



SHARED MISSION FRAMEWORK & COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Sandhurst Catholic Schools & Parishes

October 2020

1. Vision

The vision for Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (**CES Limited**) is to provide, in partnership with our families, stimulating, enriching, liberating and nurturing learning environments in each of the Catholic school communities within the Diocese. At the heart of this vision is our commitment to the ongoing duty of care that we have for the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children and young people.

We believe:

- that the values of the Gospel are central to who we are, what we do, and how we act
- in leadership encompassing vision, innovation and empowerment.

2. Introduction

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”

Mark 16:15

The Catholic Church has a rich tradition upon which to build missionary activity. The Tradition draws its strength from the person of Jesus who through his life, death and resurrection revealed God’s gracious desire to be amongst people.

God is at the heart of all evangelizing and missionary activity. It is from Jesus, the one who reveals God, that Christians draw their strength and inspiration; it is to Jesus that Christians bring their hopes for themselves, the Church and the world and it is with Jesus that Christians walk from the darkness of the tomb into the light of the world. Catholics bring a particular lens to the story of Jesus and are called to be the light, to be people of love, to spread the Good News.

Catholic schools in the diocese of Sandhurst also bring a rich history to their work as part of the universal Church in their particular parish contexts. The move to incorporation provides an opportunity to consider in more detail how the work of Shared Mission at a parish and diocesan level can be carried out in order to most effectively enliven the work of mission. We are being called into a new way of being parish and school together.

Catholic education unites the mission of the Church with service to the total development of

the human person 'it is about human flourishing in a deeply Christian understanding – whatever makes a student more wise, more loving, more fully human is making the student reflect more fully the image of God'. (*Source of Life p.3*).

This Framework is designed to support the ongoing development of the relationship and successful partnership between **Sandhurst Catholic Schools** (CES Limited schools) and Diocese of Sandhurst parishes. It is not designed to cover the legal contractual arrangements between Parishes and Sandhurst Catholic Schools. These are covered elsewhere.

The Board of Directors of CES Limited (the Board) remains aware that, while it is assuming legal responsibility for all Sandhurst Catholic Schools, Priests continue to fulfil significant pastoral and leadership roles within schools and amongst the parent community with respect to formation of faith and Catholic identity. The Priest will continue to exercise in relation to the school community those pastoral responsibilities prescribed in Church Laws regarding the office of pastor, excluding any matters of school governance or operations.

A [Template Shared Mission Commitment Statement is at Appendix 1](#) of this document. (Hyperlink to be added at a later date.)

NB:

The term "Priest" is used here to refer to those Priests who are either Parish Priests or Administrators.

It is expected that all matters noted in this document will be included in all Shared Mission Commitment Statements. Additional matters relevant to individual contexts are at the discretion of the Priest and Principal.

3. Purpose

The purpose of developing a Shared Mission Commitment Statement between parishes and schools is to:

- explicitly articulate the spirit of shared mission that is specific to parish and school communities
- formalise arrangements to ensure a genuine partnership between the Parish and the Catholic school communities
- recognise the complementary yet distinct responsibilities and roles of leaders of the Parish and school communities
- formalise opportunities to meet, communicate and to review the implementation of the Shared Mission Commitment Statement
- support the formation process for new members of Parish and School leadership.

4. Key Understandings

The following key understandings about an approach to shared mission are provided as a starting point for discussion and they are open to refinement as the incorporation process unfolds. They represent some common-sense ideas that have emerged through our

extensive consultation process and they have been guided by key understandings of Canon and Civil law. They are also informed by the various regulations overseen by the VRQA with respect to the registration of the newly incorporated body, CES Limited as the proprietor of schools.

The local Catholic community is the foundational partnership of the Catholic school. The school community is called 'Catholic' by virtue of its relationship of governance with a particular Catholic diocese, or religious institute. Yet, for schools governed by CES Limited, or owned and/or operated by religious institutes, the local parish communities are the natural environment in which parish life and ministry is enacted.

Shared Mission Commitment Statements are built upon the following understandings:

- 4.1 Catholic education will continue, as always, to be a shared ministry of mission and partnership between the parish community and its Catholic school/s
- 4.2 Each Catholic school exists as an intrinsic and important expression of the mission of the Parish community
- 4.3 Throughout their history and development, Sandhurst Catholic Schools have generally enjoyed close, collaborative and affirming relationships between school and Parish and the CES Limited Board is committed to this continuing
- 4.4. The role of the family as first educators in faith of their children is affirmed and respected and calls for close collaboration between Parish and School
- 4.5 Schools play a significant and vital role in nurturing the faith life of families and engaging children and young people in the rich heritage, mystery and ritual of the Catholic faith tradition
- 4.6 Mutual trust and an ongoing successful partnership between schools and Parishes will require effective communication and a commitment to collaborative planning on the part of both school Principal and Priest
- 4.7 While the school Principal has a range of delegated responsibilities for the civil governance of the school, the Parish Priest has the canonical authority to exercise canonical governance at Parish level
- 4.8 The shared pastoral ministry between both Principal and Priest is an enriching one
- 4.9 There is no 'one size fits all' model for the parish and school relationship. Each parish has its own unique identity as does each school.

5. Key Commitments

There are some key relationships and commitments that will underpin Shared Mission Commitment Statements between Sandhurst Catholic Schools and Sandhurst Parishes and these will be part of agreed processes to be developed between Priests and School Principals (with the assistance of members of the CES Limited Executive Leadership Team and/or their nominees).

5.1 A commitment to the pastoral and spiritual leadership of Priests

Acknowledging the strength of that relationship and of the valuable role of pastoral and spiritual leadership that the Priest brings to the school communities, CES Limited schools are committed to:

- 5.1.1 Inviting the Priest to be a part of all Advisory School Councils as an ongoing significant partner
- 5.1.2 Working closely with the Priest and parish community for the ongoing good of Catholic education in CES Limited
- 5.1.3 Involving the Priest in the appointment of key senior positions such as Principal, DP/Senior Leader and Religious Education Leader.

5.2 A commitment to schools as members of parish worshipping communities

Celebrations of life and faith are central to Catholic faith communities - parish, school, family. The parish community celebrates liturgical seasons, transitions and stages of life. The Christian mystery is celebrated through sacramental and Eucharistic liturgies and rituals.

All parishes seek to nurture their relationship with the members of their school communities. There are a range of opportunities to enhance these relationships and ensure close collaboration, for example:

- 5.2.1 Involvement of Priests in the liturgical and prayer life of the school
- 5.2.2 Involvement of Priests and parish personnel in the preparation and carrying out of sacramental programs, school liturgies, blessings, and staff and student retreats
- 5.2.3 The involvement of Priests in classroom activities, faith discussion and staff and parent formation and Catholic conversations
- 5.2.4 An agreed approach to the implementation of all sacramental programs
- 5.2.5 A shared approach to Youth Ministry
- 5.2.6 A shared approach to faith formation for children and staff and communications throughout the liturgical year (E.g. Lent/Easter, Advent/Christmas)
- 5.2.7 Invitations to school liturgies and Parish family Masses
- 5.2.8 Shared social justice projects between school and Parish
- 5.2.9 Presence of the Priests and parishioners at school events and celebrations such as awards nights, presentations, productions, and sports carnival
- 5.2.10 The communication, promotion and engagement of both schools and parishes in each other's events
- 5.2.11 The safety, formation and training of students in services such as altar serving, and other Parish and school commitments to service

5.3 A commitment to embedding a culture of child safety

In entering into partnerships, and in all of the activities undertaken in Sandhurst Catholic Schools, both the school and parish recognises that Child Safety is a primary duty. This is a mutual responsibility however in all matters relating to students whether on school or parish property the school's safety policies and procedures will be enacted.

5.4 A commitment to a shared communal approach to facilities

- 5.4.1 Shared use agreements for the timing, use and maintenance of shared facilities such as parish Church, Parish Hall, car parks and school meeting rooms (additional to agreements in the formal Lease Agreement and/or MOU)
- 5.4.2 Agreement about noise management (e.g. bells) when funerals and special liturgies are being conducted in the parish Church
- 5.4.3 Matters relevant to specific school or church settings or logistic arrangements that are pertinent to a particular school site /location
- 5.4.4 Others - as determined at the local level.

5.5 A commitment to clear communication

CES Limited is committed to ensuring an ongoing close and productive relationship between school and parish and to meeting regularly with the Priest to ensure that this relationship prospers. Formal meetings between the Priest and Principal would ideally take place regularly throughout the year as determined by each community to ensure clarity, plan future events and review processes. School and Parish leadership team members may be involved in these meetings and agendas and minutes are strongly encouraged. Principals and school leaders are also encouraged to initiate regular opportunities to build relationships with the Priest and parish personnel.

Examples of communication strategies include:

- 5.5.1 Parish and school calendars could be shared so that each party can be informed of the key events and, where possible, provide mutual support
- 5.5.2 Contact mobile phone numbers and email addresses (including emergency numbers) could be shared between Parish and school personnel and securely stored
- 5.5.3 The sharing of Parish and school Newsletters to ensure clear and supportive communication between school and Parish along with the promotion of each other's key events and initiatives.

The list provided in the following template is not an exhaustive list and each individual school and parish community will have additional specific arrangements pertinent to their situation.

Appendix 1 - Sample Commitment Statement

(blank templates will be available for each school and parish)

We agree and commit to the following actions outlined in this Commitment Statement and to ensuring that the following matters will be included:

1. Priests and School Principals will meet regularly and work together to maintain and develop the school's founding charism and Catholic mission and identity
2. Catholic ethos: The school leadership will consult with the Parish in order to ensure the ongoing development of Catholic identity, culture and ethos of the school
3. Eucharistic liturgies: The presiding priest will ensure alignment with the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) in matters of Eucharistic liturgies and will work closely with the Priest in this regard
4. Parish and school buildings:
 - Protocols for the school's use of the church and church grounds
 - Protocols for the shared use of Parish and School buildings and facilities
5. Selection panels: The Priest or his nominee will be a member of the selection panel for all Principals, Senior Leaders and Religious Education leaders.

While examples are provided below, each Priest and School Principal will need to determine together the relevant items under each heading. They may also wish to include additional headings.

1. Communication & Planning, for example:

- a. Attendance at meetings and events (Parish and School)
- b. Dialogue and involvement in planning and publicity of key events
- c. Recognition of parishioners and of the status they hold in the community
- d. Agreements regarding noise or any other considerations that may affect parish or school life
- e. Protocols regarding school issues that are brought to the Priest
- f. Protocols regarding child safety to comply with Ministerial Order 870
- g. Protocols for the involvement of the Priest in program planning/review for the mandated diocesan Religious Education Program (*Source of Life*)

Spiritual Formation of Children & Young People, and their Families and Opportunities for Engagement in Parish Ministries

1.1 Spiritual and Pastoral Formation, for example:

- a. Formation for students, staff and parents
- b. Class Masses and involvement in weekend family Masses
- c. Christmas Carols participation
- d. Feast day activities
- e. School participation in the Youth Group
- f. Scheduled and guided visits to the Church

1.2 Sacramental Programs & the Reception of the Sacraments

- a. Parish based sacramental program
- b. Sacramental meetings hosted on the school site

1.3 Engagement in Parish Ministries, for example:

- a. Opportunities to Altar serve along with the relevant training
- b. Opportunities for participation and training as lectors
- c. Opportunities for involvement in liturgical music
- d. Opportunities for engagement with parishioners ensuring the relevant child-safe protocols are in place

Pastoral Support Arrangements

1.4 Pastoral Support of Families, for example:

- a. Protocols for shared information concerning families with particular needs and the support they can be offered
- b. Protocols for working together to support initiatives such as Project Compassion, St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal and Christmas Hampers etc.
- c. Protocols for responding to complaints brought to Priests about school matters while still providing pastoral accompaniment to families.

1.5 Pastoral Support, for example:

- a. Arrangements for priests to provide pastoral support for school staff
- b. Arrangements for school leaders to maintain support for Priests of the parish

1.6 Enrolment Processes

- a. Protocol for informing the Priest about the enrolment process and communication about student numbers etc.
- b. Protocols to assist Priests in getting to know school parish families

1.7 Senior Staff Appointments

- a. Selection panels: The Priest or his nominee will be a member of the selection panel for all Principals, Senior Leaders and Religious Education Leaders

1.8 Parish School Facilities & Planning, for example

- a. Protocols for communication of major maintenance activities or changes to facilities
- b. Protocols regarding the use of any shared facilities or resources, e.g. Hall or car parks
- c. Protocols regarding disruptions to school or church day that will impact on the other

Joint Review

The signatories agree that this Shared Mission Agreement will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a change in School Principal or Priest. The signatories also agree that they will review and assess the progress of the development of relationships between the Parish and the School and make a recommendation as to the resolution of any issues concerning the interpretation of this Shared Mission Commitment Statement.

Dispute Resolution

In the event that either party cannot come to an agreement with respect to a major procedural or operational issue in the context of the Shared Mission Framework support and advice may be obtained from an appropriate member of the CES Limited Executive Management Team or from the Bishop's office. The appropriate member of the CES Limited Executive Management Team will work in partnership with all parties to facilitate a mutually satisfactory resolution to the dispute. If the dispute relates to Child Safe Standards – Ministerial Order 870 it must be reported in line with CES Limited Child Safety Framework.

Signatures

Signed for and on behalf of [Parish and School Name] by:

.....
Parish Priest Signature

.....
School Principal Signature

.....
Parish Priest (Print Name)

.....
School Principal(Print Name)

.....
Date

Witness signatures are also optional if desired by either party.