



SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Corpus Christi School is one of two primary schools in Corpus Christi Parish, Kingsville. Together with the other parish primary school (Annunciation School) Corpus Christi School provides faith and academic education for the children of the parish. Each school is zoned for a particular part of the parish.

Democratic Principles

Corpus Christi School has a focus on developing the whole child and ensuring their development in body, mind and spirit. The school's curriculum has a framework based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and through its implementation of an integrated curriculum using an Inquiry approach aims to promote lifelong learning and active participation as citizens in Australian society.

An important focus of curriculum development and implementation is the focus on Community and Citizenship, which is developed and explored in line with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards Physical, Personal and Social Learning Strand and the Civics and Citizen Domain of the Discipline Based Strand. Corpus Christi School combines this framework with the Catholic Education Office Melbourne's vision and strategic plan for Active Citizenship that children who attend Catholic schools are "prepared for their present and future lives as independent persons, citizens, parents, workers, learners and members of the Catholic Church empowered to contribute to the common good of society" (*CEOM, One Body – Many Parts: Strategy Plan 2008 – 2010*).

The programs of Corpus Christi School, and the learning and teaching processes used to implement them develop understanding of and promote involvement in:

- the principles and practice of Australian democracy
- the elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association; and
- values of openness and tolerance.

Parents and the community are kept informed of the aims and processes for developing citizenship and democratic principles through a variety of media, through the policies, programs, documentation and practices of the school. This occurs formally at the enrolment interview on application for enrolment to Corpus Christi School; through newsletter items, parent information sessions, open days, at regular school assemblies.

Corpus Christi School actively promotes student participation in the wider community enabling students to see democracy in action and to participate in collaborative projects with community groups to build their understanding of civic infrastructure, their appreciation of democratic process and their ability to participate in community support.

Corpus Christi School's Governance Structure

Canon 803 of the Code of Canon Law states that: *A Catholic School is understood to be one which is under the control of the competent ecclesiastical authority. No school, even if it is in fact Catholic, may bear the title 'catholic school' except by the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority.*

Catholic schools in Victoria operate under the canonical authority of the Bishops of the four Victorian Dioceses (Melbourne, Ballarat, Sandhurst and Sale) and Corpus Christi School operates under the authority of the Archbishop of Melbourne.

Catholic schools operate with a high degree of autonomy under the authority of their respective school governor, known as the canonical administrator. The canonical administrator and Parish Priest (currently Fr John O'Connor) is the governing authority for Corpus Christi School and the Principal is his delegate, in taking responsibility for the day to day running and management of the school, its community and its facilities.

Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) acts on behalf of the Bishops to assist Corpus Christi School to maintain the highest possible standards of learning and teaching. The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) has been delegated authority by all canonical administrators to work on behalf of all Victorian Catholic schools to fulfil accountability and reporting requirements to the Australian and Victorian governments.

In order to undertake this work, the CECV and CEOM collaborate with Corpus Christi School to develop and implement policies and strategies to meet legal, financial, educational and reporting obligations. These constitute a highly developed accountability and support system.

School's Structures for Managing its Financial and Legal Obligations

The Parish Priest is responsible for the financial management and legal obligations of Corpus Christi School. The Principal is delegated with responsibility for the management of the school's funds by the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest and Principal will engage an accountant whose responsibility it is to ensure the school's finances and legal obligations are carried out.

The School Accountant will complete the Annual Financial Statement (AFS), which will be completed in consultation with the Parish Priest and the Principal. The Parish Priest and Principal will sign the completed AFS as being true and correct.

An annual audit will be carried out of the school's finances. The Parish Priest, Principal and School Accountant will be available for the annual audit and subsequent discussions regarding the auditors' findings (exit meeting). The Parish Priest and Principal are required to attest to the honesty, accuracy and integrity of the AFS at the audit exit meeting.

Functions and Duties of the Governance of Corpus Christi School

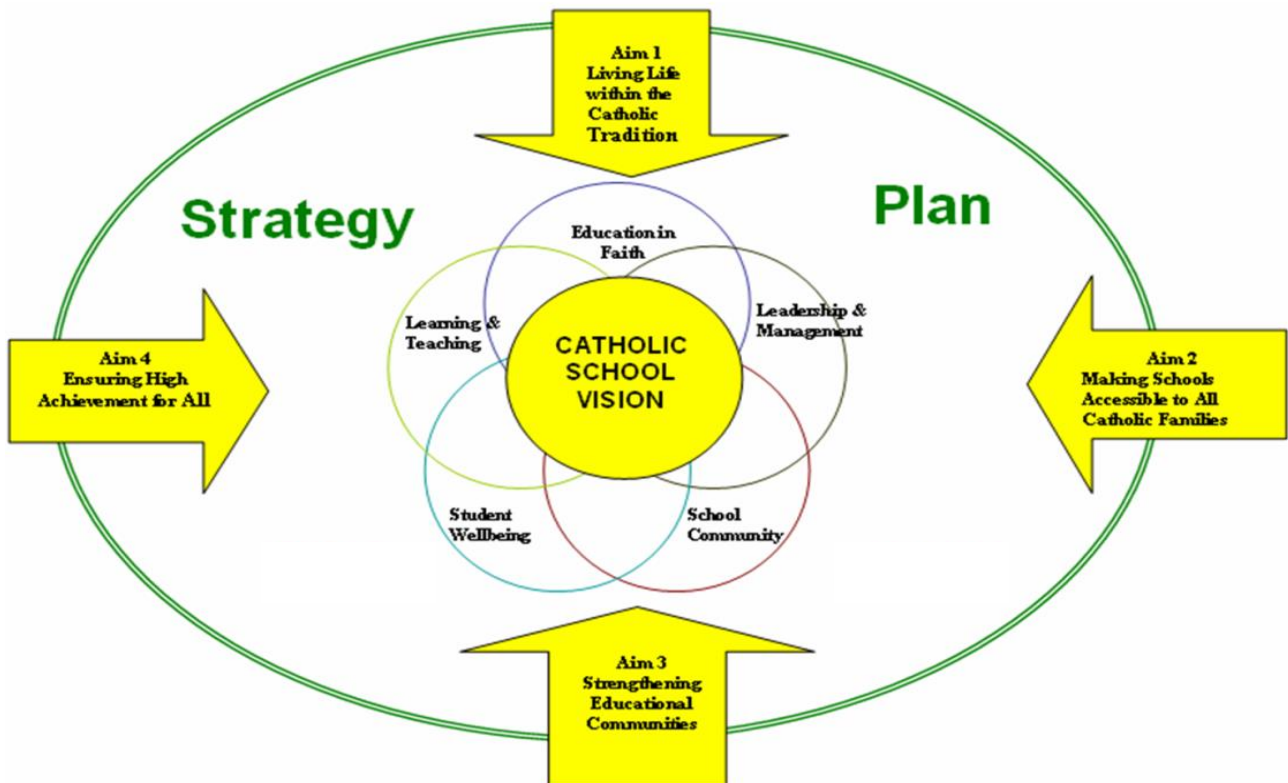
The Parish Priest and Principal have the responsibility to *(but not limited to)*:

- develop, review and assist in implementing a vision and educational philosophy for Catholic education for Corpus Christi School from which policy will be developed; this is done with input from representatives of the whole school community and with the support of CEOM
- ensure there is consultation and collaboration with representatives of the school community, staff, students and parents in developing school policy where it is appropriate
- develop review and implement the School Improvement Plan and Annual Action Plan

- lead the school in its cyclical review process, (every four years) which is completed by representatives of the whole school community and involves input by an independent reviewer appointed by Catholic Education Office Melbourne
- ensure the CEOM *Financial and Administrative Procedures Manual* is used as guide for the schools finance management
- ensure the completion of the *Annual Financial Statement* and the completion of the Australian Government's online *Financial Questionnaire*
- utilize the *Legal Issues In Schools* (CECV 2003 *currently under review*) document as a reference for advice on a wide range of legal issues, in particular those related to use of the internet, enrolment, employment of staff, sexual harassment, and mandatory reporting
- refer to the CEOM and CECV policies in developing school based policies, practice and procedures
- ensure teaching staff are registered with *Victorian Institute of Teaching* and have a current *Criminal Record Check*
- ensure non-teaching staff and parent/community helpers and volunteers have a *Working With Children Check*
- ensure *CECV Industrial Relations Unit* professional advice on employment and industrial relations matters is accessed as required and that workplace requirements and agreements are adhered to
- determine the School's Enrolment Policy in line with CEOM
- encourage an enhanced level of inter-relationship between the Parish and its two primary schools, and the two primary schools with each other;
- prepare an Annual Report to the Community of the Parish
- oversee promotional activities of the school
- set the level of school fees and levies annually.

Development of the School Improvement Plan for Corpus Christi School (the school's structures and plans for developing its strategic direction)

Catholic School Vision Embedded in 5 Key Spheres of Schooling within the context of the Strategy Plan for Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne



The School Improvement Framework, diagrammatically represented above, forms the basis of the development of school policy and practice in the *spheres* of Education in Faith, Learning & Teaching, Leadership & Management, Student Wellbeing and School Community. Central to each of the overlapping spheres is the Catholic School Vision. School Improvement in this context refers to:

“A systematic approach to effective organisation within a school to ensure improvement of the learning opportunities and outcomes for all students. Within a Catholic school context this should reflect the true nature of Catholic schooling to educate in faith and knowledge. Effective school improvement is an approach which values students and the importance of preparing all students to value themselves and to be valuable members of society in this millennium.” (*Catholic Education Victoria Network, School Improvement Framework Glossary 2007*)

In order to strategically plan for school improvement a School Improvement Plan is developed as part of the four year cyclical review process of the school. The School Improvement Plan is defined as:

“A document that draws on evidence and analysis generated by the review processes. It should be developed in the context of the Strategy Plan for Catholic Education within the Melbourne Archdiocese and should identify the strategic planning for the next four years, expressed through goals and intended outcomes with clearly identified targets.” (*Catholic Education Victoria Network, School Improvement Framework Glossary 2007*)

The Parish Priest, Principal and the Leadership Team of Corpus Christi School will develop the School Improvement Plan, with input from staff, students and parents where appropriate, utilizing the School Improvement Framework as outlined above.

The Corpus Christi School Vision Statement will inform all areas of the School Improvement Plan and subsequently all its policy, practices and procedures.

A School Improvement Plan is developed for a period of four years. At the end of the four year period, the school review process is conducted whereby an independent Reviewer will be engaged to collaborate with the school in the review of school's achievement of its goals in the previous four year period. At the culmination of this process a School Improvement Plan for the following four year period will be developed with input from the whole school community (Parish Priest, Principal, all staff, students and parents), CEOM Regional Principal Consultant and the independent Reviewer appointed by CEOM.

Each year an Annual Action Plan will be developed from the School Improvement Plan. This will detail the strategies and timeline for the implementation of the particular aspect of the School Improvement Plan in that year.

It is the responsibility of the Parish Priest and Principal working in collaboration with the Leadership Team to ensure the School Improvement Plan is developed with input from all school community representatives, where appropriate, and that the Annual Action Plan which is developed from the School Improvement Plan, is executed.

Corpus Christi School Leadership Team

The *Leadership Team* is appointed by the Principal in consultation with the Parish Priest. It will consist of the Parish Priest, Principal, Deputy Principal and other key leaders of staff as decided by the Parish Priest and Principal.

The actions of the Leadership Team in our Catholic school are guided by religious, professional and ethical principles and purposes. Leadership is not confined to management roles. Effective leadership involves mobilizing and energizing others with the aim of improving teaching and learning. Improvement of school performance involves critical evaluation of practice and identification of areas of need and hence entails leaders in the role of building improvement capacity, of taking initiative and modelling professional reflection and continual improvement.

Five key principles infuse leadership action in every area and component:

1. Having a clear purpose driven by ethical standards and an identified need
2. Building and maintaining relationships
3. Understanding and managing the complexities of the change process, especially change in attitudes and practices
4. Creating and sharing knowledge
5. Ensuring coherence and alignment of structures and policies

Our School Leaders have knowledge that is characterized by:

- Thinking creatively and building and communicating concepts that inform action
- Understanding, analysing, rationalising and implementing the school vision
- Drawing connections between the practical knowledge of experience and research based, theoretical knowledge
- Sharing and creating knowledge with colleagues and the wider school community
- Contributing to the strategic development of an Annual Action Plan
- Contributing to the ongoing professional development of themselves and colleagues

Their actions are informed by:

- The core beliefs and understandings, values and principles of Catholic education
- The contribution of Catholic education to society
- Pedagogy and educational theory and modelled on the CEOM Spheres of Learning

- Curriculum planning and development
- Links between curriculum and formative and summative assessment
- Modern technologies, their use and impact
- Improvement processes and management, professional learning & mentoring
- School governance and accountability
- Policy creation, consultation and review
- Use and management of resources

The purpose of the Leadership Team is to strategically work together to lead the vision of Corpus Christi School through the implementation of the School Improvement Plan.

Goals of the Leadership Team:

- To improve student learning outcomes
- To improve opportunities for education in faith
- To ensure student and staff wellbeing
- To enable school community connectedness
- To strategically plan and manage for the future of the school and its community by ensuring that the School Improvement Plan is a working document and the Annual Action Plan is specific
- To continue the professional development of the Leadership Team using the Catholic Education Office Leadership Framework
- To build the leadership capacity of fellow staff, students and parents
- To model democratic and collaborative principles and procedures for and with staff, students and parents

Business Plan Relating to the School

The Parish Priest and Principal, with the assistance of the school accountant (along with assistance from the Financial Management Section of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne) are responsible for financial matters relating to the school

Specifically the accountant is enlisted to assist in:

- Analysis of the school's financial situation
- Providing accounting advice to both the Principal and the School Secretary when required. This will include advice over the phone or by way of meeting at the school premises. It is anticipated there will be at least four meetings with the Principal and further meetings can be arranged when required
- Completion of CEO and Government Questionnaires and forms relating to accounting matters
- Preparation of School budgets
- Regularly reviewing the cash position to ensure adequacy of cash flow to meet recurrent and capital expenditures. Budget reviews will include a meeting with the Principal to explain review and discuss any areas of concern in the budget figures
- Assisting in the preparation of reconciliations required for the Annual Financial Statement including grants, fees, loans, salaries and Bank accounts
- Assisting in preparing for annual audit – assemble, check and collate working papers, cashbooks, accounting reports and other documents for auditor's review
- Consulting with the Principal to prepare annual write-off lists of uncollectible school fees and levies for approval by the Parish Priest

- Preparing various financial reports for the Principal/Parish Priest in a timely manner as required:
 - Annual Financial Statement
 - Financial Questionnaire – Dept of Education, Science & Training
 - CEO Cash Flow Statement (September)
- Assistance in preparation of submissions as required
- Tax office compliance
- Review of accounts including GST, Fees and Levy reconciliations.

Policy Development and Review

Policy making is a shared process and responsibility. Depending on the policy area, policy development in Corpus Christi School is usually undertaken by representatives from any or all of the following groups:

- School leadership Team
- School staff
- Parents and parent groups
- Students (if appropriate)

**It should be noted that Corpus Christi School does not have a School Advisory Board*

The process of policy development and review varies according to the nature and context of the area or issue being considered but the responsibility for oversight of these processes rests with the school principal.

Important Publications: To assist the process of policy development and review in the school, the following publications are referenced:

- Catholic Schools Victoria Education Policy Manual
- Guide to Policy Development for Catholic Schools
- Communications from the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) or the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM)
- CECV Finance and Administration Manual
- Diocesan policies for Religious Education
- Teachings and communications of the Catholic Church
- Policies from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)
- Policies endorsed by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), CECV or CEOM
- Australian Government legislation, regulations and policies.