



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

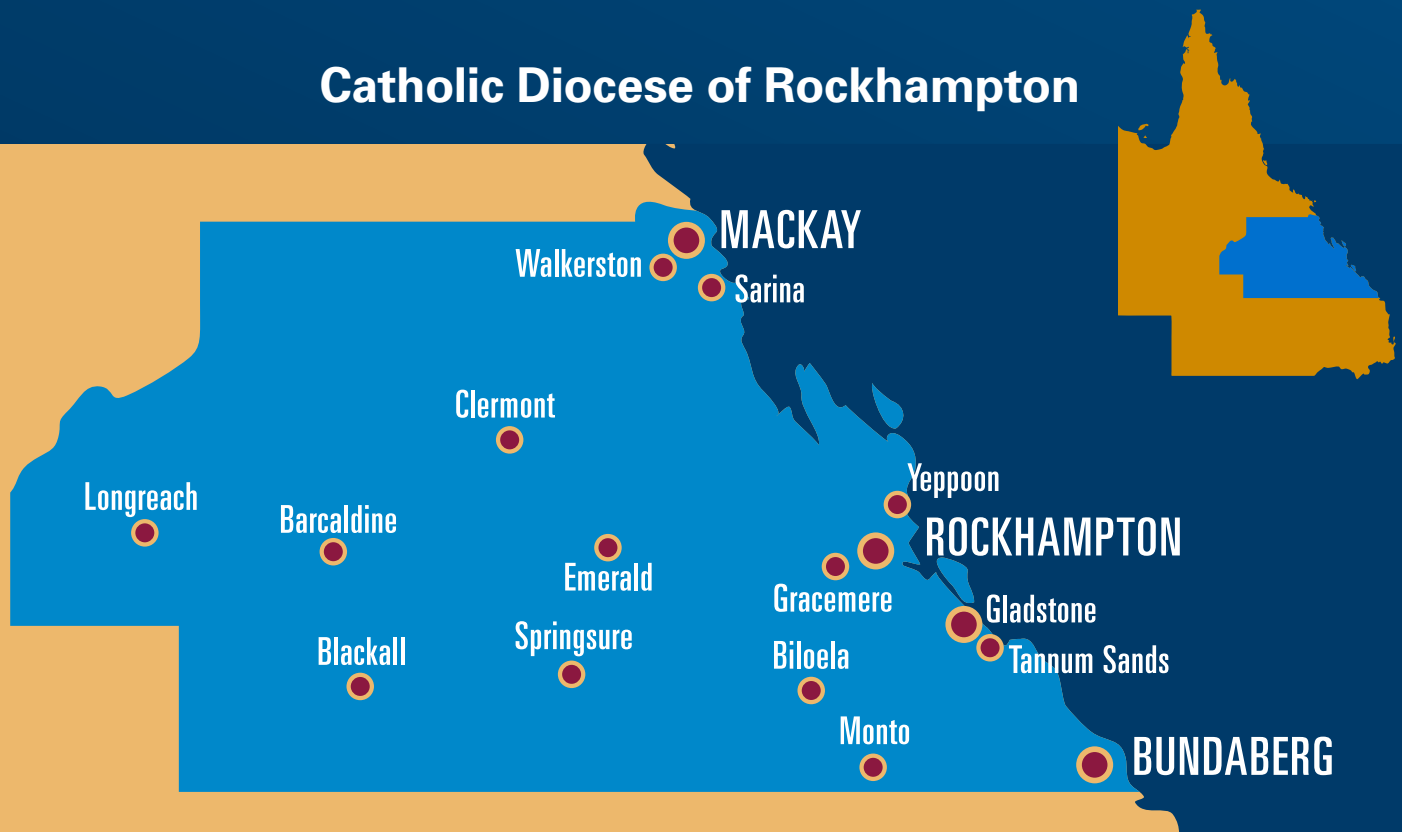
Diversity of Ministry — Oneness of Mission

Relationships between parish and school
in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton

Our Vision

- Give witness to the message of Jesus and the mission of the Church
 - Are open and accessible to all who seek our values
 - Are communities of care and safety
 - Have a clear Catholic identity
- Offer a relevant and holistic curriculum of quality teaching and learning
- Are characterised by inclusive partnerships within a community of faith

Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton



Our Mission

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

In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world. (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 1965. 2*)

Catholic schools of the future will be places where working partnerships for all members of the school and parish community are a lived reality. Indeed, the fundamental and defining source of the Catholic school's service to the broader community is to be found in the extent to which this lived experience of community is authentic and also in the extent to which the defining nature of the Catholic school as witness to the Good News is a lived reality. (*Diocesan Education Council, Diocese of Rockhampton, 2000*)



Preface

The purpose of this document is to enhance the positive and collaborative relationships that exist between parishes and schools in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton. This document complements an earlier document *The Pastor and the Principal — Collaborative Relationships*. (Diocesan Education Council, Diocese of Rockhampton, 2019)

There are 31 parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton. There are also 31 primary schools and ten colleges, hereinafter collectively referred to as schools.

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, and staff of the Rockhampton Catholic Education Office.



School and Parish Working Together

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that “the parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop. It is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ’s saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly [sic] love.” (The Holy See, 1994)



The Catholic school is a work of the Church. The Congregation for Catholic Education citing Pope John Paul II states that “the ecclesial nature of the Catholic school ... is written in the very heart of its identity as a teaching institution. It is a true and proper ecclesial entity by reason of its educational activity, ‘in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony.’ Thus it must be strongly emphasised that this ecclesial dimension is not a mere adjunct, but is a proper and specific attribute, a distinctive characteristic which penetrates and informs every moment of its educational activity, a fundamental part of its very identity and the focus of its mission.” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2004)

The Catholic school of the future is to be a place where the working partnership for all members of the school and parish community is to be a lived reality. This partnership means inclusiveness for all stakeholders — priest, principal, staff, students, parents and other members of the Church community. The development of true partnership in which the role of the school as an important element of the local church is recognised and respected lies at the core of the future of the Catholic school. The true partnership between parish and school demonstrates mutual respect, tolerance, care, justice, honesty, openness and a genuine desire to work together. (Diocesan Education Council, Diocese of Rockhampton, 2000)



Schools and Parishes in the Catholic Diocese Of Rockhampton

With a current enrolment of approximately 16,000 students and a staff of approximately 2,500 in ten kindergartens, 31 primary schools and eight colleges, Rockhampton Catholic Education serves communities from Bundaberg in the south to Mackay in the north and west to Longreach (Rockhampton Catholic Education Office, 2013). In addition to the schools, colleges, kindergartens and outside school hours care centres administered by the Rockhampton Catholic Education Office there are two religious institute public juridic person (PJP) schools at Yeppoon: St Brendan's College and St Ursula's College with approximately 1,000 students and 150 staff (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012).

In the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton parishes are grouped into deaneries. In each deanery the priest who is appointed by the Bishop to be the dean or vicar forane provides guidance and support for the other priests within his deanery. There are five deaneries in the Diocese of Rockhampton: Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Central Highlands, Central West and Mackay.

There are Catholic primary schools in each deanery of the Diocese and there is at least one college in four of the five deaneries:

The number of schools and colleges associated with particular parishes varies considerably across the diocese. For example, Capricorn Coast parish contains two primary schools and two colleges whereas Rockhampton North parish is associated with one primary school. Some parishes have no associated school.

The parishes in the diocese are served by diocesan priests and by priests who are members of religious orders or congregations including Divine Word Missionaries, Heralds of the Good News, Norbetine Canons and the Society of Mary. These clerical religious priests have worked in a number of parishes including Woorabinda Mission, Blackall, Bundaberg, Biloela and Gladstone. (National Council of Priests of Australia Inc., 2012)

Deanery	Parishes	Primary Schools	Colleges
Rockhampton	9	13	5
Bundaberg	1	3	1
Central Highlands	7	4	1
Central West	5	3	0
Mackay	9	8	3
TOTAL	31	31	10

(Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton, 2019)

Ownership and Management

The land on which churches and schools are situated is owned by the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Rockhampton. Some parcels of land are regarded as Parish land, while other sites are known as "diocesan land". The two religious institute PJP Catholic colleges in the diocese are owned by Church entities or public juridic persons separate from the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Rockhampton.

There are some schools which are built on parish land. These schools are typically older primary schools which were often built in conjunction with the parish church and presbytery. The plant and equipment in these schools belongs to the school and not to the parish and their maintenance and development is managed and financed by the Rockhampton Catholic Education Office (CEO).

Some schools are situated on land which is parish land but which is the subject of a memorandum of understanding between the parish and CEO. Under the terms of these memoranda all rights to the land, its use and associated financial obligations are transferred to CEO for an agreed sum.

There are other schools that are constructed on land which was originally purchased by the diocese and was not assigned to any particular parish. This land is referred to as diocesan land. Some of the diocese's more recently built schools fall in this category. At these schools all rights to the land, its use and associated financial obligations are assumed by CEO.



A number of schools from all of the above three categories have entered into formal or informal agreements with parishes for the use or shared use of parish facilities such as parish halls, meeting rooms and car parks. These sharing agreements and the ways in which they are given practical expression are marked by cooperation, mutual respect and informed dialogue. Other examples of schools sharing their facilities with the parish include the use of school grounds and facilities for parish fetes and other parish celebrations.



Sacramental Life

The school and parish cooperate in realising the mission of the Church. The school supports the pastoral and liturgical ministry of the parish by exercising its own particular ministry of education. The parish, particularly through its sacramental and liturgical life, provides the school with access to Eucharist which is the "source and summit of the Christian life" (The Holy See, 1994).

Celebration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist marks the rhythm of the life of the Catholic school (Miller, 2007). Schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton celebrate the Sacrament in a variety of settings appropriate to the school's own particular circumstances. Some of these include:

- celebrating Eucharist weekly on campus as a voluntary experience for students and staff
- celebrating Eucharist weekly in the parish church during school time with all staff and students attending
- celebrating Eucharist either on campus or in a church on occasions of special significance such as school feast days, commencement or graduations.

Schools ensure that these celebrations of the Eucharist are advertised to the wider parish community and warmly welcome parishioners who choose to attend.

From time to time various parishes celebrate Anointing Masses. When these Anointing Masses are held on a weekday during school hours groups of older primary students and secondary students often attend the Mass. It is a common practice after the Mass for these students to help parishioners in providing refreshments to members of the congregation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that the Sunday Eucharist is the centre of the life of the parish (The Holy See, 1994). When school students and staff are actively involved in the Eucharistic celebration they demonstrate in a concrete way the oneness of the mission of the parish and the school. (The Holy See, 1964). Staff members from the Catholic schools often serve in a variety of ministries during the celebration of the Eucharist. Senior students from some colleges contribute to the liturgical life of the parish by serving as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist at parish Masses. In some parishes senior students volunteer along with other parishioners to be placed on the roster of readers for Mass. Another common practice is for schools to assume responsibility for music ministry and other duties



at a parish Mass on a regular basis, for example monthly. By encouraging and supporting the involvement of students in the liturgical life of the community, parishes and schools are cooperating in the evangelisation of youth.

A number of students during their years of primary schooling seek to complete their initiation into the Church by celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation and their First Eucharist. As part of this initiation process the students also celebrate their First Penance. The parish is where initiation into the faith is celebrated and nurtured through the sacraments because sacraments are events for the whole Catholic community to celebrate together. The parish through its sacramental team supports parents in preparing its young parishioners for these sacred moments. The school collaborates with the parish in the delivery of the sacramental preparation program through the participation of the Assistant Principal: Religious Education (APRE) as a member of the parish sacramental team (Rockhampton Catholic Education Office, 2010) and through the generous assistance of other staff members who volunteer their services to the team. Catholic schools through their Religion curriculum complement parishes and support families by providing knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, including knowledge of the sacraments.

Secondary school students sometimes express the desire to complete their initiation into the Catholic community or to become members of the Catholic Church. The APRE or Assistant Principal: Mission consults the parents and the parish priest regarding the suitability of these candidates and organises and oversees an appropriate formation program for them. On completion of the formation program the candidates celebrate their full initiation during a parish Eucharist.

The Religion Curriculum



Because the school is a significant part of the parish community it is important that students know about the parish in which their school is situated. The religion curriculum includes opportunities for students to learn about the history, structure and ministries of the parish. From time to time parishioners with appropriate knowledge and skills might be invited into schools to speak to classes about parish history, structure and ministries. (Queensland Catholic Education Commission, 2007)

Forming Relationships

Every diocesan school has a Board which serves as a pastoral and consultative body. The Board also shares in the educational and pastoral leadership responsibilities of the pastor and principal of the school in ways that are clearly defined in the School Board Constitution. Each Board has as an ex-officio member a Spiritual Leader who is normally an ordained minister of the Church (e.g. Parish Priest / Pastor of the Parish). The Spiritual Leader attends all Board meetings. In special circumstances a non-ordained person may act as delegate for the ordained minister. In these cases there is a clearly documented statement about the way in which the ordained minister relates to the Board through the Spiritual Leader. (Queensland Catholic Education Commission, 2005)

From time to time people are appointed to positions of leadership in the parish or in the school. It is important in maintaining positive relationships between school and parish that all stakeholders are aware of these appointments having been made and that they have opportunity to meet and greet new leaders.

A new member of the school leadership team is formally welcomed by parish leaders and parishioners. The person might be welcomed and invited to speak on their role at a Pastoral Council meeting, welcomed at weekend Masses or profiled in the parish newsletter. (Queensland Catholic Education Commission, 2007)

Any person such as a priest, pastoral associate or pastoral council chair newly appointed to a parish leadership position is formally welcomed by the school leadership team and by members of the school community. The person might also be invited to speak at a Parents and Friends and/or School Board meeting, be introduced at a school assembly, be invited to meet with school leadership and staff in a social setting or be profiled in the school newsletter. (Queensland Catholic Education Commission, 2007) Some parishes in the Diocese of Rockhampton welcome senior students from colleges as full members of the Parish Pastoral Council. These young parishioners provide valuable service to their parish community and in return are strengthened in their commitment to their Church. Their involvement as parish councillors signals to the community that what is important to the parish is also important to the school.



Conclusion

In 1863 the first Catholic school in Rockhampton was established by the town's first parish priest, Father Charles Murlay, with a lay person, Miss Bridget Ennis, as the teacher in charge. (Browning, 2005, p. 3). Since that time relationships between schools and parishes in the Diocese of Rockhampton have been marked by cooperation and mutual respect.

This booklet has documented some of the ways in which working partnerships for members of the school and parish community are lived realities. The treatment is by no means exhaustive, and schools and parishes will continue to find ways to use their diverse ministries to contribute collaboratively to the realisation of the mission of Jesus.



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