



DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE:
COLLABORATIVE
LEADERSHIP FOR
SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

The image shows the interior of a Gothic church. A large, white stone archway frames the view towards the altar. Above the arch, a decorative chandelier with several white globe lights hangs from the ceiling. The ceiling is dark wood with exposed beams. Below the arch, there are five stained glass windows with colorful designs. The altar area is visible in the distance, featuring a large, ornate structure with a cross on top. The pews are made of dark wood and are arranged in rows on either side of a central aisle. The overall lighting is warm and golden, creating a serene atmosphere.

“

The Church has in a special way the duty and the right of education, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life.

”

CONTENTS

PAGE 4

- Role of Education in the Church

PAGE 5

- Role of the Bishop
- Role of the Parish Priest

PAGE 6

- Parish Priest involvement in School Life
- Role of the Principal
- Role of Armidale Catholic Schools

PAGE 7

- Role of Armidale Catholic Schools Board
- Collaboration between the Parish Priest and the School

PAGE 9

- Dispute Resolution
- Mission of the Church

PAGE 10

- Referencing



ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH

In proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, education is integral to the mission of the Church.

This is outlined in the Code of Canon Law:

Canon 794 §1: The Church has in a special way the duty and the right of education, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life.

Canon 794 §2: Pastors of souls have the duty of making all possible arrangements so that all the faithful may avail themselves of a catholic education.

There is a collaborative role between the Bishop, the Parish Priests, educators and the lay faithful in the educational, evangelical and catechetical mission of the Church in the Diocese of Armidale. This collaboration helps to ensure that our Catholic schools¹:

- i. are truly Catholic in their identity, culture and life
- ii. are centres of the new evangelisation
- iii. enable students to achieve high levels of ‘Catholic religious literacy’ and practice
- iv. are led and staffed by people who will contribute to these goals
- v. are effective in promoting and supporting students to achieve knowledge in all areas of academic, cultural and sporting pursuits

The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.²

The school community is a place for encounter and promoting participation. It must listen carefully to the needs that it finds and the expectations that are directed towards it.³

There must be the closest cooperation between parents and the teachers to whom the parents entrust their children to be educated. Teachers are required to collaborate closely with the parents and listen to them.⁴

In this way, girls and boys are accompanied by a community that teaches them to “overcome their individualism and discover, in the light of faith, their specific vocation to live responsibly in a community with others.”⁵

In fact, “the integral formation of the human person, which is the purpose of education, includes the development of all the human faculties of the students, together with preparation for professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, becoming aware of the transcendental, and religious education.”⁶

ROLE OF THE BISHOP

The Bishop of the Diocese has overall responsibility for ensuring that the schools in the Diocese fulfil their mission faithfully.⁷ The Bishop has specific involvement in the appointment of the Director of Schools, Principals and Religious Education Coordinators.

Through his office of chief pastor, preacher and teacher, the Bishop provides designated leadership. He has delegated specific authorities to the Armidale Catholic Schools Board (ACSB) and its members who share with him the responsibility of certain aspects of the governance of the Diocesan system of schools.

The Bishop has a special responsibility to regulate and watch over religious education in all Catholic schools of the Diocese.⁸ Clergy, religious, educators and laity share in these responsibilities of the Bishop.

ROLE OF THE PARISH PRIEST

By being incardinated or appointed in a particular Church (Diocese), a relationship is established between a priest and his Bishop which is not an employee-employer relationship. Rather, it is a relationship of affection, trust, and obedience in which the Bishop is father, brother, and friend to the priests, and the priests act as the Bishop's principal and irreplaceable co-workers.⁹

The Parish Priest¹⁰ of a parish is entrusted by the Bishop with the pastoral care of the parish.¹¹ Under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, whose ministry of Christ he is called to share¹², he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and the lay Christian faithful.

The role of the Parish Priest with regard to the parish school has a long history, and is defined in Church law, local policy and custom. Where a parish has a school, the Parish Priest values and supports it for the role it plays in the education of the young, which is one of his principal responsibilities.¹³

The Parish Priest acts for the parish in all juridical matters and also has responsibility for the good administration of the temporal goods (Church property and other assets) of the Parish.¹⁴ In Canon Law this includes the parish school. Accordingly, the Parish Priest will be promptly consulted in any decision making process regarding the use of parish land upon which the school is built and operates.

Notwithstanding his canonical responsibilities, the Parish Priest is also bound by Diocesan policies, guidelines and protocols as well as civil law and regulations,¹⁵ Not only the Parish Priest, but all involved in the governance and operation of Catholic Schools are bound by Canon Law, Civil Law, and Diocesan Policy.

In practice, the Parish Priest will seek the views of the School Principal and the Schools Advisory Council and, if appropriate, the Armidale Catholic School Office and the Bishop before making any decision about the use of Church property currently used by the school or which is known to be of potential use by the school.

PARISH PRIEST INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL LIFE

The Parish Priest will be involved in aspects of school life which are relevant to his role including:

- the pastoral care of staff and students
- leadership in faith, worship, prayer and liturgy.
- representation on the School Advisory Council. If a Parish Priest is unable to commit to this role, he may propose a parishioner another person from the parish for membership. This arrangement must be approved by the Bishop.
- participation on selection panels for the principal and REC positions
- optional participation on selection panels for teachers and other staff
- involvement in the appraisal process for the principal and REC
- support of school personnel in the implementation of the Diocesan religious education programme including the promotion of the classroom teaching of Religion and the religious life of the school

ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal is appointed to his/her position by the Director of Catholic Schools after a selection process in which the Parish Priest has been closely involved and having received the Bishop's approval.

The Principal provides religious, educational and organisational leadership in the school. The Principal exercises prudential stewardship of the school. The Principal has responsibility for the Catholic identity and ethos, curriculum and effective management of the school.

In discharging their responsibilities the Principal works in collaboration with the Parish Priest, school community and Armidale Catholic Schools.

ROLE OF ARMIDALE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Armidale Catholic Schools (ACS) provides faith leadership and educational, administrative, ICT, industrial, financial and employment services support for school communities.

Partnering with the Bishop, priests and school communities, Armidale Catholic Schools are committed to educational excellence and the extension of the Kingdom of God. As part of the system of schools, the ACS promotes a Catholic Professional Learning Community committed to improving the faith, learning and wellbeing of all members of the school communities.

Armidale Catholic Schools provides challenge and direction, professional services and support to school communities, and collaborates with the Parish Priest to support the individual schools.

ROLE OF THE ARMIDALE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BOARD

The Armidale Catholic Schools Board (ACSB) is responsible for the management and conduct of Armidale Catholic Schools (ACS) and exercise all powers delegated to it by the Bishop from time to time.

The Director of Schools, the ACSB Chair, and the ACSB work collaboratively with and for the Bishop for the good of the Diocesan system of schools, particularly for the good of all students and staff.

The Director of Schools is accountable to the ACSB. The ACSB does not involve itself in operational matters of the Diocesan system of schools and has no delegation to do so.

The ACSB is to ensure that the objectives of Armidale Catholic Schools are met:

- Carrying on and assisting in the carrying on and promotion of the mission of the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Armidale in connection with its charitable and apostolic activities in Catholic education;
- Governing, conducting and administering the systemic schools of the Diocese of Armidale in accordance with the beliefs, teachings and legislation of the Catholic Church; and
- Governing, conducting and administering the support services for the primary and secondary schools within the Diocese of Armidale.

The ACSB shall determine appropriate strategies to achieve these objectives and shall set key performance indicators to monitor their success.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE SCHOOL

The Catholic School forms an integral part of the parish community. The school community works collaboratively for the good of the students and staff of the school, the Church and its mission in the local area. The school community includes the Parish Priest, Principal, teaching and non-teaching school staff, parents and students. They are supported by the lay faithful in the Parish.

The Principal is accountable to the Director of Schools.

The Parish Priest and the Principal work collaboratively to create an environment of mutual understanding, respect and support, and in doing so give true witness to the faith.

The Parish Priest and the Principal ensure that members of the school and the wider faith community are educated to the authentic nature, mission and purpose of a Catholic school and that the work of the school is integrated into the strategic planning and pastoral activity of the parish.

The Parish Priest and the Principal work collaboratively for the best faith and learning outcomes of students and staff.

The close collaboration between Parish Priest and Principal will be demonstrated but not limited to:

- The faith development of the staff and students. This includes their preparation for and participation in the Sacramental life of the Church.
- The duty of care to staff, students and parents. This will involve sharing with the Principal, any knowledge of information relevant to the safety and/or wellbeing of any student or member of staff.
- Ongoing doctrinal, liturgical and pastoral formation for all members of staff.
- Regular meetings of the Parish Priest, Principal and/or leadership team.
- The appointment of a new Principal or REC to the school and their appraisals.
- The Parish Priest visiting and ministering in the school on a regular basis
- The Parish Priest and Principal will also develop a shared understanding of the stewardship responsibilities of the school facilities which are located on parish land. The stewardship must be founded on the canonical responsibilities of the Parish Priest and be mindful of the legislative and other regulatory requirements with which all occupants of parish land are required to comply.



Education

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Where the Parish Priest and the Principal cannot reach an agreement regarding a specific issue, notwithstanding the particular relationship that exists between a Priest and his Bishop, the Parish Priest and the Principal will together inform the Director of Schools in writing in order to seek support in reaching the most appropriate resolution.

If this fails to resolve the issue, the Director of Schools (or his delegate) and the Parish Priest will together inform the Chair of the Armidale Catholic Schools Board in writing.

If a dispute arises between a Parish Priest and Armidale Catholic Schools or Armidale Catholic Schools and a School Principal or community, the Director of Schools or his delegate is to raise the matter with the Chair of the Armidale Catholic Schools Board in order to seek support in reaching the most appropriate resolution.

In the event that matters are not successfully resolved by this process, the Chair of the Armidale Catholic Schools Board will consult the Bishop.

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The Bishop, Parish Priest, Principal, Armidale Catholic Schools Board and Armidale Catholic Schools have different critical roles in the leadership and work of the Catholic school. Their positive and collaborative relationship enhances and supports the role of parents/carers as the primary educators of their children. The school is the “principal means of helping parents to fulfill their role in education”.¹⁶

The parish school is a vital element in the parish’s furthering the mission of the Church, building up the People of God. It is to this end that a spirit of cooperation, harmony and common purpose is to guide all interactions.

I commend this document to everybody who holds a leadership role within our system of schools.

Yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Armidale

3rd March 2022

1. Catholic Schools at Crossroads, Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007
2. Congregation for Catholic Education. The Catholic School on the threshold of the Third Millennium, 28th December, 1997, # 9
3. Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools, # 58
4. CIC 796 §2
5. Congregation for Catholic Education, The Catholic School, 19th March, 1977, # 45
6. Congregation for Catholic Education, Lay Catholics in School: Witnesses to Faith, 15th October, 1982, # 17
7. Code of Canon Law (CIC) 806
8. IBID 804
9. The Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops from the Congregation for Bishops 2004, paragraphs 75-76)
10. For the purposes of this document, the term Parish Priest means Parish Priest, Parish Administrator or Assistant Priest acting in the role of Parish Priest in the absence of the Parish Priest
11. CIC 515 §1
12. IBID 519
13. IBID 528 §1, Canon 776
14. IBID 532
15. For example: Work Health & Safety; Employment; Privacy; Mandatory reporting and so on
16. CIC 796 §1





