



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

The Pastor and the Principal

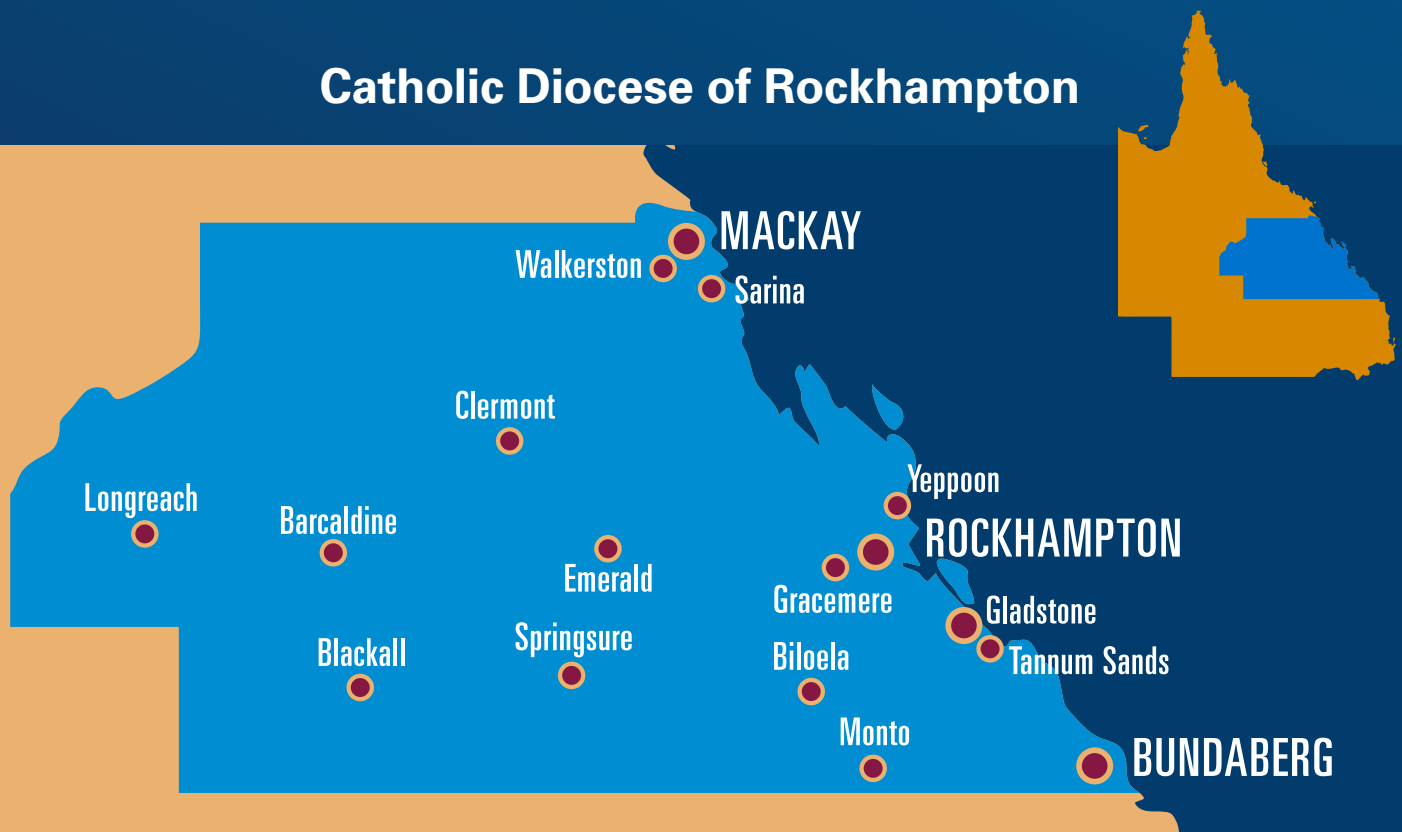
Collaborative Relationships

Vision Statement

Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton

As a community of believers,
we live out the call of baptism,
through personal faith in Jesus,
witnessing together to the Good News of the Kingdom.

Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton



Mission Statement

Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton

Inspired by the person and teaching of Jesus Christ, we serve the communities of the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton.

We provide

- Life-long faith education
- Religious education
- Relevant, holistic, quality education

Assisting all in their search for meaning for life

Preface

The purpose of this document is to provide recommended practice to assist in enhancing the collaborative relationships amongst those involved in parish ministry and educational ministry in schools, colleges and kindergartens (hereinafter jointly referred to as “schools”) in the Catholic diocese of Rockhampton.

This document has as its intended audience Priests, Principals, members of Parish Pastoral Councils, School Boards, Parents and Friends Associations, school staff, parents and caregivers, members of governing bodies of religious institute schools and staff of the Rockhampton Catholic Education Office.

While acknowledging that there are many stakeholders in the parish and school, the Parish Priest and Principal have critical leadership roles. It is essential that there be clarity regarding their responsibilities and relationships in regard to the school.

This document uses material from *Collaborating for Mission: The Parish and the Catholic School*, a joint publication of the Council of Priests and the Catholic Education Council of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The assistance of these two Councils is gratefully acknowledged.

The Pastor and the Principal — Collaborative Relationships needs to be read in conjunction with the accompanying document *Diversity of Ministry – Oneness of Mission*.



The Contexts

Catholic parishes and schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton undertake their ministries in a complex and changing environment. In this environment the three traditional pillars of life-long and life-wide Catholic education — the family, the parish and the school — are influenced by social, ecclesial and educational factors that must be taken into account when proposing a model of collaborative relationships between the Parish Priest or Pastor, the Principal and the school.

Social context

Reliable survey data over recent years indicates that Australian society is becoming increasingly secularised. While there is an apparent growth in interest in spirituality and issues of meaning in some sectors of society, religious affiliation and practice is largely in decline, especially in Christian churches. (Council of Priests and Catholic Education Council, Brisbane, 2011)

In isolated and small rural towns throughout the diocese, teachers who have been transferred there may feel a sense of isolation. Some people may be away from such towns on weekends in order to spend time with family and/or friends. This will obviously impact on their ability to participate in parish activities in these small rural towns' church activities. Priests, Principals and staff in Catholic schools continue to emphasise the importance of regular participation in Mass despite the difficulties that are a reality in isolated and rural towns.

Ecclesial context

While there has been an ongoing decline in the numbers of baptised Catholics who regularly attend Mass and

participate in parish activities and programs, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton are experiencing increasing enrolments. Catholic schools continue to attract families who see these primary and secondary schools as credible and desirable options for their children. While the majority (52%) of students in these schools are baptised Catholics, they and their families are often not regular attendees at the parish Eucharist (National Church Life Survey Research, 2009). The school or class Eucharist is for many students their only experience of the sacramental celebration. National Church Life Survey (NCLS) figures indicate that fewer than 20% of Catholic adults are regular attendees at the Eucharist or participants in other aspects of parish life (National Church Life Survey Research, 2009). It could reasonably be assumed that in Catholic schools the percentage of Catholic staff members who are regular attendees might be higher than this figure, but considerably less than 100%.

The changing role of Priests in the diocese has impacted on the relationship between Parish Priest and school. Many Priests are now responsible for multiple or amalgamated parishes, sometimes across considerable distances in the rural areas of the diocese; consequently throughout the diocese there are more diverse school and parish settings than in the past. These include one school adjacent to church and presbytery with a resident Priest, multiple schools within one parish under the care of one Priest and schools serving more than one parish, particularly in the larger provincial cities.



The Contexts (Continued)

Educational context

In Australia the Catholic school is one key element in the life-long and life-wide Catholic educational provision of the Church shared ideally with parents and the parish. In the area which makes up the Diocese of Rockhampton Catholic communities have committed to the development of schools as vitally important to the overall mission of the church since the 1860s. The advent of significant government funding of Catholic education since the late 1960s has assisted the church to respond to the need for additional places for students and to staff schools with lay teachers.

All schools in Australia have been subject to greater regulation and accountability by both State and Federal Governments at both educational and administrative levels. Parents often seem to regard Catholic schools as service or product providers, rather than as educational communities and part of the broader mission of the teaching church. This consumerist understanding of the role of the Catholic school is at odds with the Church's vision of integral formation within a community of faith.

In the Diocese of Rockhampton authority for leadership, administration and management of Catholic education in the diocese has been given to the Diocesan Director Catholic Education in the three key areas of adult education and faith formation, religious education in state



schools, and Catholic schools and colleges. The Diocesan Director Catholic Education has the authority to determine priorities in consultation with the Bishop and the Diocesan Education Council and to appoint personnel. The Diocesan Director Catholic Education is obliged to keep the Bishop fully informed on all aspects of the operations of Catholic Education. The Diocesan Director Catholic Education is vested with the responsibility to organise and coordinate the operations of Catholic Education in such a way as to ensure that optimal use is made of all resources; services are delivered efficiently and in the most effective way possible; and services are grouped together logically to ensure synergy and cost-effectiveness (Rockhampton Diocesan Education Council, 2006).

Diocesan context



The Contexts (Continued)

All Catholic schools exist to further the mission of the Church to evangelise. They do so in a manner appropriate to their context and ethos. Under the leadership of the Bishop all schools are committed to the common purpose of the diocese as defined in its vision statement: "As a community of believers, we live out the call of baptism, through personal faith in Jesus, witnessing together to the Good News of the Kingdom."

Within the diocese there are three types of Catholic schools: parish schools, diocesan schools and religious institute schools.

Parish schools are the 31 primary schools in the diocese including St Joseph's School, Bundaberg, established in 1876 when Bundaberg was part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The Rockhampton Catholic Education Office administers these 31 schools while the Parish Priest is responsible for priestly ministry in Catholic primary school/s within his parish (Rockhampton Diocesan Education Council, 2011).

Diocesan schools are the eight colleges administered by Rockhampton Catholic Education Office including a number which were formed by amalgamation of older establishments. Each of these colleges has an ordained chaplain who is appointed by the Bishop. The role of the chaplain is to work with the secondary college community in ministering to the needs of students, staff and families (Rockhampton Diocesan Education Council, 2011).



There are two schools in the diocese conducted by religious institutes or other public juridic persons established for that purpose. These schools, St Brendan's College and St Ursula's College, operate with the approval and oversight of the Bishop who has canonical responsibility for the coordination of the apostolic works of the diocese (Canon 806.1). Their internal management is conducted by the religious institute or other public juridic person.





Collaborative Relationships

As mentioned above the Bishop has delegated financial, legal, administrative and educational responsibility for schools to the Diocesan Director Catholic Education. As pastors are freed of these responsibilities towards schools they can devote their efforts towards collaborating in the development and maintenance of the spiritual life of the school. To this end the pastor offers counsel and support to the Principal who is responsible for the management and educational leadership of the school. The pastor respects the school as a legitimate ecclesial entity and works collaboratively with staff, school boards, and Parents and Friends Associations for the common good of school and parish.

Liturgy

The Pastor, Principal and Assistant Principal: Religious Education or other person to whom responsibility has been delegated work together to ensure that Eucharists celebrated in a school setting are “festive, familial and meditative” (Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 1973 #23). Preparing for and celebrating the Eucharist pays attention to the principles outlined in the *Directory for Masses with children*. Teachers prepare the children for the Eucharist so that the children are familiar with the scripture readings and spoken and sung responses

as well as with the hymns. Those children selected for special ministries within the Eucharist prepare and rehearse for their roles. Teachers are present at the Eucharist not merely as monitors of behaviour but as adults who by praying with the children are participating in the Eucharist and being models for their students. (Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 1973 #24)

Sacramental preparation

The task of nurturing children’s growth in faith and leading them to join in the liturgical celebrations of their faith rightly belongs to parents. Introduction to the Church’s sacramental life is the means through which one enters more fully into the life of the faith community. Because sacramental initiation is parish oriented, it is proper that the faith community, expressed in the parish and led by the pastor, be also responsible for and intimately involved in the sacramental preparation of children. Catholic Schools, through their culture and through their religious education curriculum, continue to support families in deepening their children’s knowledge and understanding of the sacraments and other areas of religious education (Diocese of Rockhampton, 2000).

Collaborative Relationships (Continued)

Pastoral care

The pastor demonstrates to staff, students and parents that he has a pastoral concern for their needs. He has a particular care for the Principal and staff in their roles as co-workers with him in the mission of the Church. His frequent visitation to the school is highly desirable and greatly appreciated. While respecting the obligations of confidentiality, rights to privacy, and due process, Pastor, Principal and staff share knowledge of matters relevant to their individual roles so that they can offer effective care to students and parents.

Employment of staff in Catholic schools

The Diocesan Director Catholic Education has the authority to determine priorities and appoint personnel (Rockhampton Diocesan Education Council, 2006). The pastor is invited to participate personally or by his delegate in the selection process of the Principal, others in positions of senior leadership (Deputy Principals and Assistant Principals) and campus ministers in parish and diocesan schools and is consulted prior to a final decision being made about the appointment.

The Diocesan Director Catholic Education or delegated person ensures that the pastor is notified of any intended appointment to teaching staff in the parish school and that he is invited to comment on the appointment. Any concerns raised by the pastor are addressed by the Diocesan Director Catholic Education or delegate and a mutually agreeable resolution is sought.

Parent faith formation / education

Pastor and Principal look for opportunities to help parents develop their faith and their understanding of the Catholic tradition. The Principal ensures that parents are invited to school-organised liturgies and together with the Priest endeavours to make the parents feel welcome and included. The Principal advertises parish faith formation programs and activities in the school newsletter and encourages parents to participate.

The School Board and Parents and Friends Association

The pastor is an *ex officio* member of the school board and relates with the board in three separate yet complementary roles: spiritual leader, pastoral leader and board member. In instances where the pastor is unable to commit personally to school board membership he may propose a parishioner as member in his stead (Diocesan Catholic Education Council, 2006).

In parish schools the pastor is an *ex officio* member of the Parents and Friends Association of the school (The Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in Qld). While the pastor might not attend every meeting of the Association, he is invited to take an active interest in the work of the Association. The Principal ensures that minutes of meetings of the Association are made available to the pastor. Principals of diocesan secondary schools should invite the chaplain to meetings of the Association and ensure that the chaplain receives minutes of the Association's meetings.



Dispute Resolution

Where a Pastor and Principal are at variance over an issue, each is to make a sincere effort to understand the position of the other. A person outside the situation, acceptable to both, may act as mediator to assist in the resolution of the conflict.

If resolution of the situation is not achieved at the local level, the Diocesan Director Catholic Education is informed in writing of the situation and seeks to initiate a further process of mediation and, if necessary, arbitration.

If these processes fail to resolve the issue, either pastor or the Diocesan Director Catholic Education may appeal to the Bishop who resolves the matter.

Conclusion

The principles and procedures outlined in this document are intended to enhance the collaborative partnerships of Pastors, Principals and school communities which have been a strong feature of Catholic education in the Diocese of Rockhampton over many years. The document offers guidance to all parties to support them in school ministry which is so integral to the mission of the local Church.



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