



St Patrick's Catholic School

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Response to Government Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools

This submission addresses the particular areas of (b) and (d) of the terms of reference:

(b) inquire into and report upon the measures necessary to prevent and remedy discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff

(d) examine and recommend what efforts are being made and should be made towards meeting those obligations by Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff.

St Patrick's Catholic School, Latrobe is situated in North-West Tasmania. We provide quality education for 193 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

At St Patrick's Catholic School, we position ourselves as being distinctive to offer something that meets the needs of our families and community that is not readily available in secular schools. Our school has a responsibility for educating children in the moral and spiritual dimension, and it is through Religious Education that faith and culture is brought together and made relevant to students' lives. Catholic social teaching informs and strengthens students' social conscience, and they come to understand the teaching of Jesus Christ. We have created an authentic Christian community with a sense of welcome, belonging and inclusiveness. Our Catholic School emphasises our commitment to the dignity of all.

St Patrick's Catholic School has an Outreach program, where we have implemented practical ways to reach out to those in need in our community. On the feast day of St Patrick, our school held a mini maker's market, where each class made items to sell, such as plants and painted pots, cupcakes, jams and preserves. Funds raised were donated to Gran's Van at Devonport to help provide meals for those in need. Throughout the year, students work in our school garden regularly; and fruit and vegetables are donated to Gran's Table also at Devonport. Our Mini Vinnies group is quite active during the year. So far, they have organised a Soup Day to raise money for our Outreach program and a Can for Casual Clothes Day. All food items were donated to St Vincent de Paul. Through these experiences, students explore what it means to be human, developing skills that enrich a way of life that is purposeful, to develop shared responsibility for what is right and good in their community.

At St Patrick's Catholic School, we ensure we follow Catholic Education Tasmania Enrolment Policy and Procedures. Our school has a responsibility to provide an education to those who are underprivileged, disadvantaged and marginalised, and provide protection against discrimination. We support the students with pastoral circumstances such as those students who have a disability and those who may be a

humanitarian entrant. We support students in line with the Disability Discrimination Act by providing learning programs that specifically address their needs with adjustments, supported by teacher assistants, and resources that will enhance their learning. During enrolment interviews, parents/guardians express that they choose our school because they have heard great things about us; our school reflects their values and beliefs; and we have a reputation for supporting students with needs.

Parent voice: "As a new family to the school this year, we have found St Patrick's to be very warm and welcoming. Everybody is friendly, caring and respectful. It's a true credit to the staff and students we are so happy to now be a part of it."

We assist those who are unable to pay fees. We provide uniforms to those who are unable to afford them. At its roots, our school is a school for all, and we are obligated to identify the poverty that exists in our local context and ensure we are accessible to all families regardless of financial, pastoral and personal circumstances. We ensure that St Patrick's Catholic School operates out of the paradigm consistent with social justice and community.

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) is a framework for creating and maintaining a positive and safe learning environment that enhances our school culture where we maximise individual academic and social growth.

SWPBS:

- Has a common purpose and approach to discipline
- Clear set of positive expectations and behaviours
- Procedures to teaching expected behaviour
- Continuum of procedures for discouraging inappropriate behaviour
- Procedures for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

At St Patrick's Catholic School, we explicitly teach three behavioural expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. In other words, rather than telling students what not to do, the school focuses on the preferred behaviours.

We are a community of Engaged, Respectful and Responsible Learners

With SWPBS we collect data so we can monitor and evaluate:

- Minor problem events
- Major problem events
- How often are the problem behaviour events occurring?
- Where are they happening?
- What types of problem behaviours?
- When are the problems occurring?
- Who is contributing?

We have processes in place for dealing with all levels of behaviour including bullying.

Parent voice: "My husband and myself wish to commend St Patrick's Catholic School and Staff for prompt investigation and monitoring concerning recent events with our child. These events causing various issues with both physical and mental health are making children aware of what they believe is normal behaviour can lead to further issues and a non-tolerance approach, and education is the key to safe and happy children within the school environment."

Student voice: I feel happy at St Patrick's School because I have lots of kind and WEST friends.

Pastoral care and wellbeing of staff and students is a priority at St Patrick's Catholic School. We use Rumbles Quest to measure the social emotional wellbeing of our

students each year. The Rumbles Quest survey provides students with an opportunity to measure their own wellbeing across four domains including attachment to school; emotional and behavioural self-regulation; social confidence with respect to peer relationships; and supportive environments and relationships with caring adults. The data allows us to drill down into individual results so we can understand the challenges in our students.

Student voice: "St Patrick's is a safe caring school because everyone is respectful, kind and best of all compassionate."

We explicitly teach researched based programs for students such as Grow Your Mind and URStrong by Friendology. Through our Grow Your Mind program, we teach students mental health strategies to enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of children. In Grow Your Mind, students are introduced to the brain and your mind. Students are explicitly taught about friendships and belonging, as well as emotional regulation, resilience and character strengths, and gratitude and joy. URStrong teaches students a common language for friendships, how to resolve issues with friends and make friendships closer and stronger, and how to stand up for themselves in a kind respectful way.

Student voice: "The best thing about my school is the way people treat me."

This year, we have also had guest presenters such as Speak Up and Stay Chatty for year 6 students, and later in the year Live Life to the Whole for girls. We have also had visiting guest presenters such as ThinkUKnow and Bravehearts. As well as supporting the various programs in the school, our Wellbeing Officer works with students who require self-regulation and self-awareness, with programs such as Zones of Regulation and Interoception. She connects with students daily, organises and runs breakfast club and lunchtime activities. A CatholicCare counsellor works at St Patrick's Catholic School two days per week providing compassionate care to students to improve their social, emotional and mental development.

Student voice: "When I am upset at school, I can talk to my friends and if it's a bigger problem, a teacher."

St Patrick's Catholic School is committed to ensuring the safety and positive wellbeing of our students (and staff) in our care. We employ researched based frameworks and programs to explicitly teach the strategies and skills to build positive relationships amongst students in our school. Our Religious Education curriculum is taught to promote human flourishing for each child enrolled. We are a school that is open to all, and we serve the community by being centred on the teachings of Jesus, creating a welcoming environment by being compassionate, sensitive to the issues such as marginalised students and those in need of support.

Signed: 

Mrs Carmen Aylott

Principal

St Patrick's Catholic School

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