



Sandhurst Diocesan Charter for Catholic Education

“that every person’s heart be inflamed by the love of God.”



From Bishop Mackinlay

Since the early 1850s, generations of families have entrusted the education of their children to Catholic schools in the parishes across the Diocese of Sandhurst. The strength of this partnership between families, parishes and their schools has been evidenced through both the quality of their learning communities and the generosity and commitment with which so many of our families and parishioners have contributed to the infrastructure and operations of their parish school. In recent years, it has become evident that the complexities of the contemporary era require a new approach to governance to ensure that the work of Catholic education in the Diocese continues to flourish.

The Diocesan Charter for Catholic Education has been developed to guide the work of education in the Diocese and, most particularly, to inform the strategic planning of the new diocesan company, Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited. From January 2021, this company assumes governance responsibility for all Sandhurst Catholic primary, secondary and flexible-learning setting schools, as well as for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres.

Catholic school communities understand education as nurturing the flourishing and developing of the whole person, who is created in the image of God and who is therefore fundamentally related to others, to the whole of creation, and to God. All involved in Catholic education (parents, children, young people, staff, parishioners) are actively invited to a personal encounter with Jesus, which is nourished by the Scriptures and celebrated in the faith and worship of the Christian community.

Catholic schools provide excellent learning opportunities, with an integral component of this being a high-quality religious education curriculum. There is a strongly developed culture of quality assurance, demonstrated by clear compliance with government regulatory requirements, including a focus on child safeguarding.

This Charter highlights some of the key principles that apply to Catholic education:

- the inalienable dignity of each person is always affirmed and respected, and therefore children and young people are placed at the centre of Catholic education;
- schools work in partnership with families, recognising that parents and guardians have primary responsibility for the education of their children;
- while the partnership of Catholic education is always undertaken in solidarity with a shared mission, the particular and distinctive contribution of each person is respected through an emphasis on subsidiarity and participation, so that decisions are made as close as possible to those who are actually engaged in and affected by particular activities.

I am confident that this Charter will assist all those involved in Catholic education to ensure that it continues to contribute to our diocesan vision: 'that every person's heart be inflamed by the love of God'.

Signature

14 October 2020



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the First Nations Peoples of Australia as the Traditional Owners of the land in the Diocese of Sandhurst. We are inspired and nurtured by the wisdom, stories, spirituality and experiences of our First Nations Peoples and together we work actively for reconciliation, justice, equity and healing in our country.

Introduction

The Diocesan Charter for Catholic Education outlines the vision and mission that informs the faith, pastoral, educational and wellbeing priorities which inspire and guide the work of all Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sandhurst.

Catholic education unites the mission of the universal Church with service to the development of the whole person. It is centred on Christ who reveals both the face of God and the truth of the human condition in all cultures and faiths including First Nations people of Australia (*Source of Life*, 2020). The mission of Catholic education is simultaneously both evangelising and educative.

The vision for Catholic education in Sandhurst is to provide, through a Catholic world-view and in partnership with our families, parish communities and regulatory authorities, learning environments that are stimulating, enriching, liberating and sacramental.

Overview of Catholic Education Sandhurst

Catholic schools have provided education for families in the Sandhurst Diocese since Father Henry Backhaus opened the first school St Kilian's on the Bendigo Goldfields in 1853. Our history and tradition reflect a commitment to shared mission between Parish Priests, Religious congregations, lay educators, parishioners and families.

Today, Catholic Education Sandhurst is comprised of Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES), Catholic Education Sandhurst Office (CESO), Early Childhood Education and Care Centres, Primary, Secondary, F-12 and flexible learning settings. Sandhurst is a large country diocese serving the needs and characteristics of rural and regional Victoria. Grounded in Gospel values and formed in a spirituality of reflection, discernment and relationship our mission is to realise the words of Jesus "*I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly*" (Jn 10:10) in the lives of our students, staff and families. At the heart of the educational enterprise of Catholic Education Sandhurst are our children and young people for whom we have a duty to safeguard, protect and educate.



Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited: Vision and Mission

Both the Vision and Mission of Catholic Education Sandhurst communities are enacted by:

- Nurturing and developing a distinctive Catholic identity and ethos which forms people for mission;
- Offering an approach to life that is sacramental and hope-filled;
- Developing education communities that foster dialogue, cooperation, collaboration and awareness of both responsibilities and rights across the system;
- Forming and encouraging leaders to operate with discernment in the context of servant leadership;
- Exercising sound stewardship and management of resources; and
- Engaging closely with parents/carers who are co-partners and the first educators of their children.

Sandhurst Catholic schools are called to:

- Inspire and encourage faith in God, and an encounter with the person of Jesus;
- Nurture the spiritual dimension of the human person;
- provide opportunities for children and young people to value the experiences of contemplation and prayer;
- Provide opportunities for all students to explore and articulate their meaning systems and beliefs;
- Be safe and inclusive communities where all are welcome, where all are invited to participate and where all should experience “life in all its abundance” (Jn 10:10);
- Promote a rigorous approach to life-long learning with a particular emphasis on theology and religious texts and traditions; and
- Value the place of Catholic social action and individual responsibilities to effect positive change.

Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited enacts the Charter through five dimensions which describe and support the vision and mission of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sandhurst. All of the dimensions are framed within the context of the mission of the Catholic school as expressed through its identity, ethos and mission.

Sharing the Mission

Each educational setting exists as an important expression of the mission of the Church. Recognition of the family as first educators in faith of their children is affirmed and respected as are the very positive partnerships that parishes and schools have enjoyed in the history of the diocese.

The relationship between each diocesan school and its parish/parishes is formalised in a 'Shared Mission Framework' which acknowledges the significant pastoral and leadership roles of parish priests/administrators within schools, and amongst the parent community. In addition, the diocese works with and supports order owned and administered schools.

Similarly, School Advisory Councils are the leading advisory group for the principal, providing support and advice particularly in strategic planning and school improvement. The parish priest, or his nominee, is a key advisor (ex-officio) on the Council. The parish priest is also a member of every appointment panel for principals and religious educational leaders to diocesan school settings.

Catholic Identity, Ethos and Mission

Diocesan Catholic schools respond openly and willingly to the contemporary context, reading and interpreting the "signs of the times" in the light of the Gospel. The Catholic school participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and does so in active partnership with parents and the parish. To evangelise is to promote the Christian message and a conversion of heart towards Jesus Christ through the lens of Catholic teaching and tradition.

The role of spreading the Good News of the Gospel belongs to all members of the Church and the ministry of teaching plays a vital role in this. Evangelisation is most effective when the Christian message is witnessed through personal example and is manifest in relationships, processes, daily lived social justice and a capacity to look beyond one's own community to contribute to the "common good".

Our school communities are characterised by the extent to which our students, our families and our staff are flourishing to the fullest of their God-given human potential.

**All Catholic schools throughout the diocese
are designed to be:**

PRAYERFUL AND SACRAMENTAL

LIFE-GIVING

FAITHFUL

HOPE-FILLED

JUST

SAFE & INCLUSIVE

The diocese of Sandhurst Religious Education policy and Curriculum program provide direction and support to schools in preparing for, planning and implementing the Religious Education curriculum.

Learning and Teaching

Access to learning is the right of every child and young person. Sandhurst Catholic schools seek to engage each student, encouraging awe and wonder and facilitating the development of understanding, skills and capabilities in order to help each one flourish as a person and a liberated learner within a culturally diverse society.

Leadership

Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited has a commitment to subsidiarity and prioritises collaborative leadership. Leadership in Sandhurst schools is at the service of the mission of the Church and the local community. Our leaders are called and supported to be prophetic – courageous, inclusive, countercultural, authentic and hope-filled: to be servant leaders.

In Sandhurst schools, leadership is devolved across the Diocese, system and community, through delegation and designated positions and roles within all educational settings.





Pastoral Wellbeing

Our schools recognise the diversity and uniqueness of each learner. We aim to assist each young person to develop their full potential through the integration of a healthy mind, body and spirit.

Our approach is shaped by the Catholic tradition of pastoral care and the best of contemporary research. We are committed to approaches to learning and teaching which develop socially and culturally capable global citizens.

We foster hope-filled, healthy communities, ensuring the dignity of each person, engaging our children and advocating for families and carers.

Stewardship of Resources

Stewardship of our resources flows from a deep and ongoing care of creation which is embedded in Catholic Social Teaching. Our commitment to the common good leads us to see ourselves as custodians of a heritage of service and responsibility. Respect for the human person is integral to our procurement priorities, policies and practices.

We provide an environment where our children and young people will come to a deep awareness of the potential each has to contribute to building a fairer world for all.

We are called to be just and faithful stewards: resourcing our schools, building partnerships, advocating for the community and growing a sense of responsibility for our environment.



Catholic Education Sandhurst is committed to the planning, implementation and evaluation of strategies to enable high quality outcomes and possibilities for all young people through ongoing school improvement. The Diocesan Charter for Catholic Education is explicitly underpinned by the Catholic Identity of the school - its mission, its complexity, the challenges of authenticity and witness; and the possibilities and hope it offers.

This Charter calls all members of Sandhurst school communities to share the opportunity and the responsibility: to bring about God's dream for our world; to meet the needs of all learners; to strive for the highest standards and to serve the common good.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- Initial Directions by CES Limited Member
- CES Limited Shared Mission Statement
- Diocesan Religious Education policy