



CATHOLIC  
ARCHDIOCESE  
OF SYDNEY

# CATHOLIC PARISHES and SCHOOLS



A Framework for Shared Mission



CATHOLIC  
ARCHDIOCESE  

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OF SYDNEY



Sydney  
Catholic  
Schools

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**There are many different gifts,  
but it is always the same spirit;**

**there are many different ways of serving,  
but it is the same Lord.**

**There are many different forms of activity,  
but in everybody it is the same God  
who is at work in them all.**

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(1 Corinthians 12: 4-6)

## Introduction

The purpose of this framework is to strengthen the relationship between parishes and schools and to support parish and school personnel in working effectively together. There are many areas of mission where both the parish and the school have shared responsibilities. This framework is addressed to all who work in ministry in parishes and schools, and indeed, those parishioners and families involved. It is, however, in a particular way, addressed to Parish Priests and Principals, who have leadership roles with both civil and canonical responsibility.

The document outlines guiding principles for effective shared mission and details six key areas of interest and collaboration between parishes and schools:

1. Governance of Parish Schools
2. Spiritual Formation of Children and their Families
3. Pastoral Care
4. Human Resources
5. Parish School Facilities and Planning
6. Sydney Catholic Schools Office

**This framework was developed through extensive consultation with priests, principals and senior personnel from the Archdiocese of Sydney and Sydney Catholic Schools.**

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This document is preceded by, and draws from, *The Parish Primary School, Partners in Faith, Hope and Love*, prepared by Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, 1994 on the shared responsibility and mission of the parish and the school.

This framework was developed through extensive consultation with priests, principals and senior personnel from the Archdiocese of Sydney and Sydney Catholic Schools. Particular appreciation is accorded to the Parish School Relationship Working Party, which was responsible for overseeing the development of this important resource.

# FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP

On the occasion of my installation as the ninth Archbishop of Sydney, I presented a personal vision for the Archdiocese.

*My hope is for a Church in which the Gospel is preached with joy, the wisdom of our tradition mined with fidelity, the sacraments celebrated with dignity and welcome, and the seminaries, convents and youth groupsteeming with new life; a Church in which our parishes, chaplaincies and educational institutions are true centres of the new evangelisation, our laity theologically literate and spiritually well-formed, our outreach to the needy effective and growing - and God glorified above all.*

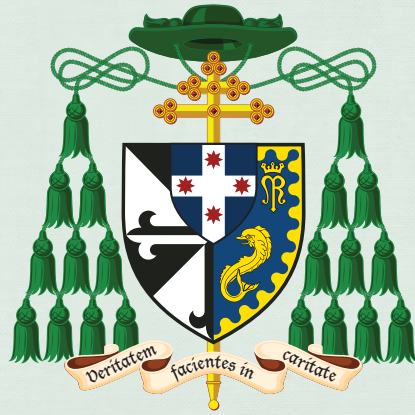
The realisation of this vision, and the degree to which it bears fruit, is dependent upon the effectiveness of our missionary activity. Our missionary discipleship must be courageous, authentic and joyful, characterised by a spirit of genuine communion.

By its very nature the Church is missionary, evangelisation its *raison d'être*. Catholic schools share in, and actively contribute to this evangelising and catechising mission of the Church as they draw people into active participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community. Working in partnership with local parish communities and families, they seek to foster the personal and spiritual growth of each member so that he or she may have and experience 'fullness of life'.

Notwithstanding their long and proud history, and their many fine achievements, Catholic schools must never be viewed as or operate from the perspective of solely being 'educational entities'. Nor should they be considered de-facto parishes. Rather, their vision and mission is informed by and should reflect their distinctly ecclesial context, as they support and collaborate in the work of the Church.

Effective missionary activity requires the reduction of silos and the promotion of greater collaboration. It means that our entire mindset, our choices and our relationships be remade after the heart of Christ. This form of renewal necessitates mutual respect, dialogue, conversion, formation, and above all - leadership. My hope is that as leaders, pastors and principals will continue to deepen their understanding and appreciation of their distinct but complementary roles and responsibilities.

As we respond to the signs and challenges of the times by making the encounter with Christ and the transmission of His Gospel the centre of all we are and do, may we recommit ourselves with enthusiasm, hope and joy to our shared mission.



Archbishop Anthony with Student Leaders

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Dr Dan White

Our Catholic parishes and schools derive their identity from the person of Jesus Christ. They exist in the hope that all members will have a personal encounter with Jesus, 'the way, the truth and the life', and be empowered in their Christian witness and discipleship.

Our Catholic schools actively contribute to the evangelising and catechising mission of the Church and seek to draw people into active participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community. They do this in partnership with their local parishes. Our challenging socio-cultural context calls us, both parishes and schools, to a missionary discipleship characterised by new approaches, vitality and enthusiasm – a 'new evangelisation'.

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*Animated by the spirit of the Gospel, our  
Catholic parishes and schools must be  
places of welcome, hospitality and service.*

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Animated by the spirit of the Gospel, our Catholic parishes and schools must be places of welcome, hospitality and service, where the seminal truths and values of a Catholic worldview are celebrated and shared, and a spirit of genuine community is fostered.

Drawing people together from diverse backgrounds and with different sets of beliefs, Catholic schools are commonly regarded as "*meeting places for those who wish to express Christian values in education*" (*The Catholic School*, p.53).

Parents' choice of Catholic education is underpinned by a myriad of motivations. While many parents prioritise the religious dimension of Catholic education, others may be drawn by the wider Christian ethos that supports the social, emotional and intellectual development of their children. In all instances however, families need to be aware of the explicit mission, vision and values of a Catholic school and its intrinsic relationship to the Church community.

Central to the mission of Catholic schools is the desire to nurture within students their sense of the true, the good and the beautiful. They do not undertake this endeavour alone. Rather, they work in partnership with families and local parish communities in a true spirit of shared mission.



# Sydney Catholic Schools

INSPIRING SPIRITS AND MINDS



Dr Dan White welcomes a beginning teacher to Sydney Catholic Schools

# THE FOUNDATIONS OF SHARED MISSION

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The community of the Catholic school involves an intersection of the Church, the family and the educators. It will succeed in its mission only if all these groups work together in a spirit of harmony and co-operation, respect each other's roles, gifts and experience and share the same goals.

The Catholic School must always be centered on the person of Jesus Christ.



Because of its identity and its ecclesial roots, [the community of the Catholic school] must aspire to becoming a Christian community, that is, a community of faith, able to create increasingly more profound relations of communion which are themselves educational. It is precisely the presence and life of an educational community, in which all the members participate in a fraternal communion, nourished by a living relationship with Christ and with the Church that makes the Catholic school the environment for an authentically ecclesial experience.

*(Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful, 2007, n.14)*

## The Church

### **Canon 794 §2**

The Church has always in a special way the duty and the right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life.

### **Canon 528 §1**

A pastor is to have particular care for the catholic education of children and youth.

## The Family

### **Canon 774 §2**

Before all others, parents are bound to form their children, by word and example, in faith and in Christian living.

### **Canon 793 §1**

Parents, and those who take their place, have both the obligation and the right to educate their children. Catholic parents have also the duty and the right to choose those means and institutes which, in their local circumstances, can best promote the Catholic education of their children.

## The Educators

### **Canon 795**

Since true formation must strive for complete formation of the human person ... children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life.

# THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF **SHARED MISSION**

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Australia is one of the world's most multicultural, multi-faith societies, and Australians are generally respectful of each other's diverse beliefs. The Catholic Church has played a major role in building the social capital of our nation through parishes, schools, hospitals and welfare, aged care, and many people have connected with the Churches for meaning, consolation and support. In recent decades, however, the religious landscape has changed significantly, and while the Church remains crucial in the lives of many people, we must recognise that declining affiliation or connection, belief or practice, in the lives of others.

Against this background the shared mission of Catholic families, parishes and schools becomes both more important but also more problematical. The family remains the foundational unit both of society and of the Catholic community. Yet the social changes that have so affected religious affiliation and practice have also impacted upon the family unit, presenting significant challenges for parents and carers, parishes and schools. The fragmentation of families and communities is all too common today; relationships are under pressure; people struggle to maintain long-term commitments. The Church remains one of the few institutions still supporting parents in their role and to helping nurture the faith life and ideals of families in our increasingly complex society.



The Church today faces a social climate often marked by indifference or hostility, a split between faith and culture, and the threat of 'spiritual desertification' of individuals and whole communities. Secularisation, individualism and moral relativism have tended to "reduce the faith and the Church to the sphere of the private and personal" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis, 2013, n.64). The rise of postmodern ideologies, disillusionment occasioned by the child sexual abuse crisis or other factors, and tectonic shifts occurring in lifestyle and economy, technology and culture, mean many now doubt the Christian narrative so passionately held by their ancestors or the authority of the institutions and practices that surrounded it. Instead they construct their own sense of transcendent meaning and moral norms, picking bits from the different approaches on offer in our culture. They may self-identify as 'spiritual, not religious' or even declare themselves 'unbelievers'.

Already in 1983 Pope John Paul II recognised that if the Church is to respond adequately to these challenges and be truly effective in her missionary activity, she needs an approach to evangelisation which is "new in its ardour, its methods and its expression". This 'new evangelisation' was conceived as a 'bold' missionary response to the social and cultural changes touched upon above. And if the arenas for this response would be individuals and whole cultures, the centres of that new evangelisation must be the family, the parish and the school working together.

Three decades after St John Paul's clarion call, Pope Francis issued a similar invitation in *Evangelii Gaudium*: to move away from the fixed pastoral mindset of 'we've always done it this way' and to "be bold and creative in the task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelisation in our respective communities" (2013, n.33). The present document seeks to engage in such a 'bold and creative' rethinking of the relationship between families, parishes and schools for contemporary Sydney.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SHARED MISSION

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The shared mission of Catholic families, parishes and schools should be underpinned and informed by a number of seminal principles.

## **Christ and His Gospel come first**

The missionary activity of the Church is always centred on Christ. It seeks to create conditions which enable an encounter with Christ, and a deepening of relationship with him. We do not need to invent some new programme for this; as John Paul II reminded us, “The programme already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition ... It has its centre in Christ himself ... It does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication”. (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 2001, n.29) Family, parish and school are all challenged today to put Christ at the heart of all they are and do.

## **The dignity of every person**

Every human being is created in God's image and likeness and therefore of inestimable value and worthy of the deepest respect. Importantly, each person's gifts and skills should be recognised, valued and nurtured. Regard for others involves listening, dialogue, consultation, and a respect for different points of view. Family, parish and school are crucial places for reverencing and unpacking the dignity of every human person.

## **The common good**

The Baptismal call to every Christian is to contribute to building up the Body of Christ. Opportunities should be provided for each person to discern, develop and contribute their ‘charisms’ (God-given gifts), not just for the sake of personal growth but as a contribution to the common good. Such opportunities foster a sense of connectivity and belonging. Families, parishes and schools are small communities in which the members serve each other's good and through which they serve the wider Church and society.

## **In communion, for communion**

We are created in the image of a Trinitarian God who is by nature relational and we share in this nature by loving God and neighbour. This anthropology (view of the human person) informs our ecclesiology (view of the Church): *communion* is both the foundation and object of our Christian identity and mission. We are what we are and do what we do because we are ‘in Christ’ and in this together. The crucial relationships of family, parish and school must be strengthened.

### **Ongoing renewal**

While every community is shaped by its history and contemporary context, they must consciously 'read the signs of the times', respond creatively, and so be open to change. Our new pastoral reality with respect to families, parishes and schools demands we renew them at their core, reconceive relationships between them, and promote greater collaboration. We need a shared vision of how to go forward.

### **Servant leadership**

Parish and school leaders should undertake their responsibilities as a ministry of service for the common good of their families and the wider community. Authority should be exercised for the empowerment of others, for the safeguarding of their rights, and to promote the flourishing of all, not just the leadership class. This will require a deep commitment to transparency and accountability, clarity about structures, roles and communication lines, and shared understandings of expectations and responsibilities.

### **Good stewardship**

Stewardship is servant-leadership applied especially to resources. Church assets are no-one's private property but rather a patrimony managed so our families, parishes and schools can carry out their mission effectively. Our leaders are custodians of these resources, and responsible for ensuring that all are provided for, especially the most disadvantaged and even future generations. Good stewards exercise their office with openness and diligence.

### **Subsidiarity**

Authority and responsibility are best exercised at the most appropriate level. Wherever possible, decisions touching upon the lives of families, parishes or schools should be made by those closest to them. This implies structures that share decision-making and activity as locally as possible. Effective subsidiarity may require training opportunities and resources for the smaller unit and back-up from the larger unit.

### **Compliance**

Families, parishes and schools must comply with the civil law like everyone else. The Church's own 'canon laws' are also important for any Catholic institution or believer. To this end, parish and school leaders should be fully cognizant of relevant laws and policies, and have in place mechanisms to ensure appropriate compliance.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE SHARED MISSION OF CATHOLIC PARISHES AND SCHOOLS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY

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Within the Archdiocese of Sydney, the system of Catholic schools has contributed greatly to the evangelising and catechising mission of the Church, and has been one of the principal means by which relationships have been established and nurtured with many families. Parishes, Religious Institutes and the Archdiocese have worked together closely to establish these schools, which have provided high-quality education to generations of young Australians.

In the Archdiocese of Sydney, primary and secondary schools largely have distinctive structures and histories. Primary schools have a strong association with parishes, and typically share the same site. They are integral to the mission of the parish and are referred to as 'parish schools'.

In contrast, the formal relationship between secondary schools and parishes varies between schools. It is dependent upon a number of factors, including: proximity to parishes, ownership of the site, and the historical and / or continuing involvement of a Religious Institute. While some secondary schools are located near a parish, and are considered to be part of the same local Catholic community, others are regional in nature, interacting with a number of parishes. Others are apostolates of particular Religious Institutes or the Archdiocese. In each circumstance, and for the purpose of their shared mission, it is vital that authentic relationships are nurtured between the school and the local parish/es.

The guidelines that follow provide Catholic parishes and schools with a framework for their shared mission.



## GOVERNANCE OF PARISH SCHOOLS

### **1.1 Canonical and Civil Governance**

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#### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. Every Catholic school is an expression of the pastoral ministry of a parish community, the parish being the basic unit of Church life. This understanding informs this support document where there is reference to parish and school communities (Canon 803).
2. The Archbishop has the duty to watch over all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese (Canon 794 §2). For Archdiocesan systemic schools, he does this through the Sydney Catholic Schools Board and the Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools.
3. While recognising that the school Principal has a range of delegated responsibilities for the civil governance of the school, the Parish Priest (Canon 532) or Administrator (Canon 540) has authority to exercise canonical governance at a local parish level (Canon 519).
4. On 1 January 2018, a new trust with a corporate trustee was established to conduct the Archdiocesan System of Catholic Schools (SCS System Schools). Sydney Catholic Schools Limited, as trustee for the Sydney Catholic Schools Trust (SCS), is the approved authority under the NSW Education Act as well as the proprietor of SCS System Schools. The Archbishop's role in relation to SCS System Schools is recognised and preserved in the terms of the Trust deed and Constitution. The Archbishop appoints Directors of the SCS Board.

5. In accordance with the NSW Education Act, there are a number of 'Responsible Persons', for SCS System Schools, including the Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools and the Principals of each school. Principals are responsible for schools at the local level and must demonstrate compliance with a broad range of civil laws and regulations, e.g. Child Protection, Workplace Health and Safety, and engage in regular governance training for responsible officers.
6. Title to the property on which many SCS schools are located is held by the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Archdiocese of Sydney (**Archdiocese Trustees**) and canonically owned by the particular parish. Parishes and SCS have entered into Licence Deeds for premises at parishes where schools are located.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. Parish Priests and Principals meet and document the parameters of their canonical and civil responsibilities by way of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This should be informed by the School and Parish Licence Deed.
  - The MOU between the parish and the school is reviewed annually or as necessary. The MOU should always be reviewed following the appointment of a new Parish Priest or Principal.
  - Assistant Priests, Parish Administrators and members of the school executive are made familiar with the MOU as appropriate. The responsibility for this falls with the Parish Priest and Principal respectively.
  - Particular care is to be taken to clarify and document the civil governance and responsibilities of shared facilities e.g. halls, parking areas), especially with respect to insurance, maintenance and hours of usage.
  - The civil governance and performance of Catholic schools is reviewed regularly through the SCS 'Inquiry and Review' processes, annual compliance visits by school consultants, and random audits by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). A copy of reports is held by the school and should be made available to the Parish Priest, upon request.

## SECTION 1.0

### GOVERNANCE OF PARISH SCHOOLS

## 1.2 Financial Management of Schools

### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. In line with the relevant State and Federal Education Acts, Principals, on behalf of SCS, have the responsibility for the prudent and effective financial management of schools.
2. In accordance with their canonical responsibilities (Canon 532), Parish Priests and Administrators oversee the temporal assets of all related parish entities, including schools. (Canon 1281-1288).
3. All funds provided for the education of children such as government grants, school fees, private donations, interest on investments, etc., must be used for the education of children in accordance with the provisions of section 83C of the NSW Education Act.
4. Because SCS operates as a system of schools, financial resources are distributed so as to ensure all schools in the system can adequately respond to the unique educational needs of their community.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. Each school has an advisory Finance Committee that includes the Parish Priest.
2. The Parish Priest is to receive a copy of the annual budget. This should highlight proposed items of expenditure with special relevance to the parish, such as maintenance and pastoral programs.
3. Following any external financial audit, a copy of the Audit Report is tabled at the school Finance Committee meeting and should be provided to the Parish Finance Committee, if requested.
4. The Executive Director of Schools will provide a Letter of Delegation to Principals, stating the financial scope and nature of any purchases or business contracts that may be entered into by the school.

A photograph of three people sitting around a table in a meeting. On the left, a woman with short blonde hair and glasses is smiling. In the center, a man with glasses and a light-colored shirt is looking towards the camera. On the right, a woman with blonde hair tied back is smiling. The table has a laptop, water bottles, and some snacks. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

## SECTION 1.0

### GOVERNANCE OF PARISH SCHOOLS

## 1.3 Communication and Planning

#### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Good communication and a commitment to collaborative planning is a vital element of developing mutual trust and a successful parish/school partnership.
2. Effective communication is timely, proactive and reciprocal in nature.
3. Pastoral planning at the parish/school level is informed by the Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools, the SCS Strategic Improvement Plan and the local Parish Pastoral Plan (if applicable).

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. Formal meetings between the Parish Priest/Administrator and the Principal take place regularly throughout the year. These are primarily for the purposes of planning and review, and where appropriate, involve other members of each community. Formal meetings are to follow a mutually agreed agenda, and be minuted.
2. In addition to formal meetings, the Parish Priest and the Principal are encouraged to avail themselves of various informal opportunities in which to engage with members of the school/parish community.
3. Parish and school communities are encouraged to share their respective annual plans and calendars, and where appropriate develop a common calendar of key events.
4. Both Principals and Parish Priests keep each other informed of significant changes in personnel and subsequent replacements.
5. The mobile telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of key school and parish pastoral staff should be shared with the school and parish offices and securely stored.
6. Parish and school newsletters should be shared. The local parish/es should be invited to regularly contribute to school newsletters and, similarly, local parish school and colleges should submit regular items for parish newsletters. In addition, relevant programs and events should be promoted in these publications.
7. Principals, and members of the school leadership team are encouraged to initiate regular opportunities to build relationships with the Parish Priest and parish staff.

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

### **2.1 Spiritual formation of children**

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#### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. Catholic education aims at the integral formation of the human person, helping them to become good citizens and preparing them for eternal life. (Canon 795). Young people learn how to responsibly exercise personal freedom for the betterment of self and others, how to function and contribute to society, develop their capacity for critical thinking and moral reasoning and experience the full development of the human personality.
2. Children have an innate awareness of the spiritual realm, and this can be nourished through experiences of worship, prayer, story, silence and contemplation.
3. Parishes and Catholic schools work in partnership to assist parents in the spiritual formation of the children in their care.
4. Spiritual formation recognises that all children are at different points in their faith journey and have varying degrees of openness to faith formation.
5. Within the context of Catholic education, children's religious imagination is stimulated when they are introduced to the treasures of the Catholic Tradition.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. In order to assist parents in nurturing the faith life of families, schools regularly share key aspects of the Religious Education curriculum that nourish the spirituality of children.
2. In nurturing the social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development of children schools promote the unique relationship with the local parish community.
3. Young children learn to pray by praying. The school works with the parish to provide opportunities for a range of liturgical and prayer experiences that deepen children's sense of mystery, ritual and the communal narrative of the Catholic Tradition.
4. Young people are engaged in regular evangelisation initiatives that seek to 'ignite the heart', including the Australian Catholic Youth Festivals, World Youth Day attendance, evangelisation days and the Pope Francis Award. These are especially focused towards students in Stages 3-6.

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

### **2.2 Sacramental Programs and the Reception of the Sacraments**

#### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. In accordance with Canon 843 §2, “*Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful*” work collaboratively “according to their respective ecclesiastical functions”, to prepare children for the sacraments; and include their families in the sacramental journey.
2. The Parish Priest has a primary responsibility for providing sacramental programs in accordance with “norms issued by a competent Authority”, i.e. the Archbishop.
3. For children from Eastern Catholic Churches, parishes and schools are to give due consideration to their possible participation in sacramental preparation programs. Importantly, Priests and school staff are to be aware of the sacramental and spiritual traditions of these Churches, and where appropriate, consult with the Priest of the Church.
4. For children from non-Catholic Churches that are Eastern Orthodox or Oriental Orthodox, sacramental initiation would not normally occur in the Catholic Church. Consideration, however, can be given to their receiving of Holy Communion in liturgical celebrations at school. This decision should respect the discipline of their Church and where appropriate, follow consultation with parents and the Priest of that Church. Respect for the Orthodox Churches and their sacramental practices should be shown at all times and any suggestion of proselytising should be avoided.
5. While characterised by a distinctive religious identity and mission, Catholic schools are respectful of the diverse religious backgrounds of students and their families.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. Key representatives from the local parish primary school, e.g. REC, Family Educator, Principal) are to support the work of the parish in planning and implementing sacramental programs and be represented on any Parish Sacramental Committee. A Parish Sacramental Committee develops policies, programs and timelines that enable families to access the sacraments.
2. Ideally, each Sacramental Committee is supported by a parish appointed Sacramental Coordinator. As a general principle, school-based employees, i.e. RECs, Family Educators, support the role and work of the Sacramental Coordinator without assuming overall responsibility for the sacramental program.
3. In collaboration with the relevant parish/es, secondary schools support the provision of sacramental programs for eligible candidates.
4. Participation of children from Eastern Catholic Churches in sacramental preparation programs might be considered from the perspective of 'ongoing catechesis'. However, the manner of any participation of these children in a subsequent liturgy must be carefully and pastorally considered, especially as they may not be receiving the sacrament.
5. School communities should promote opportunities for non-Catholic children and parents to explore and deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith. Any enquiries regarding initiation into the Catholic Church should be responded to positively, and referred in the first instance, to the Parish Priest.

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

### **2.3 Spiritual Formation of Parents and Primary Caregivers**

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#### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. The Church acknowledges parents and primary caregivers as the first educators of their children, both in faith and in life (Canon 793).
2. Catholic parents and primary caregivers choose Catholic schools for a variety of reasons, and whilst some families are active members of a parish community, many others are only nominally involved, or are not connected. Parents from other Christian churches and religious traditions may also choose to send their children to a Catholic school.
3. In collaboration with the local parish, Catholic schools seek to foster the religious awareness and spiritual growth of parents.
4. Catholic schools are committed to supporting all parents in their role, helping them nurture the social, emotional, intellectual, religious and spiritual development of their children.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. Employed by Sydney Catholic Schools, Family Educators and Religious Education Coordinators fulfill an important responsibility in each primary school. In collaboration with the local parish, a significant part of their role is to support the spiritual formation of parents and families, and to strengthen their connection with the parish community.
2. Working in collaboration, the parish and school pastoral teams should develop a comprehensive annual plan, encompassing a variety of interrelated strategies, designed to support and encourage parents in their own personal faith journey.
3. Sydney Catholic Early Childhood Services has been established in response to the local needs of a number of parish communities. In addition to the provision of early childhood services, these centres also provide before and after school care for children enrolled in the local parish school. In other instances, local parishes will partner with external providers in the establishment of Catholic Early Childhood Centres.
4. Parish primary schools, through the support of their Family Educators, are encouraged to establish parish playgroups to cater pastorally for families with preschool children.
5. Parish Priests are encouraged to connect with parents by visiting, supporting and participating in a variety of activities generated by the Family Educator: Family and Faith program, e.g., prayer experiences, visiting playgroups, social outreach activities in the wider parish community.
6. Where possible, Principals and Parish Priests should collaborate in the planning of welcome, orientation and induction programs for the parish primary school. For secondary colleges, Priests from feeder schools should be invited to orientation, induction, and meeting opportunities for new families. Secondary schools should also consult Priests for their input prior to organising key events.

PASTORAL CARE

## **3.1 Pastoral Care of Families**

### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. The wellbeing and pastoral care of families within the school community is the joint responsibility of the Parish Priest and Principal.
2. Parish Priests have a particular responsibility to develop a pastoral vision and plan for the entire parish community. Schools, in collaboration with the Parish Priest, are to develop strategies that will actively support the parish community.
3. The opportunity to offer pastoral care and support to individual families in times of need allows a parish/school community to put faith into action. Where appropriate, sensitive dialogue between Parish Priests and Principals is central to an effective pastoral response.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. Both Parish Priests and Principals regularly share and update each other on the pastoral care and outreach resources and strategies that are available in each community, e.g., counselling services, Catholic Care.
2. Principals inform the Parish Priest of the nature and scope of the Catholic Education Foundation to raise awareness of the support available to financially disadvantaged Catholic families to access Catholic schools.
3. The Critical Incident Plan for each school is to be shared with the parish. In particular, the plan should specify who is to be notified of critical incidents and the implementation of regular practice drills for shared sites.
4. When appropriate, the school should advise the parish of any serious incident, illness or bereavement in the community.
5. The school informs the parish of any significant special needs of students, e.g., wheelchair access, extreme behaviour.

## **3.2 Enrolment Processes**

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### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. The mission of the Catholic Church is to evangelise and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all nations. The Catholic school “participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out (Canon 781). In this way Catholic schools are at once places of evangelisation, of complete formation, of inculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds.” *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*.
2. The Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy (approved by the Archbishop and the SCS Board), is the seminal document that underpins the enrolment process for all Sydney Catholic Schools. While other Christian denominations and religious traditions are included, the priority for enrolment is given to Catholic families.
3. Enrolment procedures require close collaboration between the parish and school.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. In accordance with the SCS Enrolment Policy, all schools should have an Enrolment Committee comprised of members of the Leadership Team and, where possible, the Parish Priest, or his delegate, that meets and interviews prospective families as part of the enrolment process. Local circumstance will determine how interviews are conducted.
2. SCS have developed a Standardised Enrolment Reference form for Parish Priests (especially for secondary colleges). These forms ask applicants to provide information about their child's reception of the sacraments and involvement in their parish community. Parish Priests are requested to validate the information given on the form and return it to the school office.

## SECTION 4.0

### HUMAN RESOURCES

## 4.1 Staff Spiritual Formation



### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Staff spiritual formation aims to arouse and animate true hunger for union with the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit; growing daily in love of God and neighbour, in both life and ministry.
2. The deep and ongoing formation of all Catholic school staff is central to the milieu and effectiveness of the school community and the capacity of staff to contribute to the shared mission.
3. The spiritual formation of staff requires sustained and purposeful collaboration at all levels: Principals, Parish Priests, schools, parishes, SCS and the Archdiocese.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. In accordance with the SCS Faith Formation Framework, all schools, in consultation with the Parish Priest and the SCS Faith Formation Team, develop and implement a coherent and systematic three-year faith formation plan for all staff.
2. Parish Priests are to be actively involved in the implementation of the three-year faith formation plan. For example:
  - affirming the importance of 'formation' to the vocation of teaching.
  - contributing to or facilitating a staff spirituality day.
  - providing access to the sacraments, especially Eucharist and Reconciliation.
  - providing regular opportunities for a range of individual and communal prayer experiences.
  - promoting a culture of shared ministry, where staff are encouraged to be engaged, actively contributing to the faith community.
3. To support staff commitment to the Catholic faith, Parish Priests are invited to make themselves available pastorally, if requested by individual staff members.

HUMAN RESOURCES

## **4.2 Recruitment and Selection of Staff**

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### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. The legal entity for Sydney Catholic Schools Limited (SCS) is the employer of all staff. The Board of SCS has delegated the role and responsibilities of acting as the employer on their behalf to the Executive Director of Schools. Senior leadership positions such as Principal, Assistant Principal, REC, and other specialist roles, including Family Educators and Business Managers, are coordinated and appointed by the SCS office on behalf of the Executive Director. Principals are formally delegated to coordinate and appoint all other staff members.
2. Recruitment and selection processes must be merit based and non-discriminatory in accord with SCS policy frameworks e.g. Accreditation and Staff Recruitment.
3. By virtue of their canonical responsibilities, Parish Priests have a key role in staff selection processes, especially with respect to leadership positions and teachers of Religious Education.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. Selection panels for school-based senior leadership positions (i.e. Principal, Assistant Principal & REC), are to involve the Parish Priest. Where practicable, the Parish Priest is also to be involved in, or consulted with, respect to the shortlisting process.
2. Recognising the intensive time demands of the selection process in primary schools, the Parish Priest and the Principal develop mutually agreed protocols with regard to the degree of involvement of the Priest. Parish Priests should be encouraged to be on panels for the appointment of coordinators and full-time permanent classroom teachers who teach Religious Education. Involvement in other appointments will be handled by the school Leadership Team and, where appropriate, in consultation with the Parish Priest.
3. The sheer scope and diversity of recruitment makes it difficult for local Priests to be involved in school-based appointments in secondary schools. However, it is highly recommended that the Priest/s designated to a school be invited onto panels for the selection of members of the college executive, and coordinator roles explicitly involved with the school's Catholic identity and mission, e.g. Assistant REC, Youth Ministers, Social Justice Coordinator.
4. It is acknowledged that the professionalism of staff in their understanding of curriculum and pedagogy should not be underestimated when discerning the appropriate candidate.
5. References:
  - Using the SCS reference template, applicants are expected to obtain a reference from their local Parish Priest. They will ask their Parish Priest to validate the nature and length of their parish involvement. The Parish Priest will then submit the reference to the SCS Human Resources Officer.
  - Parish Priest references have a currency of three years, and will inform the accreditation process to teach religious education in a Catholic school.
  - Principals and SCS staff have an obligation to check that the Parish Priest reference form is completed before offering any permanent or ongoing appointment to teachers of RE.

## SECTION 5.0

### PARISH SCHOOL FACILITIES AND PLANNING

## 5.1 Capital Works Projects

### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. As the canonical steward of the parish site, the Parish Priest is to be consulted and approve all capital works proposed at a school.
2. Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS), supported by funding from parents, government and the school community, proposes all capital works projects and underwrites any loans taken out to fund the project.
3. Both the parish and SCS need to follow and adhere to Archdiocesan protocols with respect to the approval of projects. Most major projects will require an Extraordinary Act of Administration signed by the Archbishop.
4. Commonwealth, state and local government legislation and regulations are to be understood and observed, e.g. parish schools receiving Government building grants must use the facilities for educational purposes for a minimum twenty year period.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. SCS representatives brief the Parish Priest and the Principal with respect to the various processes associated with a capital works project.
2. In accordance with the SCS Capital Works Gateway process, both the Parish Priest and Principal must '*sign-off*' for the project to proceed to the next stage of planning, e.g. Project Brief, Master Planning, Development Application (DA), Tender Process.
3. Prior to commencing a project, a Project Brief is jointly formulated by the parish and school community, taking into account the current and future needs of all parties.
4. The Principal and Parish Priest devise a mutually agreed communication plan, ensuring the Priest is informed of all major developments with respect to the capital works project, e.g. monthly e-mail during planning phases, fortnightly e-mail during construction.
5. During the construction phase, Parish Priests are invited to attend site meetings, especially key meetings where changes to the scope of the project may be discussed.



## SECTION 5.0

### PARISH SCHOOL FACILITIES AND PLANNING

## 5.2 Maintenance of School Facilities

### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. On behalf of the parish, the Parish Priest is the steward of all parish/school facilities. As part of the Licence Deed for use of the school premises, the Principal undertakes to maintain all school facilities in good order and condition.
2. Principals, supported by SCS, are responsible for developing a maintenance plan for the school.
3. Requests for major maintenance such as roof replacement, toilet upgrades, etc. are to be made annually via the SCS Maintenance Program.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. All submissions for significant maintenance projects should be discussed with and approved by the Parish Priest.
2. Principals ensure that the Parish Priest is advised of the timeline, especially commencement dates, of any major maintenance program so as to alleviate potential disruption to the parish community, such as parking spaces or construction sheds allocated to contractors.
3. Where maintenance programs could impact on parishioners or local residents, an explanatory letter is to be provided. This could be done via an insert in the parish newsletter or a letterbox drop.



## SECTION 5.0

### PARISH SCHOOL FACILITIES AND PLANNING

## 5.3 Access to School Premises

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#### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Schools are to ensure that Priests are made to feel welcome and included when on the school premises. Likewise, Principals and school staff are made welcome when visiting the parish centre.
2. Priests in their role as chaplains, are to be regarded as ex-officio staff members.
3. As the canonical authority responsible for the entire school site, Parish Priests are to have access to school premises. However, civil legislation and governance policies, with respect to Work Health and Safety (WHS) and Child Protection will dictate specific protocols and procedures at each school with respect to site access, especially during school hours.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. The Parish Priest and Principal mutually agree to protocols regarding access to parish and school facilities, with particular reference as to why certain protocols such as signing in at the front office are applicable in certain contexts.
2. Priests are to be supplied with school and/or parish identification badges so that they are easily recognisable to children and parents as an ex-officio staff member. In some schools, especially secondary colleges, it may be appropriate that the office reception hold the personal identification badges for Priests from the feeder parishes who support the school.
3. All staff, including support and administration personnel, are to be introduced to the local Priests to help facilitate their positive and timely entry to the school premises.
4. In consultation with the Parish Priest, it may be helpful for reception staff to have pictures of their local Priests on display.
5. It is acknowledged that there will be formal and informal visits to the school by the local Priest/s. In following mutually agreed protocols, Priests are always encouraged to visit classrooms and engage with parents and students at the school gate or on the playground.
6. As the steward of school facilities (especially primary sites), Priests are to have access to alarm codes, master keys for gates, halls and classrooms. This practice not only assists with the usage of shared facilities but allows access to the school for out-of-hours maintenance, security and emergencies. Emergency maintenance protocols are set out in the Parish School Licence Deed.

## PARISH SCHOOL FACILITIES AND PLANNING

### **5.4 Shared Facilities**

#### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. As the person responsible for the entire parish site, Parish Priests have historically and generously provided school communities with access to a range of parish assets that are now recognised as 'shared facilities'. These assets include halls and parking areas.
2. The availability and use of shared facilities provides a tangible sign to the wider community of the strong bond and partnership that exists between the parish and the school, and helps nurture a spirit of goodwill and cooperation.
3. Funding for the construction and maintenance of shared facilities has, and continues to be, derived from a variety of sources, including parishioner donations and government and school maintenance grants. Therefore, there must be a detailed mutual agreement (MOU) between a parish and school regarding the overall responsibility of coordinating the usage and maintenance of all shared facilities. Government regulations place strict requirements on the use of school funds, such that they can only be used for educational purposes.
4. If a shared facility such as the parish hall is commercially sub-licensed to a third party operator, e.g. Before and After School Care, as a general principle, the parish should be entitled to receive a fair market price financial return on the investment.
5. The operating costs of shared facilities, that is, maintenance, insurance, electrical, etc., should be negotiated and reflect the level of proportionate usage.
6. In the rare case when agreement cannot be reached, the Executive Director and the Vicar General will respectively provide support for Principals and Parish Priests through a process of mediation.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. The parish school site must be formally mapped to clearly identify shared facilities.
2. The licence between the parish and the school will outline:
  - the Terms and Conditions of usage of shared facilities, e.g. parking for funerals, access to parish hall, classroom use for sacramental preparation.
  - sharing of operating and maintenance costs.
  - responsibilities with respect to Workplace Health and Safety.
  - how the facilities will be shared between the parish and the school, including times and purposes.



## SECTION 6.0

### SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

## 6.1 Sydney Catholic Schools Board

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### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. The Board of Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS Trust Board) is the legal and canonical entity that has assumed full legal and civil governance responsibilities for all systemic Catholic schools and the Sydney Catholic Schools office.
2. Under the NSW Education Act, the SCS Trust Board is the proprietor for all systemic Catholic schools, and the employer of all staff, a responsibility that is operationally delegated to the Executive Director.
3. Board Directors are directly appointed by the Archbishop and bring a range of professional skill-sets and attributes to their governance responsibilities. All Board Directors undertake a comprehensive induction and formation program, particularly with respect to understanding and balancing their canonical and civil governance functions.
4. Under State and Commonwealth Education Acts, the SCS Trust Board must ensure that all government funding and private income, i.e. school fees, building levies, are spent solely for the purposes of education.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. The SCS Trust Board is chaired by a Diocesan Bishop, and currently includes the Vicar for Education, and the Vicar-General.
2. The SCS Trust Board currently has three sub-committees: Catholic Identity and Mission, Teaching and Learning, and Audit and Risk. Members of the clergy and Religious Institutes are appointed to the Catholic Identity and Mission committee.
3. The SCS Trust Board, with the approval of the Archbishop, appoints the Executive Director.
4. The Executive Director and the SCS Leadership Team is delegated to operationally manage the system of schools.
5. The SCS Trust Board, through the SCS Governance and Policy team, will develop a communication strategy to all key stakeholders, highlighting major strategic decisions and policy developments. In particular, Parish Priests will regularly receive a SCS Board Report, along with the SCS Annual Report.
6. Parish Priests are encouraged to take an interest in the work of the SCS Trust Board and actively engage with the clergy representatives on the Board on issues of mutual interest.
7. As with other key stakeholders, Parish Priests are encouraged to raise issues of concern with the most appropriate personnel in SCS, in a sequential fashion, e.g. Principal, School Consultant, Regional or Central Director, Executive Director, in order to facilitate constructive dialogue and the timely resolution of issues of concern. However, in the event of serious concerns or significant issues with respect to system policies and governance, pastors may wish to liaise directly with the Board Chair or the Vicar for Education.
8. To assist the school /parish partnership, Parish Priests are welcome to attend the regular Governance Workshops conducted by Sydney Catholic Schools as part of its mandatory obligation under the NSW Education Act (1990). Alternatively, the clergy representatives on the SCS Trust Board may invite the SCS Governance and Policy Team to deliver a customised governance workshop.

SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

## **6.2 Executive Director's Office (EDO)**

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### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. The Executive Director (ED) is appointed to oversee and manage all aspects of the operation of Sydney Catholic Schools. Through direct delegation from the Archbishop and the Board, the Executive Director assumes a comprehensive range of leadership roles and legal responsibilities.
2. A key dimension of the ED's role is to establish and maintain authentic partnerships between Parish Priests and the SCS office.
3. The Executive Director's Office (EDO) is structured to support the SCS Board in exercising its canonical and civil governance roles, and to maintain strong lines of consultation and communication with key stakeholders, particularly Parish Priests.

### **KEY STRATEGIES**

1. The EDO is comprised of four key sub-sections:
  - a. Governance and Policy – Direct support to SCS Board, policy development, governance formation, audit and risk processes;
  - b. System Improvement – Strategic Planning, school and system improvement processes and reviews, implementation of the Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools;
  - c. Corporate Services – Management of SCS offices, major event planning and liaison with clergy;
  - d. Executive Director's office – Direct support to Executive Director, appointments and key engagements.

## KEY STRATEGIES Cont...

2. The EDO will undertake to develop a communication strategy for Parish Priests notably via:
  - a. A concise, regular Governance report from the SCS Board and the SCS Leadership Team on major system decisions and policy initiatives;
  - b. A 'termly' newsletter highlighting key events, dates and information.
  - c. Invitations to major events, e.g. Regional Masses.
3. When appropriate, the EDO will coordinate with the Chancery, whole of system 'consultation' processes around key strategic planning and policy issues. Strategies may include:
  - Annual Archbishop's Pastor/Principal Day;
  - The ED presenting/consulting at the Clergy Conference;
  - Senior SCS personnel attending Deanery meetings;
  - Combined Clergy/SCS working parties.
4. In association with the Chancery, SCS will develop programs for the induction into the operation of Catholic schools for:
  - Newly appointed Parish Priests;
  - Newly appointed clergy;
  - Seminarians.
5. Upon request, the Executive Director would welcome invitations from the clergy to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern, notably by:
  - Attendance at a deanery meeting;
  - Personal appointment or phone call.
  - A meeting during the course of scheduled school visits.

The ED can be contacted by:

Phone: (02) 9568 8201

E-mail: [executive.director@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:executive.director@syd.catholic.edu.au)

6. The Executive Director works in close collaboration with the Archdiocesan Chancery and liaises at a number of levels:
  - Monthly meeting with the Archbishop.
  - Monthly meeting with the Board Chair.
    - o Invitations to Curia discussions with respect to future planning and key evangelisation strategies.
  - Inter-agency liaison and co-operation.
  - Ad hoc meetings and working parties.
  - Regular liaison with the Vicar for Education, and Auxiliary Bishops.

SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

## **6.3 Religious Education and Evangelisation Directorate**

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### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

1. The Director of Religious Education and Evangelisation (RE&E) is responsible for articulating, implementing and providing strategic leadership to the vision and mission of Sydney Catholic Schools. Central to this, the Director nurtures a system-wide culture of engagement with and in the life of the Church.
2. The RE&E Directorate provides effective and sustainable Catholic leadership and responds to the needs of the system's key stakeholders: students and their families, staff and school communities, parishes and the wider Church. The RE&E Directorate works closely with other SCS teams in taking forward system priorities.
3. The RE&E Directorate collaborates extensively with the Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishops and the Priests of the Archdiocese, to support them in their ministry and to develop strategies to strengthen the partnership between parishes and schools.
4. The SCS Board, supported by the Catholic Identity and Mission Committee, has a clearly articulated mandate from the Archbishop, to oversee the ongoing development, support and critical evaluation of Catholic Identity and Mission programs across the Archdiocese, particularly in the context of the Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. The work of the RE&E Directorate is taken forward by five sub-teams:
  - Religious Education: Curriculum development, RE assessment, Resource development, and the support of RECs and RE teachers;
  - Accreditation and leadership development: Maintenance of the To Work, Teach and Lead policy, leadership development programs, REC appointment processes and the support of teachers and school leaders undertaking further study;
  - Staff faith formation: school based three year faith formation plans, mentoring programs, retreats, immersions and pilgrimages;
  - Youth Ministry: The support of school-based Youth Ministry Coordinators, Archdiocesan Youth Ministry pilot project, World Youth Day and the Australian Catholic Youth Festival, the Pope Francis Award and local and Archdiocesan youth forums and gatherings;
  - Family and Faith: Family Educator program.
2. SCS gives priority to consultation and communication with Archdiocesan clergy and Chancery personnel. Examples include:
  - Regular scheduled meetings with the Archbishop;
  - Regular meetings with the regional Bishops and the Vicar for Education;
  - Active engagement with the Deans and attendance at Deanery meetings, upon request;
  - Regular meetings of Priests, Principals and RECs;
  - Membership of key Archdiocesan committees and working parties;
  - Inclusion of Archdiocesan clergy on the SCS Identity and Mission Committee;
  - Inclusion of clergy on key SCS working parties;
  - Quarterly publication of 'Clergy news'.
3. Parish Priests are engaged in a range of faith formation and religious leadership opportunities for staff. Examples include:
  - Chaplains for pilgrimages and immersion programs;
  - Leading, or contributing to, retreat experiences;
  - Presenting at religious leadership programs, e.g. PEARL, Growing in Faith and meetings;
  - Leading a range of communal liturgical and prayer experiences.

## KEY STRATEGIES Cont...

4. Parish Priests are engaged in the planning and implementation of a range of youth ministry initiatives. Examples include:
  - World Youth Day
  - Australian Catholic Youth Festival
  - Regional and Archdiocesan Evangelisation Days and Youth Forums
  - The Pope Francis Award
  - Social Justice days
  - Programs of Christian Initiation
5. The RE&E Directorate supports the formation of prospective clergy through the Seminarians in Schools program.
6. The RE&E Directorate supports the strengthening of individual parish ministries through the co-facilitation of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion training program for senior students and the student catechist program.
7. The RE&E Directorate works closely with senior clergy to address issues of concern and develop advice for the SCS communities on various sensitive moral, social and ethical issues, e.g. human sexuality, gender dysphoria and euthanasia.
8. When required, the RE&E Directorate works closely with the Teaching and Learning Directorate in relation to the roll-out of new curriculum documents to provide advice and guidance to ensure that teaching and learning programs are able to be taught from a Catholic perspective.
9. Whilst the overall process for recruiting staff in Catholic schools, especially at a leadership level, rests with the Human Resources Directorate, the Director of RE&E has delegated responsibility to oversee and approve the appointment of RECs to systemic schools. Similarly, the RE&E team monitors the accreditation status of RE teachers (Category D) and senior leaders (Category E), and co-ordinates the appointment of Family Educators and Youth Ministry Coordinators. Parish Priests play an important role in the appointment of all RECs, Family Educators, Youth Ministry Coordinators and teachers of Religious Education.



SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

## **6.4 System Stewardship Directorate**

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### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

- 1.** The role of the Director of System Stewardship is to provide leadership, guidance and appropriate accountabilities for all the assets and resources of system schools. The Director provides reporting to, and maintains relationships with government regulators and education commissions both at national and state levels. The System Stewardship Directorate is responsible for financial management, reporting and compliance, planning and capital works, and information and communication technology.
- 2.** The SCS Board, supported by an Audit and Risk committee, has particular responsibility for overseeing the Canonical stewardship of the assets of a major Archdiocesan agency. SCS also reports regularly to the Archdiocesan Finance and Property committee.
- 3.** SCS recognises the canonical role of each Parish Priest in their stewardship of parish assets. The licensing of school facilities to the SCS Trust requires SCS personnel to work in close partnership with Parish Priests to ensure school assets are maintained and enhanced in an effective and collaborative manner.
- 4.** Parish communities actively support the mission of Catholic education through the provision, by a licence arrangement, of school land and facilities that had been purchased and built through the generosity of parishioners over many generations.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. The System Stewardship Directorate is composed of nine key sub-teams:
  - School Financial Shared Services
    - o School admin support
    - o Accounts payable
    - o School fee liaison
    - o School bursaries (Catholic Education Foundation)
  - School Financial Accounting and Reporting
  - School Financial Planning and Analysis
  - Census, Staffing and Visas
  - ONCE Project Team
  - Purchasing Team
  - Information and Communication Technologies and ICT Support.
  - Planning and Facilities
  - Sydney Catholic Early Childhood Services
2. The System Stewardship Directorate, on behalf of the Catholic Education Foundation, provides a range of bursaries to low income, indigenous and refugee families, so as to ensure no Catholic family with a genuine financial or pastoral need is denied the opportunity for a Catholic education. Parish Priests are encouraged to refer any potentially disadvantaged family to their local school Principal for information and application forms for the Foundation.
3. The Parish Priest, as the proprietor of the parish site, has the ultimate responsibility to formally approve any refurbishment or building projects on the school site. The Planning and Capital Works team has developed a number of planning 'gateways', or stages of development, that require the formal approval and signature of the Parish Priest prior to any development applications or building occurring on the site.
4. From the outset of a proposed building project, a representative of SCS will convene a meeting with both the Parish Priest and the Principal to discuss their vision for the project and to brief them thoroughly on the planning stages 'gateways', the proposed budget and the potential timeline for the project.

## KEY STRATEGIES Cont...

5. From time to time, SCS may have the opportunity to purchase additional land in proximity to the current parish school. Where feasible, a Planning and Facilities officer will liaise with the parish about potential land acquisitions. Land purchased directly by educational funds would be recorded in the Archdiocesan register as an asset of the SCS Trust.
6. Close liaison occurs between key Chancery officials and committees and senior System Stewardship personnel. Notably, SCS representatives meet with, or are members of, the following Archdiocesan committees and boards:
  - Archdiocesan Finance Council
  - Archdiocesan Property Committee
  - Archdiocesan Investment Committee
  - Catholic Development Fund
  - Archdiocesan working parties
7. The Director of System Stewardship, along with other key senior staff, e.g Chief Financial Officer, Head of Planning and Facilities, can liaise directly with Parish Priests upon request. Opportunities for consultation could include:
  - Scheduled site meetings
  - Meetings during regular school visits
  - Deanery meetings, upon request
  - Individual appointments or teleconferences



## **6.5 Human Resources Directorate**

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### **KEY UNDERSTANDINGS**

- 1.** The Director of Human Resources is appointed to develop, implement and oversee a complex array of legal, compliance and human resource management processes. In this respect, the HR Director, under the delegated authority of the Executive Director, deals directly with a number of highly sensitive pastoral and legal matters on behalf of SCS.
- 2.** The HR Director provides policy guidance and direct support to school Principals and regional offices in the management of HR issues. Generally, it is the responsibility of the Principal or the Regional Consultant to keep their local Parish Priest appraised of significant and emerging issues, however, on occasion, circumstances may dictate the need for senior HR personnel to liaise directly with a Parish Priest.
- 3.** Parish Priests, in exercising both their canonical and pastoral care responsibilities, should be advised of any highly significant pastoral issue or critical incident in a timely manner. However, on some occasions, the need for the appropriate levels of confidentiality and/or an ongoing investigation may restrict the capacity of HR personnel to brief pastors until a later date.
- 4.** The HR team is responsible for developing a range of policies that reflect not only human resource management 'best practice', but are also articulate the values and expectations of a Catholic employer and our key stakeholders, notably our Parish Priests.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. The Human Resources Directorate is comprised of five key sub-teams:
  - Employment Services
  - People and Culture
  - Legal, Staff Wellbeing and Professional Services
  - PHRIS Support
  - Marketing and Communications
2. All significant HR policies that may require the direct, e.g. selection and recruitment, or indirect e.g. Workplace safety, involvement of a Parish Priest, are thoroughly reviewed by the SCS Leadership Team and the SCS Board to discern how and when a pastor should be involved in the policy process. Where the direct involvement of a Parish Priest is seen as essential, the HR Director will facilitate appropriate levels of consultation with key clergy representatives, either at a Chancery or Deanery level.
3. The safety and welfare of all students and staff will always be a priority for SCS. The HR team has overarching responsibility for coordinating a response to any critical incident and ensuring the appropriate communication channels are established and adhered to, especially with respect to keeping Parish Priests informed.
4. SCS, in association with the Chancery, has developed a comprehensive suite of Child Protection policies and protocols. Senior HR personnel liaise directly with the Chancery on the management of any significant Child Protection issue. The confidentiality requirements, with respect to allegations and subsequent investigations, may preclude the sharing of information with the parish and school communities, until authorised by the appropriate authorities.
5. The legal team within the HR Directorate manages a range of contracts and other matters that may be subject to canonical approval at an Archdiocesan or parish level. In association with the Chancery, clear protocols and approval pathways have been established to ensure pastors are fully consulted on any legal matter that may affect the parish.



## SECTION 6.0

SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

### 6.6 Regional Offices

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#### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

1. The Regional Director is appointed to take particular pastoral and educational responsibility for all schools within a designated region i.e. Eastern, Inner Western Southern). In this respect, the regional office team is best placed to be the first and major point of contact and dialogue between parishes and the SCS office community.
2. Regional School Consultants are senior educators who are appointed to guide, mentor and support parish school communities. Hence the School Consultant is the key point of liaison between a Parish Priest and the SCS office.
3. A key focus of responsibility for a regional office, is to promote the Catholic Mission and Identity of each school. Consequently, the development of a strong, vibrant partnership with the local Parish Priest is vital for the sustainability of our Catholic Mission and Vision.

## KEY STRATEGIES

1. The Regional Director and/or School Consultants will regularly liaise with the Parish Priest of each community, notably via:
  - Pastor, Principal, REC Days;
  - Attendance at Deanery meetings;
  - Scheduled meetings during school reviews and performance appraisal processes;
  - Upon request by the pastor during regular school visits;
  - Personal appointments, when requested.
2. The direct involvement of clergy in a range of Human Resources processes that are coordinated by the regional office. For example:
  - School Inquiry and Review Process;
  - Appraisal of key leadership personnel i.e. Principal, Assistant Principal, REC;
  - Recruitment and selection processes for key leadership personnel;
  - The appointment of acting Leadership personnel;
  - The secondment of key personnel to another school community;
  - The management of significant staff performance issues;
  - The management of very significant and sensitive pastoral care and student welfare issues.
3. Regional personnel will consult with and brief pastors on system policies and processes that need to be followed with respect to a range of Human Resources issues, especially with regards to:
  - Setting mutually appropriate timelines for selection processes;
  - Discerning interest and availability to be involved in shortlisting processes for key leadership personnel;
  - Access to relevant information, especially referee reports, where applicable;
  - The nature of the panel process, particularly with respect to discerning a consensus for a preferred candidate and making recommendations to the Executive Director for approval;
  - Employment, Child Protection and Anti-Discrimination legislation.
4. Regional offices play a critical role in managing complaint resolution processes from parents and community members. Pastors are requested to direct parents who approach them to the Regional SCS Complaints Intake Officer, who will highlight the appropriate steps that should be followed for school-related issues. In the case of a very significant or serious complaint, pastors may wish to directly alert the Regional Consultant or Regional Director of the matter, without either of these people necessarily adopting a mediating role.

KEY STRATEGIES Cont...

5. Regional offices are grateful for the presence and support of Parish Priests at a number of key liturgical and faith formation events. In particular, the parish-school partnership is strengthened by the involvement of Priests in:
- Annual Regional Masses
  - Pastor, Principal, REC days
  - Celebrating liturgies at key regional meetings
  - Leading retreat experiences for regional leaders
  - Celebrating major school anniversaries and feast days.

6. Contact Points

The Regional Director and School Consultants will provide Parish Priests with their personal contact details, upon request. Often, however, these senior personnel are involved in a range of duties and meetings that may preclude them from responding to a phone call or email immediately. For urgent matters, Parish Priests are encouraged to ring the regional office and highlight the nature of their request, so that the matter can be registered and attended to in a timely manner.

Southern Region Office:	9772 7000
Eastern Region Office:	8344 3000
Inner Western Region Office:	9643 3600





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