



# LEADERSHIP IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE



## Acknowledgments

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## FOREWORD

This resource, *Leadership in Catholic Schools: Development Framework and Standards of Practice* (the *Framework*), has been developed by the Catholic Education Offices of Melbourne and Sale in partnership with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). It has been endorsed by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) as a valuable resource for leadership development in Catholic primary and secondary schools across Victoria.

*The Framework* emphasises the connections between the work of leaders and the core functions of schooling. It draws these connections in the context of the values and beliefs of the Catholic Church and the mission of Catholic schools in their communities.

The *Framework* has been developed with two main purposes in mind. The first is to guide the professional learning and development of aspiring leaders and to encourage teachers to consider movement into leadership positions. The second is to unite Catholic schools around a vision of agreed leadership practices for leaders – ‘the standards’ – and to provide a foundation for formalised assessment against these practices.

The *Framework* sets out to cultivate the leadership potential that exists within the system. Exercising leadership in a school setting primarily entails mobilising and energising others, with the aim of improving teaching and learning. However, leaders at all levels must first of all take responsibility for their own leadership development. When there is confidence in this area then they are charged with supporting the leadership development of others. The *Framework* enables all teachers to engage in critical self-reflection and self-development as a first step in this process.

Effective school principals support their staff in their professional learning and in their growth in leadership capacity. They provide teachers with stepping-stones from the classroom to wider professional responsibilities and eventually, perhaps, to school principalship. The *Framework* aims to provide school leaders and teachers with examples of areas of school life where teachers may lead and manage change.

Schools are encouraged to think creatively about the potential of the *Framework* in their contexts and to develop plans for its implementation. This may include its use as a guide for the development of individual leadership plans by teachers, as a reference point in Annual Review meetings, or as a reflection tool for school leadership teams.

The CECV is pleased to publish this document and gratefully acknowledges the funding received from the Australian Government through its Quality Teacher Programme. The CECV is grateful to the research partners Dr Lawrence Ingvarson and Dr Elizabeth Kleinhenz of the Australian Council for Educational Research. Finally, the CECV extends its appreciation to the principals and teachers who have been involved in the development and trialling stages of this project.

I commend this publication to you.



SUSAN PASCOE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION OF VICTORIA

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Leadership in Catholic Schools: Development Framework and Standards of Practice* (henceforth the *Framework*) has been endorsed by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. The initiative, funded by the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme, was developed by the Catholic Education Offices in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Diocese of Sale, in partnership with the Australian Council of Education Research (ACER).

The development of the *Framework* was influenced by two major trends that have gathered momentum in a number of countries, including Australia, over the last ten to fifteen years. The first was the growing recognition that new kinds of school leadership, centred on successful student learning, are now needed in schools; the second was the movement towards standards-based professional development and accountability, an 'agenda' that has now become strong in education as in other professions.

The initiative took place in a context where leadership succession has been identified as a major issue in education. The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria believes that a system wide leadership framework can be instrumental in supporting aspirants to leadership in Catholic schools. This approach is supported by Duignan (2003:56) who points out that a process of developmental profiling of potential leaders in a school, against a previously validated leadership framework, can constitute a long-term, comprehensive and systematic approach to leadership succession planning.

In the early stages of the initiative a search of the literature showed that, over the past decade, many sets of standards had been developed, nationally and internationally, for principals and for people who occupied formal leadership in schools, such as deputy principals, religious education co-ordinators and subject department heads. Yet, it was clear that many teachers who did not hold such positions also exercised leadership in schools. Indeed, effective schools were characterised by the capacity and willingness of teachers to initiate leadership activity.

One important aim, therefore, was to develop a leadership development framework that recognised any teacher who was exercising educational leadership, regardless of whether that person occupied a formal leadership role or position in a school. The main target group for this framework, however, was those practising teachers who aspired to leadership roles in schools.

The concept of standards in the *Framework* is primarily focused on uniting Catholic schools around a vision of agreed leadership practices for leaders. At the same time the standards can be used as a 'road map' to guide the professional learning and development of aspiring leaders, as well as a foundation for formalised assessment that recognises teacher performance in the agreed areas of leadership practice.

A strength of this initiative has been its strong focus on educational leadership as distinct from leadership for management, or administrative leadership. This focus is in line with current views about leadership that emphasise connections between the work of leaders and the core functions of schooling. A further strength is its emphasis on encouraging teacher leadership. This research emphasises that leadership is best understood as a feature of organisations rather than a characteristic of individuals. The *Framework* strives to draw these connections in the context of the values and beliefs of the Catholic Church, and the role and mission of Catholic schools in their communities.

# OVERVIEW

## Statement of purpose

The *Leadership in Catholic Schools: Development Framework and Standards of Practice* aims to:

- describe the complex work of leaders in Catholic schools
- support the work of leaders and aspiring leaders
- provide teachers with a professional learning guide as they work towards formal leadership positions
- form a basis for a system of assessment against the standards.

The standards described within the *Framework* set out to capture a distinct set of agreed leadership practices for leaders in Catholic schools.

While the standards identify what could potentially be measured they do not set out to identify actual measures of levels of performance. The *Framework*, however, enables the future development of formalised assessment procedures that will recognise teacher performance in the agreed areas of leadership practice.

The concept of leadership is not viewed as being either conferred or bound by role, but as being accessible to any individual within a school. Accordingly, the *Framework* is not role specific and is not tied to positions of responsibility. It is not a job description. While in practice it is likely that more experienced teachers and teachers who already occupy leadership positions would find it easier to demonstrate evidence of leadership practices, the *Framework* is accessible to all who have aspirations towards leading others in informal as well as formal ways.

Effective school principals provide many opportunities for teachers to take up leadership roles and to learn from the experience. They provide their staff with stepping-stones from the classroom to wider professional responsibilities and eventually, perhaps, to school principalship. The *Framework* aims to provide school leaders and teachers with examples of areas of school life where teachers may lead and manage change.

## Overarching context

The *Framework* operates within the overarching context of the Catholic school as the lynchpin of Catholic education. The Catholic school is a place of integral education of the human person. Its clear purpose is to meet the educational and spiritual needs of individual students, to develop in them the Christian identity of which Christ is the foundation.

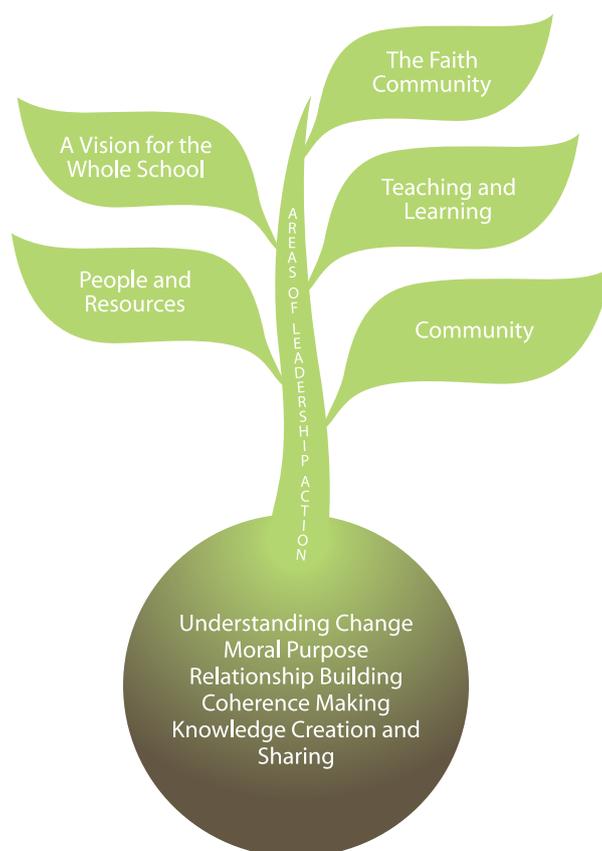
Catholic schools believe that the values taught and practised by Jesus Christ – love, justice, freedom, compassion, hope and forgiveness – inform and enrich every aspect of school life.

## Organisation of the *Framework*

The *Framework* has two facets:

1. A guiding conception of leadership
2. Areas of leadership action

The main aspects of knowledge, and the dispositions that inform the actions of school leaders, are identified. Importantly, at the centre of this framework are the five 'guiding conceptions' of leadership drawn from the work of Richard Elmore (2000) and Michael Fullan (2000, 2004). These should infuse every leadership action within every category. The Framework diagram encapsulates the relationship between the guiding conceptions of leadership and the areas of leadership action.



*Framework Diagram (Fraynetwork Multimedia 2005)*

The purpose of the **guiding conceptions of leadership**, explained below in more detail, is to provide a definition of what leaders know, believe and do. The guiding image of leadership in this framework is one where teacher leaders mobilise colleagues around concerted efforts over time to improve learning opportunities for students. These efforts might include a diverse range of strategies and projects such as leading and managing change, building professional learning teams, collegial inquiry or action research, coaching and mentoring, case methods and collaborative examination of student work.

The **areas of leadership** action are also elaborated on below. They provide a map of those areas of school life where leaders can initiate efforts to improve school functioning and student learning opportunities.

Most standards for leaders in schools are written with a particular position in mind – usually that of principal. Typically, they describe ‘competencies’ or actions that a ‘good’ leader ‘ought’ to be able to perform. These are grouped into categories, such as ‘promoting professional accountability’, ‘managing the organisation’ and ‘managing teaching and learning.’

This *Framework* similarly sets out leadership actions that are grouped within five categories or areas of school functioning: **The Faith Community; A Vision for the Whole School; Teaching and Learning; People and Resources;** and **Community**. These are not categories of leadership, nor are they aspects of a position. They are simply areas of school life within which leadership is typically exercised. For clarity and convenience the ‘areas’ are further divided into ‘components’, for each of which a description is provided, and the leadership actions are grouped within the components of each area.

## Guiding conceptions of leadership

The actions of a leader in a Catholic school are guided by religious, professional and ethical principles and purposes. Leadership is not confined to management roles; any individual may demonstrate leadership. Effective schools foster leadership initiatives from all members of the professional community.

Exercising leadership in a school setting primarily entails mobilising and energising others, with the aim of improving teaching and learning. Since improvement of a school’s performance frequently involves doing things differently from how they have been done in the past, such leadership often requires managing a process of change. A hallmark of leadership, therefore, is that it entails taking initiative, an attitude of ‘making it happen.’

However, leadership is not a matter of the heroic individual, the lone ranger, achieving momentous feats in the face of difficult odds. Instead, it reflects a collaborative relationship with colleagues.

The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilises people’s commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but above all it is collective mobilisation (Fullan 2001: 9).

Leadership may be exercised in various areas or domains of school life, such as ‘Teaching and Learning’, or ‘People and Resources’. Five of these areas and the actions that may be taken within them are described in the framework. But leadership also has its own features and principles that infuse the actions taken by leaders.

From the extensive literature on leadership, five key principles, taken mainly from the work of Richard Elmore (2000) and Michael Fullan (2001, 2004), have been selected to provide the guiding conceptions of leadership that thus inform the actions of leaders. They are:

1. **Having a clear purpose driven by ethical standards and an identified need.** School leaders are committed to students and their learning. By acting in response to a clearly identified need, with a clear moral purpose from the outset, leaders can accurately and perceptively reflect on the extent to which the original purpose was achieved.

2. **Building and maintaining relationships.** The leader is persuasive, convincing others to join in the effort. He/she exercises the interpersonal and facilitative skills of listening, joint problem-solving, honouring other people's ideas, and maintaining focus, but also knowing when to be decisive, to cut to the heart of something, to move the group forward to action.
3. **Understanding and managing the complexities of the change process, especially change in attitudes and teaching practices.** Leaders ensure participation in building a shared understanding of the purpose and nature of the change initiative. They realise the dangers of being over-zealous in promoting their own ideas; they recognise that resistance to change has the potential to be a source of useful information. Leaders understand that change leads at first to feelings of uncertainty and being deskilled; that things will often seem worse before the benefits of change become apparent. They make use of accurate data and feedback about the effectiveness of current practices in changing attitudes and the vital role that modelling and coaching play in learning how to implement new teaching practices.
4. **Creating and sharing knowledge.** Leaders seek, share and act upon relevant research. Leaders also create new knowledge through documenting and evaluating their own change efforts; they contribute to the school as a learning organisation. Leaders work toward an accountable professional culture based on shared professional standards, reflective dialogue about practice, collaboration and the de-privatisation of practice. They encourage colleagues to take up leadership roles.
5. **Ensuring coherence and alignment of structures.** Leaders ensure that change initiatives are aligned with existing school policies and programs. Change initiatives should not occur in a vacuum, layered on one another without coherence or connection with the culture and mission of the school. Not all change represents improvement, nor does every improvement require change. Frequently, improvement occurs when leaders motivate individuals to become more skilled and thoughtful regarding their work. Leaders establish structures that can be sustained over time, not swept away by the next popular reform.

These five principles should infuse leadership action in every area and component of the *Framework*.



Porch Hawkes

## Dispositions of leaders

Leaders frequently exhibit certain dispositions that serve to inspire and motivate others in their pursuit of improved student learning. These characteristics propel individuals forward in actions of leadership. They are to be observed in the actions taken by leaders. They include:

- risk-taking
- open-mindedness
- optimism
- confidence
- decisiveness
- reflectiveness
- enthusiasm
- perseverance
- respect
- courage
- integrity
- resilience
- empathy.



Ponch Hawkes

## What leaders need to know

School leaders require knowledge that is characterised by a capacity to:

- think creatively and build and communicate concepts that inform action
- understand, analyse, rationalise and defend a point of view
- draw connections between the practical knowledge of experience and research-based, theoretical knowledge
- share and create knowledge with colleagues.

They need a body of understandings that will inform their actions in all areas of the school's work. This includes knowledge of:

- the core beliefs, understandings, values and principles of Catholic education
- the contribution of Catholic education to society
- the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts of learning
- pedagogy and educational theory
- curriculum planning and development
- the links between curriculum and formative and summative assessment
- evidence-based processes to support improvement
- modern technologies, their use and impact
- change processes and management
- school governance at various levels
- policy creation, consultation and review
- use and management of resources
- environmental issues.

## How might the *Framework* be used?

The *Framework* was developed with two main purposes in mind. The first was to encourage classroom teachers to consider movement into leadership positions. Learning pathways from the classroom to school leadership are not always clearly marked and supported. Many teachers, who might make excellent school leaders may be reticent to move in that direction, perceiving the steps as too great. By providing a guiding conception of leadership and areas where leadership initiatives may be undertaken, these standards aim to provide teachers with a bridge from the classroom to school leadership. They also offer principals a guide to areas of school life where they can provide teachers with leadership opportunities.

Some suggested applications of this standards framework are:

- development of individual leadership plans by teachers aspiring to formal and informal leadership roles
- as a guide in annual review meetings
- as a reflection tool for school leadership teams
- as a guide for developing professional learning programs
- as a guide with school boards
- as a guide for cluster professional learning
- as a common framework between schools that work together.

While the standards provide direction for professional learning in leadership, they also present a foundation for a system for giving recognition or certification to teachers who can provide evidence that they have met the standards. In the pilot phase of developing this framework, teachers have been testing procedures for documenting and evaluating leadership initiatives that they have undertaken. Writing these accounts and reflecting on the experience has been an effective avenue for their professional learning. It has also provided the sector with some insights into the next stage of investigation which is concerned with judging the evidence against a standard of performance.



Porch Hawkes

## AREAS OF LEADERSHIP ACTION

The following sections of this document describe leadership actions in critical areas of school life and operations. As they perform these actions, leaders and aspiring leaders should be able to demonstrate the knowledge that underpins them, the dispositions of leadership, and, especially, the five identified guiding conceptions of leadership.



Photos: Ponch Hawkes



GUIDING CONCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP	LEADERSHIP ACTIONS IN THE FIVE KEY AREAS				
<p>The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilises people's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but above all it is collective mobilisation (Fullan 2001:9).</p> <p>The following features should be apparent in all of the actions of school leaders:</p>	<p><b>AREA 1 THE FAITH COMMUNITY</b></p>	<p><b>AREA 2 A VISION FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL</b></p>	<p><b>AREA 3 TEACHING AND LEARNING</b></p>	<p><b>AREA 4 PEOPLE AND RESOURCES</b></p>	<p><b>AREA 5 COMMUNITY</b></p>
<p>1 HAVING A CLEAR MORAL PURPOSE</p> <p>2 RELATIONSHIP BUILDING</p> <p>3 UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING CHANGE</p> <p>4 CREATING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>5 ENSURING COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT OF STRUCTURES</p>	<p>1.1 The Catholic identity of the school School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain and enhance the Catholic identity of the school.</p> <p>1.2 Education in life and faith School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain and enhance an education in faith, and opportunities for faith development.</p> <p>1.3 Celebration of life and faith School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain and enhance processes for reflection, prayer and liturgical celebration.</p> <p>1.4 Action and social justice School leaders actively and collaboratively uphold a commitment to social justice and action in the school and wider community.</p>	<p>2.1 A vision for teaching and learning School leaders actively and collaboratively develop and communicate a whole-school vision that is centred on the guidance and improvement of teaching and learning.</p> <p>2.2 A learning culture School leaders actively and collaboratively promote and build a culture that supports the school's vision for teaching and learning.</p> <p>2.3 Policy and program development School leaders plan, strategically and collaboratively, to develop policies and programs that support the school's vision for teaching and learning.</p> <p>2.4 Teacher professionalism School leaders actively and collaboratively build a culture that promotes teacher actions and teacher student relationships that are appropriate to the vision and mission of the Catholic school.</p>	<p>3.1 A focus on student learning outcomes School leaders actively and collaboratively advocate and ensure a teaching and learning focus on student learning outcomes.</p> <p>3.2 Curriculum and assessment School leaders actively and collaboratively develop curriculum and assessment policies and programs. They mobilise others to implement these policies.</p> <p>3.3 A safe and effective environment for teaching and learning School leaders actively and collaboratively cultivate and promote a safe and effective environment for teaching and learning.</p> <p>3.4 Quality teaching School leaders are expert teachers. They actively and collaboratively assist their colleagues to improve teaching practice.</p>	<p>4.1 Professional learning and development School leaders are learners who actively and collaboratively encourage and support the professional learning of their colleagues.</p> <p>4.2 Staff appraisal and performance review School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, support and participate in staff appraisal and performance review programs that aim to ensure accountability and improve teaching quality.</p> <p>4.3 Resources School leaders actively and collaboratively select and organise resources to promote student learning.</p> <p>4.4 Pastoral care School leaders actively and collaboratively promote and implement the school's pastoral care policies and programs.</p>	<p>5.1 Communication with families School leaders actively and collaboratively encourage and facilitate effective communication with families.</p> <p>5.2 Partnerships School leaders forge partnerships with individuals and groups who can have a positive impact on students' growth and learning.</p> <p>5.3 Service to the wider community School leaders emulate the model of Jesus Christ in providing service to the wider community.</p>

## Area 1 – The Faith Community

### Guiding conceptions for all leadership actions

*Having a clear moral purpose; building relationships; understanding and managing change; creating and sharing knowledge; ensuring coherence and alignment of structures*

The Catholic school is both a sign and an instrument of the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church. Catholic schools provide an integral education of the human person. Catholic schools enhance the human dignity of their students because the education they provide is based on a profound understanding of the Christian conception of human life. Catholic schools call upon young people to form values based upon a specifically Christian view of the world, which has Christ as its foundation. Through the critical dialogue with culture, Catholic schools provide an education in life and faith to all in the school community.

It is within the total experience of school life that students and staff engage in a search for meaning. In a classroom that is based upon sound educational principles, and directed towards the growth of the whole person, the general curriculum is a vehicle for the exploration of values, life, culture and faith within a Catholic framework. In specific ways, the Religious Education curriculum assists and promotes education in life and faith. Through this Religious Education curriculum, students deepen their understanding of the person of Jesus as conveyed in the Scriptures, explore the rich traditions of the Church, and are invited to participate in the prayer and liturgical life of the community.



Porch Hawkes

*Staff members providing leadership and guidance in planning the Religious Education curriculum.*

## 1.1 The Catholic identity of the school

### Description

Catholic schools share a specific, recognisable, Catholic identity that reflects the life, work and teachings of Jesus Christ and the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church.

The daily interactions among all members of the school community reflect belief in and commitment to the Catholic identity of the school.

In the daily life of the school, the community is called to live by the central values of faith, hope and love, and is especially aware of those in need.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain and enhance the Catholic identity of the school.** For example, they:

- Develop informed understanding of Church teaching and Catholic traditions, and communicate this understanding to others in the school community
- Hold and clearly articulate a Catholic faith point of view
- Promote knowledge of the rich traditions of the Catholic Church
- Initiate, develop and implement strategies to promote the Catholic identity of the school in the broader community
- Initiate and support programs that teach and reinforce Christian values.

## 1.2 Education in life and faith

### Description

An integral education of life and faith engages with the needs of all in the school community.

Teachers strive to understand the search for meaning in the lives of children and adolescents. They ensure that all teaching programs reflect Christian values.

The Religious Education program is of profound importance in assisting young people in the critical dialogue with culture as they search for meaning in their lives.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain and enhance an education in faith, and opportunities for faith development.** For example they:

- Ensure that education programs continue to reflect Christian values and principles based upon the dignity of the human person
- Initiate and facilitate programs that help teachers to understand the development of life and faith in young people and themselves
- Ensure that educative processes, e.g. assessment and reporting, contribute to the development of the whole person
- Support diocesan programs in religious education, in particular through the established curriculum and in such things as sacramental policies
- Support the work of those teaching religious education by, e.g. ensuring adequate resources and access to professional development
- Initiate and carry out reviews to ensure that education programs continue to reflect Christian values and principles.

### 1.3 Celebration of life and faith

#### Description

Prayer, reflection, and sacramental and liturgical celebrations are an integral part of the life of a Catholic school. They bring together the journey of life and faith in word, symbol and action.

These celebrations promote the development of shared understanding of Gospel values and Catholic traditions, and enhance the opportunities for staff and students to develop a personal relationship with God.

#### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain and enhance reflection, prayer and liturgical celebration in their schools.** For example, they:

- Ensure that the celebrations of life and faith are established as a regular component of school life
- Encourage others to identify and share the connections between culture and faith
- Support the sacramental policy and programs within the school
- Build capacity for prayer and reflection in themselves and others
- Explore and implement various approaches to prayer and ways of celebrating through liturgy and sacraments
- Are open to personal growth and the spiritual dimension
- Make active search for justice aimed at relieving the suffering of others
- Encourage others to develop and engage in prayer and liturgical and sacramental celebrations
- Involve parents and other individuals and groups in the community to contribute to the prayer, liturgical and sacramental life of the school.

### 1.4 Action and social justice

#### Description

The Catholic Church has strong concern for social justice. It engages in dialogue with civic authorities to promote its beliefs and values in accordance with the mission of Christ.

Through its various agencies, the Church plays an active role in seeking to establish and maintain a fair and just society that cares for all and protects its most vulnerable members.

Catholic schools assist the Church to actively promote a compassionate and just society. They build students' awareness of welfare and social justice issues in the community, and encourage them to action.

#### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively uphold a commitment to social justice and action in the school and wider community.** For example, they:

- Raise the school community's awareness of social justice issues and needs
- Promote scriptural understandings of social justice and action
- Model, and encourage school community members to participate in, appropriate social action
- Evaluate school policies, programs and structures in terms of their implications for social justice
- Build understanding and appreciation, in the school community, of Australia's multi-cultural identity, the process of Aboriginal reconciliation and the role of the Church role in ecumenical activities
- Encourage school community members to acknowledge the marginalised groups in our society, and work towards meeting with empathy the needs of these groups.

## Area 2 – Vision for the Whole School

### Guiding conceptions for all leadership actions

*Having a clear moral purpose; building relationships; understanding and managing change; creating and sharing knowledge; ensuring coherence and alignment of structures.*

The Catholic school is a place of integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation. Promoting successful student learning in Catholic schools is not only concerned with the life within individual classrooms; it is also the focus of those aspects of a school's life that extend across the whole school, or large groups (e.g. Middle Years), such as curriculum, assessment and aspects of student and staff welfare. In planning and organising at these broader levels, a sense of totality is vital; schools are more than the sum of their parts, they are more than classrooms united by a corridor. Rather, they are complex systems in which different individuals work together to collectively improve learning opportunities for all students. In this light, the school's role is one of both vision and detailed practice, to see both the whole, and each of the individual parts. School policies, programs and practices are developed and implemented to articulate and unify the various elements of a whole school vision.



*Staff members working together as part of a professional learning team to improve student outcomes.*

## 2.1 A vision for teaching and learning

### Description

A school's vision for learning is developed collaboratively and is understood and shared by all stakeholders. It is challenging, goal oriented, realistic, and strongly focused on the school's core purposes of educating students.

All decisions made about aspects of the school's work, including the professional learning of teachers, whole-school policies for curriculum and assessment, and staff and student welfare, are made in accordance with the school's vision for learning.

The school's vision for learning is clearly articulated and accessible to all. It is continually being monitored and developed to foster a climate of imaginative, yet realistic improvement.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively develop and communicate a shared whole-school vision that is centred on the guidance and improvement of teaching and learning.** For example they:

- Model the core beliefs of the school's vision for learning
- Raise colleagues' awareness of the need to develop the common understandings, goals and purposes that make up the school's vision for learning
- Mobilise colleagues to share and contribute to the school's vision for learning
- Contribute to the celebration and sharing of symbols, ceremonies, stories and activities that give meaning to the school's vision.

## 2.2 A rigorous and respectful learning culture

### Description

A culture of learning refers to the environment within a school, among students and staff. The Catholic school's central focus is on the development of the human person. Its core work is teaching and learning. The school culture is marked by respectful relationships among teachers and students, respect for learning, and commitment to social justice.

In a school characterised by a culture of learning, students accept responsibility for investing high-level energy in their work, and teachers are themselves learners who demonstrate a passion for student learning. In classrooms and across the whole school, support for high levels of student effort and achievement is apparent.

Additionally, a culture of learning is characterised by an environment of trust and safety. Therefore, an important responsibility of school leaders is to ensure that students and staff alike are certain that their ideas will be courteously received, and that 'errors' are recognised as opportunities for learning.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively promote and build a culture of learning that promotes teacher behaviour and teacher-student relationships that are respectful of effort and achievement.**

For example, they:

- Articulate and demonstrate consistently high expectations for learning and achievement
- Model exemplary teaching and learning practices
- Acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of individuals and teams
- Create opportunities for teachers to learn together
- Initiate strategies and processes to develop and improve a culture of learning in the school
- Promote and model values of fairness, respect and tolerance of individual and cultural differences
- Encourage risk-taking by both students and staff in seeking to improve the quality of student learning.

## 2.3 Policy and program development

### Description

The school's overall vision for learning is clearly spelled out and implemented in policies and programs that reflect shared beliefs and values.

School policy and program statements establish directions for the future, provide the basis for action and reflect what the school community currently believes, values and does in the respective policy areas. They are continually monitored to foster a climate of continuing improvement.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders plan strategically and collaboratively to develop policies and programs that support the school's vision for teaching and learning.** For example, they:

- Identify areas for improvement and involve others in monitoring and improving those areas
- Build the capacity of others to seek, critically assess and incorporate new ideas into existing policies and programs
- Ensure that programs reflect the school's vision and culture for learning
- Initiate processes and strategies for teachers and other school community members to share ideas about programs and develop whole-school approaches that promote the school's vision for learning.

## 2.4 Teacher professionalism

### Description

The school's vision, as an expression of the Catholic school, gives clear parameters for the professional behaviour of teachers.

School policies clearly state guidelines and procedures for the pastoral care and discipline of students, classroom management and the maintaining of a professional relationship with students, parents and colleagues.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively build a culture that promotes teacher behaviour that is at all times highly professional.** For example they:

- Respect the dignity and integrity of each person within the school community
- Model appropriate classroom management so as to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all students
- Ensure the confidentiality of information where appropriate
- Communicate with courtesy and respect with students, teachers colleagues and parents
- Model the professional relationship between students and teachers, and parents and teachers
- Dress in a manner that reflects the dignity of their teaching profession.

## Area 3 – Teaching and Learning

### Guiding conceptions for all leadership actions

*Having a clear moral purpose; building relationships; understanding and managing change; creating and sharing knowledge; ensuring coherence and alignment of structures.*

Teaching and learning programs in Catholic schools develop the student as a whole person. Providing opportunities for students to learn successfully, while ensuring their faith development, is the Raison d'être of Catholic schools. Learning is enhanced when teachers work within a positive culture that values learning and the human person, and when teachers have the skills to engage students, cater for their individual differences, and monitor progress towards identified learning outcomes.

Students in Catholic schools aspire towards the transcendent, the mystery or meaning of life, through knowledge gained in an education framework that supports such aspirations.



Ponch Hawkes

*Staff and students engaged in informal discussions.*

### 3.1 A focus on student learning outcomes

#### Description

A focus on outcomes refers first of all to clarity on the part of educators as to what is important in student learning. What are the learning goals or outcomes? And, following that, what would count as evidence of such learning? Secondly, a focus on outcomes refers to the manner in which educators collect, analyse, and report data in order to maximise student learning. They ask questions of the data, they recognise patterns in student results, and they use this information to improve the quality of learning.

Central to this component is an understanding of the importance of data, and the encouragement of a culture in the school that seeks evidence for action. Also critical is the role of collaboration in interpreting information, and in planning future steps.

#### Leadership Actions

**School leaders advocate and ensure a focus on student learning outcomes.** For example, they:

- Encourage and support colleagues to build their analytical skills, in order to make effective, collaborative use of student achievement data and confirm teaching practices
- Ensure that information about student learning is recent, relevant and valid, and shared among appropriate educators
- Ensure that there are appropriate processes to collect and store student achievement data, and follow students' progress over time
- Promote effective reporting practices that meet the needs of parents and other stakeholders
- Ensure that the school community regularly reviews reporting procedures.

### 3.2 Curriculum and assessment

#### Description

A school's curriculum expresses the expectations for student learning that are embodied in the school's learning objectives, policies, programs, and offerings. It translates the states' or systems' content standards into a sequenced series of statements about what and how students will learn through their school experiences.

The statements of what students will learn may include statements of procedural knowledge and conceptual understanding, communication and social skills, and aesthetics and ethics. A written-down curriculum need not, in other words, be narrow.

Assessments, formal and informal, summative and formative, should be aligned to the curriculum. They serve as the operational definition of the curriculum, and provide educators, parents and other stakeholders with evidence of the extent of student learning.

#### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively develop curriculum and assessment policies and programs. They mobilise others to implement these policies.** For example, they:

- Exhibit a high level knowledge of contemporary curriculum and assessment theory, structures and processes in their own teaching, and interactions with colleagues
- Initiate and support regular, collaborative processes for curriculum review and renewal
- Ensure that school curriculum and assessment policies and programs reflect the curriculum and assessment requirements of the Catholic education system in Victoria
- Ensure that assessment procedures are fair, valid, and consistent
- Initiate and support teaching programs and strategies for individual students and groups that are based on collaborative analyses of student achievement data.

### 3.3 A safe and effective environment for teaching and learning

#### Description

Innovation and improvement occur best in an environment of trust and safety. In other words, fear shuts people down. A safe and effective learning environment is physically comfortable, socially and emotionally supportive, well resourced and orderly.

In a safe and effective learning environment staff and students alike have high self-esteem; all are confident that their ideas will be received with respect, and that 'errors' will be regarded as opportunities for learning. Schools with safe and effective school environments have agreed procedures to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

#### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively cultivate and promote a safe and effective environment for teaching and learning.** For example, they:

- Ensure that teachers and students work, free from harassment and interference, in a safe, comfortable, well-resourced environment
- Promote and model values of fairness, respect and tolerance of individual and cultural differences
- Ensure a climate that encourages risk-taking by both students and staff, in seeking to improve the quality of student learning
- Celebrate student and teacher achievement.

### 3.4 Quality teaching

#### Description

Of all the factors in a school that contribute to student learning, the quality of teaching is the single most important. Therefore, a critical aspect of school leadership is to promote and sustain high quality teaching within the context of a focus on outcomes and high expectations.

The components of high quality teaching are many; from the knowledge teachers have of their subjects and their students and how they plan for lessons, to the sorts of environment they create in their classrooms, and the extent of student engagement achieved. Effective teachers possess a rich repertoire of teaching strategies and are keen to innovate.

#### Leadership Actions

**School leaders are expert teachers. They actively and collaboratively assist colleagues to improve teaching practice.** For example, they:

- Use team-building strategies to promote collaborative improvement in teaching and learning among colleagues
- Encourage and support staff to reflect on their teaching
- Initiate and facilitate opportunities for teachers to collaboratively analyse student work as evidence of their levels of understanding, and for indicating areas for improvement in teaching
- Stimulate and support colleagues to seek and critically evaluate new ideas and practices in teaching and learning and incorporate them into new and existing programs
- Model teaching strategies, advise colleagues, and provide useful feedback.

## Area 4 – People and Resources

### Guiding conceptions for all leadership actions

*Having a clear moral purpose; building relationships; understanding and managing change; creating and sharing knowledge; ensuring coherence and alignment of structures.*

Teachers are by far the most important resource for student learning in the school, and attention must be paid to their learning and other needs. Major features of a strong performance and development culture in a school are encouragement of professional growth and the provision of opportunities for teachers to contribute their own special talents to the general good. This entails that physical resources are available and deployed in ways that allow teachers and students to work in comfortable spaces where the materials that support learning are at hand. It also means the intelligent placement of support staff such as teacher-aides, and managing blocks of time in ways that allow sufficient time for teachers to plan, and students to engage in learning. The challenge for school leaders is to ensure that the school's arrangements for managing staff and resources are oriented towards enhanced teacher and student performance.



Porch Hawkes

*Staff using the Framework to guide discussion at an Annual Review meeting.*

## 4.1 Professional learning and development

### Description

Staff professional development ensures that schools are self-renewing organisations. It is through advancing practice, based on research findings, that teaching avoids becoming stale and frozen in time. The professional learning of individual teachers operates within, and contributes to, the school's vision for effective teaching and learning. Individual professional development plans should always be developed in this context, and supported by whole school activities.

Professional learning and development is much more than something teachers 'attend'. Some of the best professional learning occurs at the school, as teachers' plan together, discuss students' work and share classroom experiences.

Professional development is not only for teachers. Non-teaching staff, including senior administrators, also need access to programs and activities that will enable them to best perform their duties to support students' learning.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders are learners who encourage, acknowledge and support the professional learning and work of their colleagues and celebrate achievements.** For example, they:

- Build professional learning communities and a culture of professional inquiry
- Organise opportunities for teachers to share approaches and strategies to enhance student learning
- Organise professional development that meets the needs of staff and the needs of the school
- Create a climate for offering and accepting critical feedback among colleagues
- Organise mentor programs for teachers new to the school and to the profession
- Acknowledge and celebrate the work and learning achievements of colleagues.

## 4.2 Staff appraisal and performance review

### Description

All Catholic schools in Victoria now use formal and informal processes and strategies to appraise and review teacher performance. There are two main purposes for these efforts; first to support the learning of teachers and students and second, to ensure that the work of teachers meets school and system accountability requirements.

The challenge for school leaders in this area is to ensure that the procedures used maximise teachers' professional learning and provide opportunities for them to reflect on their practice.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, support and participate in staff appraisal and performance review programs that aim to ensure accountability, build a strong performance and development culture, and improve teaching quality.** For example, they:

- Encourage and help colleagues to engage in professional conversations and reflection on practice as part of appraisal / performance review processes
- Ensure that roles and responsibilities in these processes are clearly defined and understood by all stakeholders
- Ensure that colleagues have opportunities to ask questions and clarify ambiguities
- Provide colleagues with thoughtful and effective feedback about their performance, in accordance with school policies and programs.

### 4.3 Resources

#### Description

The securing and allocation of resources represents a critical area of school life in that the resources reflect school priorities and goals. Resources need to be fairly and equitably allocated to meet the needs of teachers and students. They need to be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to serve the purposes for which they were intended. Teachers and support staff need training in the use of some resources, especially those involving new technologies and their classroom applications. Time is an important resource that needs to be managed according to criteria of effectiveness in terms of meeting learning needs, as well as efficiency. It is critical that all educators are engaged in collaborative discussions regarding the optimal distribution of scarce resources.

#### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively select and organise resources to maximise student learning.** For example, they:

- Initiate and facilitate collaborative processes to develop resource priorities and ensure that the learning environment meets teaching and learning needs
- Are pro-active in seeking and gaining funding for resources
- Manage financial and other resources, including time, astutely, efficiently and effectively to meet teaching and learning needs
- Are fair, even-handed and consultative when making decisions about the distribution of financial and other resources, including time, among various groups and individuals in the school
- Monitor and review the range, quality and use of resources against outcomes, to assess impact on student learning and ensure continuing viability
- Initiate processes to train staff in the use of new resources, especially those involving new technologies
- Ensure that the content of printed, electronic and other resources used by teachers and students is morally and ethically acceptable, according to agreed school codes and guidelines.

### 4.4 Pastoral care

#### Description

The Catholic school is a community that cares for all its members. Policies and programs reflect concern for every student, as a whole person, an individual, and a member of the school community. The policies and practices demonstrate concern, especially, for students who are experiencing learning and other difficulties, for students at risk, and for those who are most vulnerable. All Catholic schools have special structures that cater for the pastoral needs of students. These may vary from school to school, but, in substance, they are informed by the same beliefs, values, understandings and principles that stem from the Gospel: Love one another as I have loved you (John 13).

#### Leadership Actions

**School leaders actively and collaboratively promote and implement the schools' pastoral care policies and programs.** For example they:

- Encourage and support processes for identifying and analysing the special needs of students
- Ensure that opportunities exist to extend the learning of gifted students
- Mobilise colleagues to address the needs of students at risk
- Share an up-to-date knowledge of mental health issues with colleagues
- Ensure that the curriculum equips students with a knowledge of mental health and other factors that impinge on their health and welfare and that of their fellow students
- Monitor and support the pastoral care structures of the school and act to ensure their continuing effectiveness and relevance
- Encourage contact between teachers and parents to assist students with special needs
- Support and encourage school staff who have specific care roles, such as student welfare teachers, in helping students with special needs.

## Area 5 – Community

### Guiding conceptions for all leadership actions

*Having a clear moral purpose; building relationships; understanding and managing change; creating and sharing knowledge; ensuring coherence and alignment of structures.*

Catholic schools are learning communities that assist the Church in its mission of spreading the gospel of Christ. They promote schools as inclusive and compassionate learning institutions, and develop understanding and empathy for those in need in the local, national and global communities.

Catholic schools recognise that children’s learning is enhanced when parents are acknowledged and supported in their role as educators. They maintain strong links with parents and encourage a sense of belonging and mutual respect within the school community. Catholic schools provide opportunities that help families develop the faith of their children. They encourage and support the partnership model of sacramental preparation.

Catholic schools foster a strong commitment to welfare and social justice. They are inclusive, compassionate and empathetic communities that give spiritual support and practical help to the lonely and the marginalised, and contribute to the maintenance of a fair and just society.



Ponch Hawkes

*Staff across three primary schools gather as a 'cluster' for project planning.*

## 5.1 Communication with families

### Description

The Catholic Church places high value on family life and traditions. It recognises that parents are the first educators of their children and encourages them to continue their educative role.

In a secular and pluralistic society, the Catholic school has a special role to play in ensuring that its specific Christian educational values are understood, acknowledged, and appreciated by families.

Parents and family members are welcome in a Catholic school. They are encouraged to share, reinforce and embrace the Catholic ethos, and to witness and celebrate their faith within the school community.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders ensure frequent and effective communication with families.** For example they:

- Collaborate with colleagues to enhance the quality of their regular communication with families
- Organise social and other events that encourage families and school staff to gather in celebration of their shared role of bringing up the children
- Initiate and organise parenting programs that foster relationships and help parents to improve their parenting skills
- Facilitate information sessions for parents and families
- Ensure and enhance the welcoming atmosphere in the school.

## 5.2 Partnerships

### Description

Catholic schools are a Catholic presence in the local community. They form collaborative partnerships with parents, religious and other groups, professionals and various agencies within and beyond the immediate community, such as universities, that are concerned with the education and wellbeing of young people.

Catholic schools have close connections with Church, diocesan and parish life. They express these connections through participation in liturgical and other cultural activities and celebrations.

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders forge partnerships with others who can have a positive impact on student learning.** For example, they:

- Work collaboratively with parents, priests and other community members and groups in a spirit of pastoral collaboration
- Promote school policies and programs that link the school with various Church and community groups in work and celebration
- Involve the school in the liturgical and wider celebrations and activities of the parish, diocese and Church
- Maintain networks with the broader community and external agencies
- Show tact, respect and discretion in dealing with various individuals and groups
- Initiate and facilitate programs and projects that mobilise teachers and students to build relationships and share tasks with various individuals, groups and agencies in the wider community.

## 5.3 Service to the wider community

### Description

The Catholic Church has a two thousand year history of giving service to the wider community. This service is founded on the example of the life of Jesus Christ and his teachings. It is also strongly exemplified in the work of those members of religious communities who dedicate their whole lives to the caring professions, e.g. health and education.

Staff and students in Catholic school communities base their mission on this model of service. They actively participate in and contribute to a variety of activities that aim to serve and assist others, especially those in most need.

*Love one another as I have loved you (John 13).*

### Leadership Actions

**School leaders emulate the model of Jesus Christ in providing service to the larger community.**

For example, they:

- Develop an awareness and understanding of community needs among school staff and students, especially the needs of the marginalised and disadvantaged
- Promote and support the work of Catholic welfare organisations and other community service groups
- Actively witness to Catholic ideals through mobilising staff and students to build and participate in school-sponsored outreach programs
- Mobilise teachers and students to respond, in a variety of practical ways, to the pastoral needs of the parish and wider community
- Initiate and facilitate programs and processes that involve the school in caring for the spiritual and practical needs of the lonely and the marginalised.

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