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PREAMBLE:

The purpose of this statement is to articulate the philosophical basis of education at Marist-Sion College.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY:

Mission

Marist-Sion College, Warragul, is a Catholic co-educational secondary school which is inspired by the traditions of the Marist Brothers and the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion.

Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel message with joyful hope, to nurture those in our community and to inspire excellence.

Values

Faith in action

Excellence in teaching and learning

Community

Resilience

Purpose

Justice

Vision

We aim to promote an active faith which is guided by the Gospel message, scriptural values and the Catholic tradition.

We aim to help students and staff to maximise their capabilities.

We aim to build a community within which all are nurtured, valued and respected.

We aim to develop students' ability to recover from setbacks and persevere in the face of challenges.

We aim to help students find meaning and direction, enabling them to live active and engaged lives.

We aim to create a more just and sustainable world.

The Vision of the Catholic School

Catholic schools exist as part of the evangelising mission of the Church. They are challenged to foster a distinctive culture, educational vision and practice.

The Catholic schools of the diocese, in the tradition of the Emmaus story, seek to nurture the development of students within God's vision for humankind as this is understood in the Catholic tradition.

As communities of faith they seek to help young people, teachers and parents understand and live out this vision in the face of continuing and significant cultural and social changes. Catholic schools endeavour to promote a contemporary sense of Christian discipleship. (Catholic Schools Journeying Together p.12)

Our commitment to value young people and their development as 'persons in community with others' lies at the heart of the Catholic school's mission. In this respect our schools are countercultural, rejecting the narrow individualism that characterises much of modern life.

In its broadest sense, Catholic education is a *religious education*. A Catholic educational style seeks to help the students integrate faith, culture and life. It also seeks to develop in learners the cognitive, affective and spiritual skills needed to interpret their individual and collective experience through the Judeo-Christian worldview, and so to make personal meaning of human experience.

The School as Means of Evangelization

The life of the school community is important as a means of evangelization because it provides a unique context which favours the integral development and Christian formation of our students. The Christian understanding is of a Triune God. The second person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ, His message and His mission, are central to our educational project. This project operates from a religious vision that is comprehensive and hopeful in what it says about the human person, and the human person's relationships within community, Church, and the natural world.

The vision challenges us to go beyond the ordinary, to help young people recognize, develop and use their talents in the service of others. The Christian vision needs to permeate in an explicit way all facets of the life of our schools if they are to be truly Catholic.

The school community builds on the experience children have of community in their own families. The Christian formation children receive in their family setting is vital to their development. Schools aim to support parents in this task through a variety of means.

Community and Partnership

The Catholic school does not function in isolation; it is part of the wider Church community.

...this ecclesial dimension (of the Catholic school) is not a mere adjunct but 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. (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n.11)

In this context, the tasks of Evangelisation, Catechesis and Religious Education are shared by home, school and parish, with each having its own distinct contribution to make in a sense of genuine partnership.

The Place of the Christian Vision in Teaching and Learning

The way the Christian vision is incorporated into teaching and learning is of particular significance for the mission of our schools. From this perspective, teachers need to love and respect learners as well as being deeply committed to their own learning. In practical terms this love and commitment is expressed in the desire shared among staff to provide a high quality education for all students through best practice pedagogy, sound curriculum development and effective assessment and reporting.

The Curriculum

Religious Education lies at the heart of the curriculum of Catholic Schools, synthesising, enriching and complementing the learning experiences of students. It articulates intentionally, the connectedness of the human person with the whole of reality, human and divine, thus it can awaken all disciplines of learning to their deep potential.

Every curriculum area or subject that is taught within a Catholic school has a religious dimension, a capacity to assist students to examine the world of human culture and the world of religion, providing knowledge and skills, and fostering attitudes and values that are life-giving and that assist young people to search for meaning and truth.

Respect for the Individual

The students in Catholic schools do not comprise an homogeneous group. They exhibit a rich diversity in terms of their most pressing individual needs, their cultural, social and economic backgrounds, their personal qualities, their stage of development and the experiences they have encountered in life. They are also from a range of faith backgrounds, are at different stages of faith development and have various levels of faith commitment.

Christians are called to respect the dignity and uniqueness of each person. The Gospel imperative directs attention to the just claims of those in need of support. Hence, the Catholic school seeks to develop an overall curriculum that will cater for individual differences and build the self-esteem of all its students in an environment free from discrimination, coercion and suspicion.

This commitment is particularly appropriate in Religious Education programs which should be genuinely inclusive, responsive to the needs of learners, and employ a wide range of learning and teaching strategies so that all students may participate with a sense of self-worth and achievement. This is especially relevant to students of English as a Second Language (ESL), students in Special Education programs and those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

Outcomes

Our philosophy is enacted through our teaching and care for students. Our philosophy guides our teaching, strategic plans, governance decisions and the daily management of the school.

The College's Graduate Goals are based on the Melbourne Declaration on Schooling, with the addition of a point which reflects our school's Catholic nature.

We aim to help graduates of Marist-Sion College to be:

- *people of active and practical faith,*
- *successful lifelong learners,*
- *confident and creative individuals, and*
- *active and informed citizens.*

To ensure that the current and prospective staff, students and parents understand the philosophy of our college, this philosophy is reflected in our Prospectus; Course Guides; Staff Handbook intranet site; Website; Strategic Plan and various posters on display around the school.