Director’s Message

Through your collaborative efforts, Catholic schools continue to be committed to imbuing students with a strong ethical and moral compass based on the Church’s teachings and the life of Christ.

Recent reports show us that students attending Catholic schools are successful both academically and in relation to emotional and moral values. Students achieve strong literacy and numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN, and tertiary entry scores. Catholic students also experience less bullying, are more tolerant of students from different backgrounds and more willing to volunteer to help others. International studies note that Catholic schools promote increased community engagement and cohesion.

By working together with parents to provide the very best education possible, our schools literally open their students’ lives to a world of opportunity. It’s a role Catholic education has successfully performed in Victoria for over 150 years and will continue to do with great vigour. The collective strength of our sector and growth includes the provision for 10 new schools in the next decade.

I thank you for your continued support, commitment and care.

Best wishes

Stephen Elder
Executive Director

Reflect and consider

Our FAITH our PARISH our WORK
‘A faith that does not know how to root itself in the life of people remains arid and, rather than oases, creates other deserts.’ Pope Francis (October 2015)

‘The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach (28).’ Evangeli Gaudium.

How are these elements enlivened in your community? What does this mean to your role and work on a school board?

Resources

Resources for primary school boards and college boards are located on the CEVN website http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au under School Improvement / Parish–School Boards.

Past copies of the quarterly Board Business newsletter are available at www.cem.edu.au/our-schools/school-boards/
**Child safe organisations**

In response to the Betrayal of Trust Parliamentary Inquiry, the Victorian government is introducing minimum child-safe standards to ensure organisations providing services for children and young people are child-safe. The purpose of the new child-safe standards is to ensure that child safety is an organisational priority. The standards will provide a framework to improve policies, procedures and practices that aim to keep children safe.

Legislation to introduce the child-safe standards is expected to be introduced into the Victorian Parliament in late 2015 so that standards can be implemented in schools in January 2016. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) will have responsibility for ensuring compliance in schools.

Catholic Education Melbourne is working collaboratively with the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the VRQA to provide resources to support schools to effectively implement the child-safe standards.

**Guiding principles for our schools:**

- Catholic schools are places where all children and young people feel safe and in reality are safe.
- **Children and young people** are aware of their right to be safe, empowered to have a voice about safety and know how to raise concerns.
- Parents are confident that their children are safe at school.
- There is an integrated and collaborative approach to building safe and respectful communities.
- Child-safe compliance is linked to the fundamental right of children and young people to be respected and safeguarded by all.

**Approach:**

The best opportunity for... a whole–school approach that encompasses governance, school culture, policies and practices, training, support and intervention, and community partnerships. *(Truth Justice Healing Commission Response to Issues Paper 9 September 2015)*

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**Seven standards**

1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.
2. A child-safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
3. A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.


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**Three Categories of Implementation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2014 &amp; 2015</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal law reform</td>
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<td>Three new offences introduced – immediate child safety:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• grooming</td>
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<td>• failure to disclose child sexual abuse</td>
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<td>• failure to protect a child from sexual abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child safe organisations</td>
<td>2015 &amp; 2016</td>
<td>Strengthening approaches to prevent &amp; respond to abuse:</td>
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<td>• ministers of religion who have contact with children to have WWCCs</td>
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<td>• Child Safe Schools Act 2015 passed</td>
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<td>• minimum child safe standards for organisations engaged in child-related work</td>
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<td>• exploring a ‘reportable conduct’ scheme</td>
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<td>Civil law reform</td>
<td>2015 &amp; 2016</td>
<td>Improving access to justice for victims:</td>
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<td>• removing inappropriate time limitations for claims (Operative since July 2015)</td>
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Building better boards

BOARDS WORK WELL WHEN ... School boards will be most effective when they

- believe their opinions count
- find meaning in their work
- are motivated to produce high-quality work
- develop confidence in their ability to meet agreed objectives.

Encourage, support, acknowledge: create an environment where values are lived and achievement is celebrated – more will be accomplished.

Establish agreed goals and objectives: connect board work to the School Improvement Plan/Annual Action Plan with clear expectations, outcomes.

Provide information that is relevant and timely: support board members to understand the context and the why that will help them better perform their role – open communication makes for better advice and decision-making.

Develop and grow capacity: make available to board members opportunities to develop their understanding of Catholic ethos; education, curriculum, contemporary learning, teaching and wellbeing needs of school communities; principles of good governance and governance structures in Catholic schools.

Work together to achieve more!

Featured website

Archdiocesan Office for Youth

The Archdiocesan Office for Youth seeks to inspire and engage young people in the life and mission of the Catholic Church through initiating, supporting and encouraging youth (secondary school aged young people and young adults) in Catholic parishes, schools and organisations that:

- fosters in young people a personal relationship with Jesus Christ especially through prayer and the sacraments
- encourages young people to live their lives centred in the teachings of Christ and the Church
- inspires leadership among young people in the Church and in society
- empowers young people to witness to their faith in Christ through service to others.

The office is guided by the words pray, witness, serve, and we see these lived out in the lives of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati and St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

Catholic Education Melbourne www.cem.edu.au