Director’s Message

In developing our Strategic Plan 2015–2019, we consulted widely with Catholic schools on how we can best serve and support them in their mission and service. In recognition of the integral relationship between schools and our work, the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) will now be known as Catholic Education Melbourne.

Our new name will better reflect our vision and mission and be more inclusive of our many partners in the Catholic education community. Genuine partnerships with parents, parishes, religious institutes and the community actively support Catholic schools in educating students. Our system also has a rich history of dialogue and collaboration with state and national government departments and authorities.

Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne is a faith-based educational jurisdiction and a leading provider of school education in the third-largest Catholic diocese in the world. We play an important role in shaping and supporting national Catholic education priorities and policies.

Catholic Education Melbourne serves and leads Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. We provide a range of services to support about 18,000 teaching and non-teaching staff in 328 Catholic schools serving almost 151,000 students (August 2014 figures).

With the Catholic Education Melbourne Strategic Plan 2015–2019 we renew our commitment to support schools in their mission of educating students for faith and life. The themes for the next five years are:

• Enhancing Catholic identity
• Quality teaching for all learners
• Catholic Education Melbourne capability to better serve and lead.

As with all in Catholic education, the student is our first concern and our priority. We are committed to ensuring that we offer schools the most effective support to enable all students in Catholic schools to be engaged and creative learners who value excellence and effort, who see the importance of faith, and who have the knowledge, skills, hope and commitment to contribute to peace, justice and the flourishing of the human community.

Best wishes

Stephen Elder
Executive Director

It would be appreciated if a copy of this newsletter could be provided to the school’s board members or school parent group.

Reflect and consider

WHY we do WHAT we do and HOW
‘Our works are of no value if they be not united to the merits of Jesus Christ.’ St Teresa of Ávila

‘... do you succeed in having your friendship with Jesus “shine” in your attitudes, in your way of behaving?’ Pope Francis to youth in Turin, June 22 2015.

‘Catholic education is founded on the love of the Father in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. The mission, and privilege, of the Catholic school is to build a community where authentic relationships based on love provide the means and the support for all students to flourish and...’
grow into the fullness of life. Every child is precious and we hold dear the dignity and possibility of each one.

In all it does the Catholic school invites students to encounter the living Christ and to recognise God’s presence in their lives. Students are invited to deepen their understanding of the Christian story and the Catholic Tradition. In light of that knowledge and understanding, students are given opportunities to engage with the many other perspectives on faith and life in today’s complex and globalised world. This helps students in their searching and helps students know themselves, others and God more deeply. They also learn to respect and embrace difference and see it as a source of richness rather than conflict.

In Catholic schools students have the opportunity to develop their talents and abilities, their knowledge, skills and capabilities, across the many areas of learning and wellbeing, in particular those areas that enrich the human person. In this way they can live lives of meaning and embrace the possibilities and challenges of the future with responsibility and hope.

Parents, parishes, religious institutes and the wider community, along with Catholic Education Melbourne, are significant and essential partners with schools in this endeavour.


Schools Water Efficiency Program

The Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP) is available to every school in Victoria. SWEP:

- is a State Government initiative funded by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and the Department of Education & Training
- enables schools to continuously track their water consumption by using data-logging technology
- provides teachers and students an opportunity to learn about water efficiency through maths concepts such as measurement and data in a tangible and realistic environment
- helps monitor a school’s water usage to detect leaks and faulty appliances so they can be rectified, allowing schools to save water and money.

To register online, and for case studies and further information, visit the SWEP website.

On care of our common home

‘What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?’ (160).

This question is at the heart of Laudato si’ (Praise be to you), the new Encyclical on the care of the common home by Pope Francis. ‘This question does not have to do with the environment alone and in isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal.’

Most Rev. Denis J Hart DD
Archbishop of Melbourne (2015)

Resources

Resources for primary school boards and college boards are located on the CEVN website


Past copies of the quarterly Board Business newsletter are available at www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/school-boards/

On care of our common home

BEING VISIBLE

What does the school and community know about your school board: who the board members are, what the board does.

It should be widely known that board members are volunteers giving of their time and talents for the benefit of the school. Each member has a leadership role and a commitment to the board’s responsibilities and obligations.

The board has purpose (constitution) and their work has meaning which is directly connected to the school and the community (supporting the schools strategic plan with goals linked to the School Improvement Plan/Annual Action Plan).

Boards and their valuable work need to be visible to the school and the community. This will:

- ensure that the experience of being a board member is a positive one
- perhaps encourage others to consider giving of their time to be a member
- help the school and community engage with the board members and the work of the board.

What can be done?
1. **Give the board a face.** Tell the school and community who your board members are. Some strategies include: website, newsletters, commissioning Mass with other school leaders, give board members a nametag to wear each time they are on school premises or at school events, have the board represented at school activities and events or presenting awards (don’t limit this to the Chair!), lead the opening prayer, facilitate a school forum, conduct sessions/tours at open days, connect faces with names with ‘introductions/profiles’ in newsletters.

2. **Broadcast the contribution of the board.** Tell the school and community what work the board is undertaking and what it has achieved. Do not leave it just to the Annual General Meeting and the Annual Report. Some other strategies to connect the board to the school and community include: regular ‘board news’ in the school newsletter; a clear articulation of the board’s goals for each year and progress updates; a biannual board newsletter including goals, progress, board member profiles with details of why they value the experience of being on the board.

The guiding beliefs of the **Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body** (VCSPB) dictate their aspirations as articulated in their vision and mission.

- **Our Catholic ethos**, in particular the Scriptural values of equity, justice, and the respect and acknowledgement of the inherent dignity of each individual, is an expression of our Catholic identity. It guides our operations and underpins our policies, practices and processes.

- **Parents are the first and primary educators of their children.**

- **When schools and families work together in partnership guided by the Catholic ethos, children benefit, schools improve and communities flourish.**

- **Every parent has the right to choose a quality Catholic education for their child regardless of their background, and to not be disadvantaged by that choice.**

- **Every parent has the right to be informed about, and inform policy decisions that relate to the education of their child.**

- **Partnership, collaboration and effective communication are key to the Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body’s influence.**

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**Featured website**

**Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body**

Promoting community - Advocating for parents

Extensive collated resources are available to assist schools and parents on

- Bullying
- Catholic Identity
- Curriculum
- Parent engagement
- Parenting

[www.vcsbp.catholic.edu.au](http://www.vcsbp.catholic.edu.au)

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