

Policy

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Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Purpose

Within the Cairns Diocese, a comprehensive strategy impacting students, staff and parents has been implemented for helping individuals and communities develop the fundamental knowledge, skills and values that are necessary for learner wellbeing and life effectiveness.

The SEL framework, incorporated within the Identity and Mission Framework, is a direct, intentional and systemic approach to; invigorate learning, nurture wellbeing, build relationship quality and connectivity and strengthen the effectiveness of processes, procedures and practices of the systems within which people work, learn and live.

Policy

Catholic Schools will encourage individuals, people and communities towards Christian wholeness by implementing evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning to nurture wellbeing, invigorate learning and develop cultures of connectedness.

Rationale

Religious Statement of Intent:

A Catholic school is not simply a place where lessons are taught; it is a centre that has an operative educational philosophy, attentive to the needs of today's youth and illuminated by the Gospel message.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School n.22

There is extensive concern about the health, wellbeing and educational achievement of young Australians. Significant interest by Commonwealth and State governments in values education, safe schools, child protection, social and emotional learning, drug education and student resilience reflect these concerns (ACU & Erebus International, 2008). However, despite similar national policy efforts over the past twenty years many young people still find it difficult to develop a strong sense of identity, purpose and connectedness with life and school (Eckersley, 2008).

Educational settings have the potential to engage young people in ways that would help them to define who they are, how and why they are important, how they should act and what they can become. Our Catholic school communities engage in the mission of the Church through daily active living of the Gospel. At the heart of Catholic schooling is a Christ-centred ethos and world view that is committed to freedom and wholeness for all. A Catholic education nurtures and celebrates God's presence in people, community and creation.

For Catholic schools the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) framework, incorporated within the Identity and Mission Framework provides a vehicle for optimising the learning and wellbeing of young students by

influencing educational landscapes to support holistic development.

It follows that the experience of Catholic education involves bringing together faith, culture and life to make meaning of the world and form the basis for personal and social transformation. Within this faith-based context, a Catholic school holistically promotes the growth and development of the human person as an individual, in relationship with God, with others and within community.

Consequences

1. CES and school leadership provides for, and leads, effective and sustainable school-wide SEL implementation.
2. CES and schools adopt and implement SEL developmental curricula, based on theory and research, for all young people.
3. Schools, with the support of CES, provide for explicit teaching of SEL and infusion of SEL into regular academic curricula, engaging students actively and experientially using appropriate pedagogical practices. (Eg Circle Solutions pedagogy)
4. Schools reinforce SEL skills and methods in extra-curricular activities and as part of the implicit curriculum, to create classroom cultures where caring, responsibility, trust and commitment to learning can thrive.
5. CES and schools identify and develop the interactive processes, practices and relationships within the school system, necessary for holistic learning and community wellbeing.
6. Schools implement programmes and develop practices that encourage quality cross-age relationships between and across all members of the school community.
7. Schools provide appropriate identification and coordinated intervention measures for those young people with significant risk factors and delays in social and emotional development.
8. CES and schools build and strengthen referral mechanisms to provide effective SEL experiences and programmes for students with psychosocial and mental health issues through student, school, family and community linked services and supports.
9. The School-Wide Positive Relationships frameworks and policies of schools reflect the preventative/intervention approach of SEL methods and practices to guide the management of behaviour and discipline practices.
10. CES and schools provide high quality ongoing SEL professional learning and support of staff members.
11. Schools develop and execute plans for inter-personal and intra-personal learning opportunities, spiritual nourishment and relationship-building for school personnel.
12. Schools provide and execute plans to :
 - a) bolster parent connectedness to school,
 - b) build connected, caring and resilient communities and
 - c) provide parents and families with opportunities to develop the capabilities to support young people's social and emotional development.
13. Schools develop systems to audit, evaluate and report on
 - a) effectiveness of their RE and Wellbeing Annual Plans which incorporates the SEL planning
 - b) Student social emotional development
 - c) School-wide needs and resources of current SEL programmes
 - d) The Religious Life of the School / School culture

14. Schools encourage partnerships with the broader community to promote community wide understanding about ways in which adults support and advance the social and emotional development, achievement and well-being of all young people.

Reflection

RELATED NATIONAL INITIATIVES

This policy responds to the national initiatives listed below:

- The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School.
- http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/index_it.htm
- Protecting Children is Everyone's Business. National Framework for Protecting
- Australia's Children (2009 – 2020)
- That National Framework for Health Promoting Schools (HPS)
- The three National initiatives based on the HPS model:
 - ✓ MindMatters: secondary focus
 - ✓ KidsMatter: primary focus
 - ✓ StaffMatters
- National Framework for Values Education
- National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF)
- Principles for School Drug Education
- National Drug Strategy (2004 – 2009)
- National Suicide Prevention Strategy
- National Action Plan on Mental Health (2006 – 2011)
- Queensland Plan for Mental Health (2007 – 2017)
- Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers, Queensland College of Teachers

See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)