

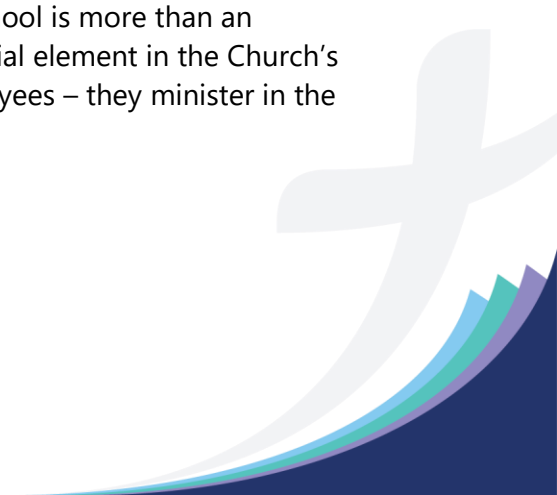
A Statement of Principles Regarding Catholic Education

The Catholic School, through its defining culture, curriculum and classroom-based Religious Education programs, plays an important formative role in support of families in the Religious Education of those to whom it ministers. It is a place of testimony and acceptance, where faith and spiritual accompaniment are provided to young people.

It is also a place where the sacramental and dialogical approach to the teaching of Religious Education promotes a recontextualising school environment. This environment may challenge people to give shape to their personal identity in conversation with others, against the background of the Catholic Tradition. In all it does, the Catholic school works to meet the needs of school, family and communities in evangelising students and helping them realise the beauty, the power and love of faith in Jesus Christ. In schools today a recontextualised and dialogical approach strengthens a systematic, comprehensive, enriched curriculum. It addresses this context in a pluralist and increasingly secular society. Growth and formation in a Catholic School is enhanced by the development of a post critical belief.

A key objective is to walk alongside students, listening to their challenges and aspirations, sharing their joy and pain, and helping to create a stillness and an openness in their hearts to the presence and action of God in their lives. From the very first moment a person enters a school in the Diocese of Sale, we want them to encounter the person, story and message of Jesus Christ. It is through this encounter that a fullness of life is gifted to our school communities and to the individuals that form these communities. We want people in our Schools to encounter an authentic Christian message through their lived experience of the school. In this encounter, and through the formal Religious Education programs offered in our schools, school community members are called to witness and contribute to God's plan of salvation. In our cultural context, where Christian truth is continually rediscovered and made real through a continuous search for it, all school community members are encouraged to be open to God's revelation as something that inspires and shapes a living faith. Through all the activities of a School's life, in its teaching and through its prayer, ritual and liturgical life, we want school community members to have the opportunity to have their faith shaped and nurtured. In this, schools are able to draw on the richness and depth of Christian tradition for inspiration and guidance.

This philosophy of Catholic education, expressed in a growing number of documents and policy statements, guides the Catholic school in its functioning. Whilst it is accountable to the general community for the provision of quality education to young citizens, it is also accountable to the Church community for providing this within the context of the Gospel and its values as expressed in Catholic doctrine. The Catholic school is more than an educative institution: it is a key part of the Church, and an essential element in the Church's mission. So too staff in the Catholic school are more than employees – they minister in the name of the Church and of the Gospel.



All staff in the Catholic school have an indispensable role to play. It is expected of all employed in a Catholic school that they:

- (a) accept the Catholic educational philosophy of the School in the Diocese of Sale;
- (b) develop and maintain an adequate understanding of those aspects of Catholic teaching that touch upon their subject areas and other aspects of their work;
- (c) through their teaching and other work, and by personal example, strive to help students to understand, accept and appreciate Catholic teaching and values;
- (d) avoid, whether by word, action or public lifestyle, influence upon students that is contrary to the teaching and values of the Church community in whose name they act;
- (e) in relation to teachers, comply with the *Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School Policy*, and other policies of the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited;
- (f) be committed to regular ongoing professional development;
- (g) be appropriately qualified and registered as required by state authorities;
- (h) be a person suitable to work with children.