

Sport and Catholic Schools



Our Particular Ethos



Sport and Catholic Schools – Our Particular Ethos

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Catholic schools exist to educate students within a Catholic vision of the world, in a school where “Christ is the foundation of the whole enterprise.” (Can 803.1)
- 1.2. This vision applies to all aspects of school life: school sports teams and individual students taking part in sports exist within this context, and contribute to this vision.
- 1.3. Catholic schools’ first priorities are their faith mission and their academic programme. The values and focus which drive the Special Character and the classroom learning are the same values which drive sports teams, sporting events, and cultural activities.
- 1.4. Sports programmes, if they are well focussed, help students to develop as full human beings with well rounded Christian values, including co-operation, dedication, respect, self esteem, self sacrifice, discipline, mutual support and encouragement, honesty, courtesy and striving for excellence.
- 1.5. If they are to reflect our Catholic ethos, all those involved with sport teams – staff, coaches, referees/umpires, students and parents – need to support a common vision of the purpose and behaviour of the team and its supporters. Many teams are now managed, coached and supervised by parents or other non-members of the school staff, and it is particularly important to discuss this common vision with them, and to seek their input into guidelines.
- 1.6. Trustees and staff would be wise to develop policies and guidelines which clearly establish the purpose of sporting participation within a Catholic school, the standards expected of participants and supporters, principles for deciding whether teams should take time out of the classroom for sporting trips, and standards of safety and behaviour on sporting trips. These policies need to take into account the school’s Mission Statement and its strategic plan.
- 1.7. It would be prudent of principals to have in place a programme for the regular promotion of appropriate behaviour for all those connected with sporting teams.

2.0 SUGGESTED RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Board:

- 2.1.1 is responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies are in place for players, coaches, referees/umpires and supporters;
- 2.1.2 ensures, as a matter of pastoral care and justice, that the school provides a safe and suitable environment, including safe equipment, satisfactory facilities and good coaches who subscribe to the school’s sporting code;
- 2.1.3 is responsible for overseeing appropriate financial arrangements for sports;
- 2.1.4 co-ordinates fundraising and grant applications as necessary;
- 2.1.5 establishes a complaints procedure and ensures incident records are kept.

2.2 The Principal:

- 2.2.1 shows ongoing interest in the sporting programme (both practices and games);
- 2.2.2 promotes sports as a way of developing Christian values;
- 2.2.3 regularly promotes messages about disciplined and respectful behaviour and other appropriate sporting values at assemblies and in school newsletters;
- 2.2.4 oversees development and regular review of appropriate policies;
- 2.2.5 as part of annual planning, works with the person in charge of sports to budget for sports, oversee the financial viability of each sporting code, ensure a safe and suitable environment and equipment, set priorities for areas of improvement if appropriate, and ensure that procedures for dealing with incidents are clear and workable;

- 2.2.6 appoints and supports coaches who ascribe to the sports ethos of the school, and are prepared to promote this with players, parents and supporters;
- 2.2.7 inevitably shoulders the opprobrium resulting from bad sporting behaviour by students, coaches or parents and supporters.

2.3 The Sports Co-ordinator

(or teacher responsible for overseeing sporting teams):

- 2.3.1 supports and develops coaches;
- 2.3.2 ensures that everyone involved (coaches, referees/umpires, players, parents and supporters) is regularly alerted to the values of the school and how these apply in the sporting situation;
- 2.3.3 ensures that the total sports programme is evaluated each year (as well as individual sports);
- 2.3.4 ensures that individual codes are fairly funded, and given equitable treatment in relation to coaching time, use of facilities, any time taken out of school for important events etc. Establishes clear financial guidelines for any fundraising activities, including grant applications;
- 2.3.5 takes responsibility for ensuring the school's policies and guidelines are adhered to, especially in relation to sports trips;
- 2.3.6 takes responsibility for the school's annual sporting handbook. This handbook explains fees, uniforms, practice times etc, gives any necessary details about supervision of students at practice and matches, parental pick-up responsibilities, policy about travel and overnight trips etc. It should also set the tone for sports, explaining everyone's responsibilities and defining appropriate conduct for players, referees/umpires, coaches, parents and supporters. It includes codes of conduct, to be signed up to by players and parents;
- 2.3.7 develops appropriate procedures for dealing with incidents of foul play and inappropriate behaviour, keeps written notes of such incidents. and makes sure that everyone involved knows the consequences of poor behaviour;
- 2.3.8 ensures that the complaints procedure is followed and incident records are kept, with follow up as appropriate;
- 2.3.9 ensures that notes of congratulations and thanks are sent to teams, coaches, umpires and parents as appropriate, including notes to commend good behaviour;
- 2.3.10 regularly promotes appropriate sporting values and activities.

2.4 Coaches:

- 2.4.1 model responsible Christian adult behaviour;
- 2.4.2 set goals, values and attitudes which will inspire their team members and challenge them to excellence, discipline and respectful behaviour at all times;
- 2.4.3 coach reliably, effectively and with the total welfare of all their players in mind.

2.5 Referees or Umpires:

- 2.5.1 umpire games without showing bias;
- 2.5.2 support fair play;
- 2.5.3 develop their skill set;
- 2.5.4 reflect the values of the school.

2.6 Players:

- 2.6.1 learn to be supportive and to model good behaviour for each other, lead and mentor team members and younger players, contribute to team spirit and fair play, behave with courtesy to their own and the opposing team even if provoked, and remain positive even if unfairly treated or criticised.

2.7 Parents and supporters:

- 2.7.1 are made aware of the school's sporting values and behaviours, and receive a clear message that they will be asked not to attend matches if they are not prepared to support these values and behaviours.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1. Schools are encouraged to use SPARC's Active Schools Toolkit, including *Get Ready* (for principals, management teams and Boards of Trustees) and *Get Started* (for teachers), to support the quality of their sports services.
- 3.2. Sporting activities provide an excellent area for the development of the whole person, in particular for the development of Christian values in action. It is worthwhile revisiting this vision regularly.

New Zealand Catholic Education Office
July 2011