



Ecumenical Schools: A Roman Catholic Perspective

Archdiocese of Brisbane





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Brisbane Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Brisbane
243 Gladstone Road
Dutton Park
GPO Box 1201
Brisbane 4001, AUSTRALIA
Email: cec@bne.catholic.edu.au
Web: www.brisbanecatholicschools.com.au

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The Archbishop acknowledges the assistance given to this project by members of the Catholic Education Council and Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations. The Working Party included:

Co-Chairs

Rev Dr David Pascoe, chair Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations
Ms Kerry Rush, Education Officer - Religious Education, Brisbane Catholic Education

Members

Mr Brian Blaney, principal Emmaus College, Jimboomba
Mr Greg Casey, principal Jubilee Primary School, Gaven
Rev John Fitz-Herbert, parish priest Browns Plains
Mr Rudy Goosem, principal Unity College, Caloundra
Mr Eddie Howard, member of the Catholic Education Council
Sr Mary McDonald SGS, chair of the Catholic Education Council
Mr Neville McDonald, area supervisor South Coast Region, Brisbane Catholic Education
Ms Trish McGrath, delegate of the Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations
Mrs Patricia Meulman, coordinator Multimedia Centre, Brisbane Catholic Education
Mr Pat Mullins, delegate of the Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations
Ms Margaret Naylon, executive officer Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations
Ms Toni Pride, delegate of the Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations



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Foreword

This revised statement is a further instance of cooperation between the Catholic Education Council and the Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations.

As the document points out, "ecumenical schooling is evidence of the vital spirit-guided activity of the churches that cooperate in the Church's mission of the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole world."

The Second Vatican Council exhorted the Church to be open to and develop ecumenical cooperation in all dimensions of Church life.

Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses that bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant. Such cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more. It could contribute to a just appreciation of the dignity of the human person, to the promotion of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, and the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit. (Decree on Ecumenism #12)

The cooperation between Christian Churches in the education of children has already borne much fruit in the Archdiocese. I commend this revised statement with its intentional incorporation of the experience of ecumenical schools from the last twenty years as an important guide to further ecumenical endeavours in the future.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John Bathersby".

The Most Reverend John A. Bathersby DD
ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE
October 2009

Contents

Foreword	
	Page
Introduction	2
History	3
A Roman Catholic Perspective on Ecumenism	5
Rationale for Ecumenical Partnership in Education	7
Principles of Ecumenical Schooling	8
Ethos of an Ecumenical School	10
Leadership in an Ecumenical School	10
Local Pastors and the Ecumenical School	12
Staffing an Ecumenical School	13
• Staff induction and formation	
Religious Education in an Ecumenical School	15
• Purpose of religious education in an ecumenical school	
• The classroom teaching of religion from an ecumenical perspective	
• The religious life of the school from an ecumenical perspective	
• Religious identity and culture	
• Evangelisation and faith formation	
• Prayer and worship	
• Social action and justice	
Guidelines for Enrolment Policy in an Ecumenical School	19
Legal, Financial and Governance Issues	19
Reflections on some Aspects of the Journey	23
• A pastor's perspective	
• Part of an ecumenical journey – Jubilee Primary School, Gaven	
• Reflections on ecumenism at Emmaus College, Jimboomba	
• Reflections on the journey of Unity College, Caloundra	
Definition	
The Lund Principle	28
Appendix	
Appendix A - Blessed and Broken. Pastoral Guidelines for Eucharistic Hospitality Archdiocese of Brisbane	28
Appendix B - Local Covenant	29
Appendix C - Canonical Agreement between the local parish Catholic pastor and the Catholic Archbishop	30
References	32

Introduction

In 2006 Unity College, Caloundra opened as the third ecumenical school initiated by a local community and supported by Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. While a number of documents related to ecumenism and education have been produced by various Archdiocesan bodies in the past twenty years, none has been able to draw on the experience and expertise of those involved in these schools.

The Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations approached Brisbane Catholic Education in late 2005 with a proposal to review the *Document for the Catholic Perspective in Ecumenical Schools* (1997). The Commission believed that a great deal could be learnt from the three ecumenical school communities currently operating under the auspices of Brisbane Catholic Education and that it would be beneficial to have this experience available to a wider audience.

A joint working party of the Catholic Education Council and the Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations was established and began consultation in 2006. The working party developed the current document as the result of that consultation. The first part provides policy guidance to existing and establishing ecumenical schools that are under the auspices of the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. The second part provides an historical reflection of the experience of ecumenical schools within the Archdiocese.

This document provides guidance for those in the planning stages of a new ecumenical venture; and those involved in operating an existing ecumenical school.

The audience for this revised document includes:

- the clergy and the parish community considering the establishment of an ecumenical school
- planning bodies (e.g. BCEO personnel) looking at establishing a new ecumenical school
- the clergy of neighbouring Catholic parishes
- the steering committee for an ecumenical school
- Catholic parents considering enrolling their children
- pastors and the communities of other Christian Churches considering being part of a project to set up an ecumenical school
- members of the board of an ecumenical school
- staff of an ecumenical school.

In this document the term ecumenical, when related to schooling, refers to the ecumenical approach.

History

The concept of ecumenical schooling in the Archdiocese of Brisbane emerged in the late 1970s. Brisbane Catholic Education sought to provide secondary education for Roman Catholic students in the rapidly-developing residential areas in the City of Brisbane. One innovative model of schooling in this context was the ecumenical school.

In the 1980s, a joint taskforce was set up and produced a document – *Guidelines for Ecumenical and Interchurch Schools: A Catholic Perspective*. This was the first of a number of joint initiatives in the area of ecumenism.

In 1990, a document was prepared entitled *Recommendations Concerning the Pastoral Care of Christian Pupils Other than Catholics Enrolled in Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane*. This was updated in 2000 by another taskforce in a document *The Pastoral Care of Students of Other Traditions in Our Catholic Schools*.

Within the Archdiocese, under the leadership of Archbishop John Bathersby (1991 - present), and supported by Bishop Michael Putney, ecumenism became a priority.

In 1996, the Heads of Churches Ecumenical Projects Team monitored new housing developments at Springfield, Forest Lake and Helensvale/Pacific Pines. These offered opportunities for ecumenical collaboration in the provision of pastoral and educational services. The Commission for Ecumenism was asked to establish two taskforces, one for schools and the other to provide guidelines for ecumenical worship spaces.

Underlying the establishment of the former taskforce for schools was the recognition of the need for the Church to work out its position on ecumenical schooling before engaging in wider ecumenical dialogue. There was a growing awareness of questions surrounding the question of children from other Christian traditions enrolling in Roman Catholic schools, and an increase in requests for ecumenical schools.



A document was produced in 1997 *Document for the Catholic Perspective in Ecumenical Schools*. These guidelines assisted in the establishment of three ecumenical schools over the next 10 years.

Jubilee Primary School at Gaven in the Oxenford Parish

This partnership of the Anglican, Father's Heart Apostolic, Roman Catholic and Uniting Church communities in the northern Gold Coast area commenced in 2001. It provides education from Prep to Year 7.

Emmaus College at Jimboomba in the Browns Plains Parish

This partnership of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting Church communities commenced in 2002. It is building towards providing education from Prep to Year 12, with its first Year 12 group graduating in 2010.

Unity College at Caloundra West in the Caloundra Parish

This partnership of the Roman Catholic and Uniting Church communities commenced in 2006. It will provide education for students from Prep to Year 12.

These schools were developed after a long process of consultation and dialogue within the local communities. The ecumenical orientation grew from the experiences of the local communities as they operate collegially and collaboratively. Brisbane Catholic Education's role was one of identifying the areas in which new schools were to be developed, and through the development of education briefs to facilitate the dialogue about the orientation of individual schools within the mission of the Archdiocese. Each of these communities expressed a desire to work ecumenically based on their experience. Catholic Education staff provided support through the development of policies, procedures and resourcing. As the development and continued operation of schools is a complex matter requiring extensive resourcing, these schools are owned and administered by Brisbane Catholic Education. They continue to grow and are a testament to the strong ecumenical relations and commitment that exist in each of the communities.



A Roman Catholic Perspective on Ecumenism

Oikoumene (ecumenism) – of the whole inhabited earth

The Roman Catholic Church was a late-comer to the ecumenical movement. Recognition of the necessity for Christian Unity began in the nineteenth century as Anglican and Protestant missionaries spread throughout the world. As they preached against one another competing to 'win souls' and, the scandal of disunity became apparent. At the same time youth movements such as Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Woman's Christian Association (YWCA) were founded and took personal faith in Jesus Christ as their basis of membership.

The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910 is generally recognised as the occasion for the official birth of the modern ecumenical movement. As a result of the conference several ecumenical projects and agencies were founded. In 1925, the Life and Work Movement was established to allow churches to work together in confronting social issues, particularly peace and poverty in the wake of World War I. Formal theological dialogues began in 1927 with the founding of the Faith and Order Movement. In the aftermath of World War II, the World Council of Churches was born in 1948.

Although individual Roman Catholics had been involved in the search for Christian Unity for some time, it was the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) that launched the Roman Catholic Church into the ecumenical movement.

While there are many different approaches to ecumenism, the Roman Catholic Church sees the ecumenical movement as inspired by the Holy Spirit to draw the various Christian Churches into full visible unity through relationships of dialogue and collaboration. The purpose of these relationships is to bring the churches closer toward the goal of restoring their original communion which has been lost in a number of divisions throughout history. Ecumenical activity is effective only when those participating in the movement are both faithful to their own tradition and open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. There can be no compromise in matters of faith, but neither can there be any lack of openness. The visible unity of the church is what is sought.

The following quotations are taken from foundational documents of the Roman Catholic Church highlighting the importance of ecumenism.

The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one church and one church only.

(Second Vatican Council: *Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis Redintegratio*, 21 November 1964 #1)

In recent times more than ever before, He has been rousing divided Christians to remorse over their divisions and to a longing for unity. Everywhere large numbers have felt the impulse of this grace, and among our separated brethren also there increases from day to day the movement, fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the restoration of unity among all Christians. This movement toward unity is called "ecumenical." Those belong to it who invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, doing this not merely as individuals but also as corporate bodies. For almost everyone regards the body in which he has heard the Gospel as his Church and indeed, God's Church. All however, though in different ways, long for the

one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal and set forth into the world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God.

(Second Vatican Council: Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 21 November 1964 #1)

*The unity willed by God can be attained only by the adherence of all to the content of revealed faith in its entirety. In matters of faith, compromise is in contradiction with God who is Truth. In the Body of Christ, 'the way, and the truth, and the life' (Jn 14:6), who could consider legitimate a reconciliation brought about at the expense of the truth? The Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae* attributes to human dignity the quest for truth, 'especially in what concerns God and his Church', and adherence to truth's demands. A 'being together' which betrayed the truth would thus be opposed both to the nature of God who offers his communion and to the need for truth found in the depths of every human heart.*

(Encyclical Letter of John Paul II: *That They May Be One, Ut Unum Sint*, 25 May 1995, #18)

*Dialogue does not extend exclusively to matters of doctrine but engages the whole person; it is also a dialogue of love. The Council has stated: 'Catholics must joyfully acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments from our common heritage which are to be found among our separated brothers and sisters. It is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood. For God is always wonderful in his works and worthy of admiration'. (*Unitatis Redintegratio* #4)*

(Encyclical Letter of John Paul II: *That They May Be One, Ut Unum Sint*, 25 May 1995, #47)

Rationale for Partnership in Education

Ecumenical schools are one dimension of the broader Christian ecumenical movement. These schools provide an opportunity for the churches to 'live' ecumenically, to express concretely their desire for visible unity. The churches seek to form a mutual partnership of dialogue and collaboration.

Ecumenical schools are one means of implementing the principle enunciated at the World Council of Churches Third Conference of Faith and Order in Lund, Sweden in 1952:

We earnestly request our churches to consider whether they are doing all they ought to do to manifest the oneness of the people of God. Should not our churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other churches and whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?... Obedience to God demands also that the churches seek unity in their mission to the world.

A distinction needs to be made between different approaches to 'ecumenical' schooling. These are ecumenical, inter-denominational and non-denominational.

In an ecumenical school denominational differences are respected and considered within the agenda of the meeting or the project. The goal in the long term is reunion; in the short term, manifestation of this unity is already a reality through common baptism, in mission and worship.

In an inter-denominational school denominational differences are acknowledged and respected but deliberately not dealt with in the agenda of the meeting or the project. The goal is denominational cooperation in the project. In a non-denominational school denominational differences are excluded from the agenda of the meeting. The goal is individual cooperation in the project.



Principles of Ecumenical Schooling

The fundamental principle that guides ecumenical schooling rests in the nature of the Church as one, and the contradictory reality of the various Christian denominations divided from one another. Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism* (#1) proclaims:

Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalises the world, and damages the most holy cause, the preaching the Gospel to every creature. (Second Vatican Council: Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis Redintegratio, 21 November 1964, #1)

The endeavour to collaborate through ecumenical schooling is one way by which the churches seek to overcome their divisions through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit and proclaim the Gospel together.

A powerful scriptural authority that undergirds this principle is Jesus' words of prayer from John's Gospel (17:20-21):

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.

The Catholic Church recognises the imperative for ecumenical endeavours that move the church toward visible unity. These endeavours are to be carried out through many forms of dialogue with other Christian Churches that seek to express a more perfect communion of the bonds of baptism that already existing between them.

Ecumenical schooling is evidence of the vital spirit-guided activity of the churches that cooperate in the church's mission of the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole world.

Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses that bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant. Such cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more. It should contribute to a just appreciation of the dignity of the human person, to the promotion of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, and the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit. Through such cooperation, all believers in Christ are able to learn more easily how they can understand each other better and esteem each other more, and how the road to unity of Christians may be made smooth.

(Decree on Ecumenism #12)

This agenda for ecumenical cooperation outlined by Vatican II provides an admirable framework for the context of learning and teaching in a school environment. Dialogue among those Christian traditions in an ecumenical school develops greater understanding and mutual cooperation among the churches and gives expression to the shared vision and mission in proclaiming the Gospel.

This fundamental principle for ecumenical schooling is developed in the following sections of this document. The following list of principles has been distilled from Church documents and scripture. They provide support to those planning a new ecumenical school and those reviewing an ecumenical school already in operation. Ecumenical schools aim to:

- promote reconciliation and the restoration of the unity of all Christians fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit
- recognise the baptismal equality of all Christians
- encourage ongoing dialogue and lifelong learning about ecumenism
- encourage a growth in understanding the traditions of the Christian communities involved in the ecumenical partnership
- build welcoming Christian communities with sincerity and hospitality
- provide opportunities to experience the richness of the religious practices of the participating traditions
- develop relationships that promote dignity, respect, esteem and a greater understanding for those within and beyond the ecumenical partnership
- acknowledge the shared wisdom within and beyond the participating traditions through collaborative partnerships and the lived expression of *Christ as Servant*
- promote excellence in learning underpinned by Gospel values and their lived expression
- encourage and support the vision and mission of the participating church communities.



Ethos of an Ecumenical School

In an ecumenical school, the ethos, the lived expression of the school community's shared core values and beliefs, is shaped by the collaborative spirit of all involved in the school community. The tradition of each participating church and the efforts of all parties to journey together towards the unity Christ desired for all are integral in creating the ethos. Such an ethos is characterised by personal and communal prayer, reconciliation, and openness to the Spirit's gift of unity and love, which underpins every effort to build and celebrate relationships in the school community. The ethos of a school is also built on underpinning principles of ecumenical schooling. These principles inform and sustain the ethos of an ecumenical school.

The ethos of an ecumenical school is encapsulated in the development, reflection and evaluation of the school's vision. To arrive at a vision statement for an ecumenical school, it is important that those working at the initial stages of the school's development are given opportunities to share their values, visions, perspectives, dreams and concerns before committing to the final draft of the school's vision. The vision which is unique to each school is formulated in the early stages of planning and is endorsed and renewed by the school leadership and community during the first years of development.

Leadership in an Ecumenical School

Leadership in an ecumenical school is committed to the principles of the Gospel and ecumenism and strives to engage proactively with the community in creating a robust school ethos and culture. While leadership in an ecumenical school requires general educational leadership qualities, it also necessitates a strong commitment to ecumenism. The leaders of ecumenical schools strive to make a significant contribution towards the restoration of Christian unity by:

- recognising baptismal equality
- promoting excellence and inclusiveness in Christian education
- providing quality educational opportunities for all students
- promoting relationships that value dignity, respect, esteem and understanding
- providing educational support and spiritual development to assist the growth of each person
- providing for the diversity of students' Christian denominational backgrounds, development, capacity, cultural background, religious background, gender, interests and needs
- welcoming and involving the participating church communities and contributing to the life of those communities
- providing opportunities for the sharing of beliefs
- dialoguing and interacting in partnership always acknowledging the shared wisdom within and beyond the school community
- encouraging and supporting the mission endeavours of the participating church communities
- working for justice and peace.

Leadership in an ecumenical school is driven by the principal and is upheld in collaboration with all members of the Leadership Team. Members of staff also have a leadership role in the development and ongoing running of an ecumenical school.

The principal, with others, helps create an atmosphere in which healthy interpersonal relationships form the basis of all structures and practices designed to support the vision, mission and policies of the school. Within the current ecumenical schooling structures of the three existing schools, full authority to carry out the responsibilities of the position is delegated to the principal by the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

Leadership in an ecumenical school is modelled on the Gospel and supports the ecumenical principle: *that all may be one, so that the world may believe*. (John 17:21). Leading in an ecumenical setting challenges all to: *act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately*. (World Council of Churches Third Conference of Faith and Order in Lund, Sweden in 1952)

As people of faith, leaders in an ecumenical school bring knowledge and experience of their own journey in faith and tradition. Beyond this, they are required to have an openness of spirit to dialogue and a capacity to listen to other churches' positions; a capacity to learn about ecumenism and keep informed about current global and local ecumenical dialogue.

All school leaders are required to have a capacity to discern diverse positions before making and implementing decisions, strategic plans and directions. Leaders in ecumenical schools are required to have the same capacities when applying these processes to situations where differences in beliefs and values may be evident in members of participating churches. In order to implement decisions and plans, leaders in ecumenical schools need to guide and communicate to staff and other members of the school community, the underpinning beliefs and values that inform decisions.

Decision-making processes made about the classroom teaching of religion and the religious life of the school take into account the complexity of the church communities involved and the ecclesial situations of the particular churches. Leaders and decision-makers need also be sensitive to, and grounded in, a philosophy that emphasises the shared wisdom model: *that no one has all of the wisdom, everyone has a different piece of the wisdom, and everyone has some of the wisdom*. (Benet McKinney 1998)

Leaders in school communities have a commitment to lifelong learning that provides for adequate induction, formation and professional development of all members of staff. They are also committed to lifelong learning that promotes further understanding of the traditions of the Christian communities; the principles of ecumenical schooling; the school's vision and mission; and the diverse needs and capacities of staff from different Christian denominations.

Local Pastors and the Ecumenical School

Schools grow out of and are part of their local community. A distinguishing aspect of an ecumenical school is that it is sourced from and closely connected with two or more faith communities. The fact that an ecumenical school is proposed indicates that these communities have built up a respectful and trusting relationship and a shared understanding of ecumenical cooperation as part of their Christian mission. It can be assumed that the faith communities planning an ecumenical school have, for several years, been involved in dialogue and cooperation in areas other than education.

The ecumenical vision and commitment of the leadership, and in particular the pastor, of each of the faith communities is vital to this whole process. While much ecumenical activity can be initiated and carried out by committed community members, it is often the relationship that has developed between local pastors that leads to major projects such as ecumenical schools. In the Archdiocese of Brisbane, where schools are owned and administered by Brisbane Catholic Education, these foundational relationships are especially important for the Roman Catholic pastor.

The experience of the three existing schools has shown that they have benefitted greatly from the active involvement of the pastors from each of the participating communities. Pastors are frequently members of the school board and build up strong working relationships with the school leadership. A common practice has been a meeting each term between the pastors and the school Leadership Team to support the religious education program and ensure that it meets the needs of the diverse traditions.

The liturgical life of the school provides further opportunities for pastors to exercise their leadership and to witness to their commitment to work and to pray for the restoration of the unity of the Body of Christ. Local pastors may either rotate or share this role in leading the prayer life of the school. Eucharistic celebrations are in a different category, but the discussions of how these celebrations are to be provided opens up the possibility of fruitful ecumenical dialogue. A point of reference is the *Blessed and Broken; Pastoral Guidelines for Eucharistic Hospitality*. (Archdiocese of Brisbane 1995)



Pastoral care of staff, students and their families, especially at significant times such as births, illnesses and deaths, is an essential ministry within the school community and provides further occasions for ecumenical cooperation and enrichment by the pastors.

As each school has different features and needs, the specifics of the role of the pastor within the ecumenical school community will vary. However, the key nature of the role cannot be over-emphasised. Recognition of the baptismal equality of all Christians and of the need to journey together towards the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed is important for all involved in the leadership of an ecumenical school.

Staffing an Ecumenical School

The administrating body of an ecumenical school allocates leadership positions and selected candidates in accordance with the eligibility criteria for ecumenical schools. Those selected are to be participating members of one of the Christian Churches involved in the school and are expected to support the ecumenical mission of the wider church community. The interview and selection process is developed with the involvement of the participating local churches.

Prior to employment, staff members are required to provide a reference from their local pastor. The first criterion for the selection of staff is that they are committed members of their particular Christian tradition. Ideally, all staff will be practising Christians of mainstream Christian traditions. For those ecumenical schools that are administered by the Archdiocese of Brisbane, teachers of religious education require accreditation in accordance with the accreditation guidelines. The faith and conscience of students and staff from all church traditions are respected. Facilities are available to clergy of all communities for spiritual and sacramental ministry to their own faithful attending an ecumenical school.

Staff induction and formation

All staff are expected to consciously and actively support the vision and be grounded in the ethos, philosophy and values of the school. Ongoing induction and formation on ecumenism and the principles of ecumenical schooling are vital for the whole staff. Some of this can be achieved through existing ecumenical schools sharing experiences, approaches, knowledge, past projects and future directions.

The local Diocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations is also a valuable resource and can provide formation and support on a wide range of ecumenical issues.

Another area of induction and formation is the need for school leadership and staff to become more aware of the governance of participating churches and their schools. Such understandings will facilitate a more authentic representation of each of the participating churches. A further extension of this would involve induction and formation of leadership and staff working in partnership with and learning from the educational arms of the participating churches. This facilitates the sharing of professional knowledge, approaches to curriculum, the teaching of religion and sharing of quality resources.



Religious Education in an Ecumenical School

Religious education in an ecumenical school is a partnership of family, school and the local church communities. The term 'religious education' refers to a wide range of activities that take place in homes, religious communities, parishes, schools and the broader community.

The ecumenical school setting has as its purpose the provision of a Christian education for its students. There are two distinct, yet complementary dimensions of religious education - these are the educational dimension and the area of faith formation. The first dimension, most commonly referred to as the classroom learning and teaching of religion, is focused on religious education as an educational activity. It utilises a range of quality learning and teaching processes and resources to meet the diverse needs and capacities of learners from the religious denominations. The second dimension, faith formation, is reflected in the religious life of the school with its particular ecumenical focus, and in the family and local faith communities. The two dimensions are inextricably linked in a complex web of experiences that have the potential to nurture the Christian faith life of young people.

Policies relating to the religious dimension of the school and to the teaching of religion in the classroom are to be developed in collaboration with each of the participating churches and with a mindfulness of ecumenical principles. In the same spirit, the ecumenical school community will aim to do together in study, and in worship, whatever is agreed to be in accord with the teachings and traditions of each of the participating churches.

Purpose of religious education in an ecumenical school

The purpose of religious education in an ecumenical school is to focus attention on the religious and moral development of all students within a framework of Christianity. Religious education is one means of empowering students in their quest for God.

Religious education in an ecumenical school:

- enables students understand and appreciate both their own and others' religious heritage
- communicates about religious matters from an ecumenical perspective
- provides one means by which students are assisted to develop their spiritual and moral capacities
- heighten students' awareness of the mystery which permeates all life
- enables students to grow in their knowledge and understanding of God
- enables students to develop their moral sensitivities and sense of responsibility
- enables students to develop self-worth
- promotes personal and communal sustainable lifestyles and establishes community partnerships that care for God's creation
- enables students to understand the role Christian faith plays in human affairs and achievements
- provides students with opportunities to engage in practical projects designed to promote and support a just society.

The classroom teaching of religion from an ecumenical perspective

Religious education is recognised as a key learning area within the school curriculum with appropriate approved time allocation. In the religious education program emphasis is given to content that the participating churches hold in common. In a true ecumenical spirit, the differences among them will also be acknowledged. It is a valuable exercise in fostering the ecumenical nature of the school for teachers, pastors, parents and other members of the wider community to participate in dialogue about their differences.

Within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, schools sponsored by Brisbane Catholic Education, including ecumenical schools, base their religious education program for the classroom teaching of religion on the *Religious Education Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Brisbane*. Religious education programs have Jesus Christ at their heart and provide the students with a solid grounding in the Christian faith, its history and its practice. It also gives special attention to the study of ecumenism, emphasising historical moments where differences have emerged, and events influencing relationships between the churches which have given rise to modern ecumenical movements.

It is important for students to have the opportunity to experience and to understand, at an age appropriate level, the particular beliefs and practices of each of the Christian traditions and the relationships between the various traditions. Therefore, appropriate availability of religious education resources that reflect the different religious traditions in the school is required.

It may be appropriate at times for classroom and beyond classroom activities to be conducted in denominational groupings. This would be where a particular body of denominational teaching or a particular denominational practice would not be appropriate for the members of other Christian traditions or where it might cause offence to them.

The religious life of the school from an ecumenical perspective

The religious life of an ecumenical school provides opportunities for members of the school community to grow in Christian faith through prayer, worship, a Christian environment, community, formation, outreach, social action and justice. This dimension of religious education outwardly demonstrates the ecumenical nature of the school.

Four focus areas constituting the religious life of an ecumenical school are; Religious Identity and Culture; Prayer and Worship; Evangelisation and Faith Formation; and Social Action and Justice. An ecumenical school community can use these four areas to review their religious life and to plan for future development.

The *Guidelines for the Religious Life of the School* (2008) endorsed by the Archbishop is a significant reference point for the Roman Catholic perspective. For example, with regard to the celebration of the sacraments, worship needs to occur with due sensitivity to students of all traditions who may also wish to celebrate and ritualise aspects of their own traditions on special occasions.

Religious identity and culture

Elements within this area include the ethos, identity and charism of the ecumenical school; the aesthetic environment including choice of religious art, provision and design of sacred and reflective space; pastoral care and personal and social development programs; school policy, procedures, organisation and structure. The environment and culture of the ecumenical school is shaped by the collaborative spirit of members of

the school community. A special contribution to the Religious Identity and Culture of an ecumenical school comes from the traditions of the participating churches. The proclaimed ecumenical school environment and culture align rhetoric and reality, the philosophy and the practice of all the participating churches.

Evangelisation and faith formation

Elements within this area include the building and celebration of Christian community; the provision of opportunities for the evangelisation and faith formation of students and staff in the participating church communities; participation of families in the life of the school and engagement with wider faith communities of participating churches. Faith formation in ecumenical schools needs to be of an invitational nature and handled very sensitively with respect for the beliefs and values of the participating churches.

Prayer and worship

Prayer and worship in the ecumenical school requires thoughtful consideration on the part of the organisers and facilitators of these experiences so that they reflect openness to the Spirit's gifts of unity and love. Sensitivity to participation by students from various Christian traditions needs to be considered. The place of the celebration of the Eucharist in an ecumenical school needs to be sensitively established for each of the participating faith communities.

Social action and justice

Elements within this area include action for justice, peace and ecological sustainability and reflection on such action in the light of the Gospel; support of Christian agencies such as Caritas, Spiritus, Red Shield, Uniting Care and engagement in structured social service and outreach programs.

Religious education is a very significant area of learning and of experience in an ecumenical school. When the classroom teaching of religion and the religious life of the ecumenical school are valued and considered priorities, religious education has the potential to influence and transform lives.





Guidelines for the Enrolment Policy

The sponsoring Churches, in their initial agreement preparatory to the commencement of an ecumenical school, agree on the parameters of the enrolment policy for the school. These parameters ensure that the school is truly ecumenical. This requires that students are enrolled from amongst the sponsor churches or other Christian Churches whose members are broadly committed to the ecumenical journey, the Christian ethos of the school, and the traditions of the participating churches.

The enrolment policy and processes of an ecumenical school make provision for the inclusion of the school's ecumenical goals and mission statement in its prospectus or other pre-enrolment materials provided to prospective parents or guardians.

The enrolment policy for an ecumenical school gives priority to students of families who preferably have some initial understanding and appreciation of their particular Christian tradition and of the ecumenical journey. The enrolment policy of an ecumenical school may permit the enrolment of students who are not Christian but who are nonetheless committed to their respective faiths.

Such students and their families are respectful of the Christian faith and willing to participate alongside Christians in their journey of faith. The enrolment policy and procedures of an ecumenical school include appropriate processes for a written application which will elicit from parents or guardians information necessary for the school management to properly identify students best suited for enrolment at the school. The enrolment policy includes the supply of evidence of baptism or the supply of appropriate references.

Legal, Financial and Governance Issues

An ecumenical school is an example to all of Christian Churches acting together and in line with the Lund Principle. It is necessary for sponsoring bodies from the respective cooperating churches to reach agreement in relation to the legal, structural, financial and governance issues prior to the commencement of an ecumenical school. There are several models of governance. Three common models are: one church to be the sponsoring body of the ecumenical school; churches form in equal partnership to govern the ecumenical school; an independent separate corporation of a company runs the ecumenical school. The first of these models is the current and preferred model of the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Once an agreement has been reached on these issues, it is documented and signed by the respective sponsoring bodies. A sponsoring body from the Roman Catholic Church may be a parish, a deanery, the Archdiocese, or a religious order, congregation or institute. In reaching agreement on these issues the Catholic sponsoring body is careful to ensure that the agreed provisions in relation to legal, structural, financial and governance issues do not compromise Catholic principles. The approval of the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane is required for any Catholic sponsoring body to participate formally in an ecumenical school.

The discussions leading to the agreement on these issues constitute an ecumenical conversation. Such conversations involve a dialogue in truth such that the Catholic position is not compromised. This is consistent with the Lund Principle, that in matters where deep differences of conviction exist, then ecumenical cooperation may not be possible.

Ecumenical cooperation between sponsoring churches is an essential feature of an ecumenical school. Where sponsoring churches have reached agreement on all issues prior to commencement, the ecumenical school can be fully focused on mission. It is a sign of hope that the scandal of a divided church can be rectified.

The requirement for an agreement between participating/sponsoring churches in relation to legal, governance and financial matters prior to the commencement of an ecumenical school is essential to ensure that the ecumenical school becomes the sign to the world that it should be. Such an agreement is an example of an ecumenical covenant that is itself a powerful sign of hope. The agreement between sponsoring bodies includes an agreement about the style and structure of any legally incorporated body which will hold the assets of the ecumenical school and assume the employer obligations for the staff of the ecumenical school. Before any formal agreement between participating churches is signed, the Roman Catholic Church sponsoring body should take canonical and civil legal advice.

The original agreement between sponsoring bodies must deal with how responsibility for the school will be shared amongst participating churches. The Roman Catholic Church preference is for both local and diocesan or regional representation.

There are a variety of possible corporate structures for an ecumenical school. One model is an independent corporation (a company limited by guarantee). A company limited by shares may not be an appropriate corporate vehicle for an ecumenical school, as the preferred model is one of support and sponsorship, not ownership and control. An ecumenical school is not a business or commercial entity. A body incorporated under the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981* may not be an appropriate vehicle for an ecumenical school because ultimate responsibility for an ecumenical school should be shared between the participating/sponsoring churches or church bodies. In this way the ecumenical school becomes a sign of ecumenical cooperation between the sponsoring churches at a practical level.

Any incorporated legal entity should also be the financial entity for the ecumenical school to ensure compliance with the *Non-State Schools Accreditation Act 2001*.

There needs to be some flexibility in achieving a structure that both operates effectively and efficiently and ensures financial viability. These are matters for agreement between the sponsoring churches. Patience, attentive listening and openness are features of any ecumenical dialogue. These qualities are needed in the dialogue between the sponsoring churches about the appropriate structures and arrangements for an ecumenical school.

The initial agreement about structures and arrangements for the ecumenical school should include consideration as to the following:

- A provision should be included about the initial capital contribution required and what recurrent financial contributions will be required from the respective sponsoring churches and over what period of time those recurrent contributions will be required
- The supply of guarantees or indemnities from sponsoring churches and the provisions of those guarantees and indemnities and the terms (times) when those indemnities and guarantees

- Provisions in relation to the releases of guarantees and indemnities and when those releases will be anticipated, as well as provisions in relation to the repayment of capital contributions made by the sponsoring churches (if repayment is required)
- Contingency arrangements which will apply if a particular sponsoring church is unable to meet its commitments under the agreement
- Provisions in relation to the disbursement of assets on dissolution of the company limited by guarantee
- An agreement as to the terms of the constitution of the company limited by guarantee. The constitution is a legal document that charts the basis of the organisation of the ecumenical school. It is also an example of an ecumenical covenant.
- Provisions in relation to financial controls, budget preparation, monitoring of expenditure, authorisation of spending limits, bank account operation requirements, credit arrangements, provisions relating to borrowings, accountability provisions in relation to government authorities, stakeholders/ company members, financial policy and management roles.

Governance and legal control are separate issues. In the agreed structure for an ecumenical school there needs to be a clarity of relationships and responsibilities. The governing body exercises governance but is responsible to the sponsoring churches. The governing body should report on a regular basis to the sponsoring churches. The sponsoring churches and the governing body they support share the ecumenical vision for the school.

The Roman Catholic Church's preferred position is for a discernment style of decision making as the appropriate and compatible style of decision making for an ecumenical school. A discernment style of decision making is not inconsistent with a corporate model. It should also be a decision making style which is infused with a truly Christian and pastoral ethos (which includes an option for the poor and marginalised). Any model should ensure that a properly documented procedure retains the ultimate responsibility for the ecumenical school among the sponsoring churches.





Reflections on Aspects of the Journey of Ecumenical Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane

This section of the document provides guidance to those in the planning stages of a new ecumenical venture and those involved in operating an existing ecumenical school. It draws on the lived experience and reflections of those who have founded and formed ecumenical schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

A pastor's perspective

Emmaus College, Jimboomba, began teaching and forming students at the start of Term One in 2002. Over the last six years it has enjoyed the cooperation of the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Lutheran Church and Uniting Church in every facet of its life and learning. This has evolved over time and it has involved different pastors and staff and families. Many disciples from the four communions have walked together and will continue doing so in these formative years.

For me, as the Catholic pastor of the sponsoring parish of St Bernardine's, the bonds of communion and faith between our four communions has grown and developed in ways never imagined. So too has our shared commitment to local families seeking contemporary Christian education for their children. We have gathered term after term with the college Leadership Team for 'Pastors Meetings'. We pastors have worked with the APREs on writing the shared religious education curriculum. We are invited to fully participate in the life and work of the college board. This has been ecumenical dialogue and practical cooperation at the grass roots.

When a new opportunity arises for our shared life within Emmaus College, I often remember two parts from within the Rite of Blessing which was joyously celebrated at the official opening of the school: a Gospel proclaimed and a phrase from the Archbishop. The story may seem obvious – the Appearance on the Road to Emmaus from the closing moments of Luke's Gospel (24:13-35). It's set on Easter evening; it involves journey; it concerns anxious disciples and the Risen One; it emphasises word and sacrament. Time and time again we have found all these elements and more within what we are doing at Emmaus.

As one of four ministers who regularly proclaims God's Good News within Christian rite and prayer within the Emmaus family, this narrative helps me to shape Gospel words of encouragement. It reminds me to echo God's call to live faithfully with each other. Perhaps our College's motto sums it up best: we are *walking with Christ*. Time and time again we who preach return to this vivid resurrection experience in order to better understand what it means to be in a living relationship with each other.

The phrase spoken by Archbishop John Bathersby during the homily was that there is no blueprint for our ecumenical school at Jimboomba. We are still pioneers journeying into a promised-yet-unknown future. We have to really believe and trust in the common baptism we share. We also have to believe and promote our common calling to promote the reign of God in this region through this college.

It is sobering to realise that Emmaus College has not been done before. This combination of churches and this style of college make the experience of ministry so rich and meaningful. It is our privilege to co-pastor the families who come here for learning, growth and development.

I sometimes wonder what may have emerged at Jimboomba if we hadn't embraced the challenge of ecumenical schooling. Such wondering is always short lived. I'm glad that the Spirit moved us to do what was done in the early days of visioning a future for education here. I'm very glad that the same Spirit continues to move us to do it together with human hearts and minds and hands in the expectation of His return.

Reverend Father John Fitz-Herbert, parish priest Browns Plains

Part of an ecumenical journey – Jubilee Primary School, Gaven

Jubilee Primary School was established in 2001 by Brisbane Catholic Education in collaboration with the Christian communities of the Gold Coast North region. Our school was the product of a very strong ecumenical presence in this region which had its origins in shared Advent, Easter and Pentecost services in the early 1990s. Our model of an ecumenical school sees four Christian traditions working together in the service of Christ. The Anglican, Apostolic and Uniting Church congregations accepted an invitation from St Mary's Catholic Community and Brisbane Catholic Education to become part of our Jubilee entity.

Our original steering committee had membership from all four church traditions as well as leadership personnel from Brisbane Catholic Education. When our school commenced in 2001 we transitioned from this steering committee to a pastoral school board model for leadership and direction-setting for our school. This board still has members from all four faith traditions as well as staff and parental involvement. The membership from our four Christian traditions is seen as critical as it serves to strengthen and continue our ties to our original roots.

From the very outset we have regularly held meetings between our clergy and school Leadership Team. This, along with our board meetings, has proved to be a great opportunity for dialogue on and sharing of our faith in an open and honest forum. We have used this group to discuss major focus points of an ecumenical model of schooling



such as: our sacramental and liturgical life; staff faith development; pastoral care for our community; religious symbols within the school; the prayer life of our community; development of our religious education program; staff selection and ecumenism on a world scale.

Our clergy also provide leadership through our various liturgical celebrations which they often share with their ministerial colleagues. They are also involved in staff faith development opportunities and through rostered input into our weekly newsletters.

We are fortunate in that our staff members are also members of our respective Christian traditions and this provides the opportunity for each of them to lead us in prayer and worship. This has been one of the many blessings of our model of schooling.

Mr Greg Casey, foundation principal (Term 3 2000-2007)

Reflections on ecumenism at Emmaus College, Jimboomba

From the beginning there has always been a commitment to and emphasis on unity. One expression of this is an agreed common approach for all whole school liturgies. Pastors from any of the participating churches can lead the community celebration and often several pastors participate together, sharing parts of the liturgy. In addition, coming together as a community was, and continues to be, very important.

From the earliest days, dividing the students into various church groups was considered divisive and many students and parents would have felt alienated if that had been the organisational structure. Coming together to pray communally is an opportunity to demonstrate and 'educate' parents and friends in what we value as an ecumenical college.

An increase in the number of communal prayer opportunities would have been advantageous in the early years at Emmaus. This would have brought about a greater depth of knowledge within the community regarding what is distinctive about our school. There needed to be a more explicit focus on the religious dimensions of the school.

For the first few years at Emmaus, there was an emphasis on being careful because of the differences. However, many people now understand that there is much in common about our participating churches. Greater emphasis on educating teachers and professional development in the early stages of a new ecumenical school would improve this situation. Teachers need the confidence and clear support in approaching the teaching of religious education and prayer.

The presence of pastors is an essential element in the development of our school. The role of these committed people needs to be emphasised for the development of a strong ecumenical culture. Pastors need to be invited to participate in many different ways. Experience at Emmaus has indicated that some pastors need some explanation of what we would like from them. There are now regular visits and contacts between pastors and Assistant Principals Religious Education (APREs) and each term the Administration Team meet together with the four pastors to discuss a range of matters. This collegial commitment has bonded the group and has led to many positive outcomes.

An emphasis needs to be given to classroom prayer from the outset. There should be support for teachers in knowing what they can do that would be acceptable to all churches. If teachers do not have this confidence, or feel that they might do something 'wrong', they are less likely to actively pursue this essential element of a faith filled school.

From the earliest writing of the first education briefs, Brisbane Catholic Education has examined the implications of being involved in ecumenical schools. Policies, regulations and procedures that affect staff and schools have been reviewed. Some areas that have been addressed are: the selection criteria for senior administration and staff; the need for a balance of staff who are members of the participating churches; following selection as staff of Brisbane Catholic Education they can access the volunteer transfer system and freedom for ecumenical schools to advertise to fill vacancies to ensure the employment of members of the participating churches as staff.

The principal plays a pivotal role in maintaining and developing connections with the church groups – at the local and broader church level and with Brisbane Catholic Education.

The development of the religious education curriculum involves the full participation of Brisbane Catholic Education personnel, the local pastors, APREs and principal both at the initial stages and regular times during the school's development. Such times occur on the arrival of a new minister, a change of principal, and at each stage of development from early/middle/senior Years.

Respect and acceptance of differences among churches on practical aspects in schools need to be decided at the local community level – for example, a policy on the selling or provision of alcohol at school functions; the running of raffles; accepting money from the Gaming Commission; religious icons; main religious celebrations; signing; prayers; hymns and words of common prayers such as the version of the Lord's Prayer.

Education briefs need to be revisited and revised during the development of the new school. Adaptations need to be made resulting from dialogue between churches or from any new and emerging thinking or lived experience.

The induction of the new board and Parents and Friends Association is crucial in the development of a productive and effective team. Once again, it is important to gain the perspective of all the participating churches when making decisions and developing policy.

Mr Brian Blaney, principal (2005-2008)



Reflections on the journey of Unity College, Caloundra

The journey to establish Unity College and the journey since has been a life giving experience for all involved.

Fourteen years ago Fr John Dobson saw the need for an ecumenical college in the Caloundra area and established a working party which involved the Catholic, Uniting, Anglican and Lutheran Churches. In the subsequent years several of the churches established their own schools on the Sunshine Coast and therefore withdrew from the group. By the time the working party became the steering committee for the actual establishment of the college, the Uniting Church community was left to join with the Catholic Church.

A group including the APRE, a Brisbane Catholic Education religious education consultant, the Uniting Church minister, and two other elders of the Uniting Church (from the steering committee) worked together to develop the religious education program. The Brisbane Catholic Education *Religious Education Guidelines* were used as the foundation and model to build an inclusive curriculum. This process was most educative to all parties, as the objective was to remain authentic and true to the BCE guidelines, without compromising the faith and spirituality of either the Catholic or Uniting Churches. The result of this collaborative team was a living document that truly reflects the collective wisdom of the members of the group.

The style of the cross to be use in classrooms led to further discussions. It was decided to use the Celtic Cross as a symbol of our mutual Christian heritage.

A weekly meeting involving the principal, Catholic parish priest, the Uniting Church Minister and the APRE is also held. The support of the Catholic and Uniting Church communities through the regular meeting times and open dialogue has been tremendous and provided a great deal of positive energy and interaction which has truly enriched the college community.

Rudy Goosem, foundation principal (Term 2 2005-present)



Definition

The Lund principle

The third world conference on Faith and Order at Lund, Sweden, in 1952 issued this challenge:

Should not our churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other churches, and whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?

This challenge has been adapted in many forms as the Lund principle. One current formulation is 'that we should not do separately what conscience permits us to do together'. This principle is affirmed in the 1995 papal encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*.

<http://ecumenism.net/educ/resources/encounter3.htm>

APPENDIX A

Blessed and Broken. Pastoral Guidelines for Eucharistic Hospitality Archdiocese of Brisbane. Brisbane.

<http://www.litcom.net.au/documents/eucharistichospitality.php>



APPENDIX B

LOCAL COVENANT

An example of a local covenant made between pastors of participating churches.

LOCAL COVENANT



PART 1

DECLARATION OF INTENT:

We the Members of:

St. Mary's Catholic Community, Oxenford
Gold Coast North Anglican Church
Apostolic Church (Australia)-Gaven
Uniting Church in Australia Coomera-Helensvale Linked Congregations

WE REAFFIRM OUR BELIEF that the visible unity in the life and mission of all Christ's People is the will of God.

WE ALSO BELIEVE that we are being blessed in our generation to witness the quickening of the Spirit in drawing the Churches together in a common search for unity.

WE AFFIRM OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOUR according to the Scriptures, and acknowledge our calling to serve His mission in the world.

WE GIVE THANKS for all we have in common, but we recognise that our differences can be a hindrance to that mission.

WE RECOGNISE ONE ANOTHER as Communities of Faith, Hope and Love committed to following Jesus Christ and pledged to serve His Kingdom.

WE THEREFORE MAKE A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER in this local covenant, not knowing what form unity may eventually take, but believing that, by taking the steps to which we now commit ourselves, we shall be led to grow ever more deeply in that unity which is Christ's will for all His people.

PART 2

WE PLEDGE OURSELVES TO

- join in prayer and worship;
- support each other in growing appreciation of and respect for our own tradition, and each other's, for the enrichment of the life of the wider Church;
- explore together our Christian convictions and their practical application;
- co-operate in Christian education and training;
- share in God's mission.

PART 3

WE AGREE to explore such further steps as will be necessary to make more clearly visible the unity of all Christian people in this local area;

WE AGREE to continue to develop methods of decision making in common;

WE AGREE within the fellowship of this Declaration of Intent, to respect the rights and conscience of individuals.

SIGNED this day of 200-

APPENDIX C

An example of a canonical agreement between the local parish Catholic pastor and the Catholic Archbishop.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARCHDIOCESAN PRIMARY/P-12 SCHOOL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARISH AND THE ARCHDIOCESE



The local Catholic school is a major component of the Church's mission in Australia. It has been for over 175 years. The parish school plays an indispensable role in the parish faith community. Catholic schools adapt to changing circumstances and changing times. Ecclesial, political and social contexts influence the operation of Catholic schools, resulting in changes to the ways these Catholic schools are organized, function and relate to the wider community.

The opportunity exists for Brisbane Catholic Education, within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, to work cooperatively with faith communities in some of the parishes of the Archdiocese to generate variants of the existing administrative structures. This collaborative style of partnership is being explored and implemented with the approval and blessing of the Archbishop.

This collaborative partnership involves a Pastoral School Board, school administration, the local Catholic parish and Brisbane Catholic Education. It has outcomes that bring about the following changes in the administrative and pastoral practices of such schools.

Responsibility for building the school and administration of its finances and assets (land and buildings) belongs to Brisbane Catholic Education.

Responsibility, on behalf of the Archdiocese, for the oversight of the pastoral activities of the school community remain with the pastor of the local parish as would be appropriate for other parish primary schools. The document *The Pastor and the Parish School* (April 1993) outlines the rights and duties of the pastor in relation to the parish school. In all except financial and property management matters (Section 6 and 7) the interaction of pastor and school will be in accord with the spirit of this document.

The school continues to be integral in the parish community's life, faith journey and 'mission'. Integral to this collaborative partnership is the generous and cooperative sharing of facilities and resources.

To implement these changes the school leadership and pastor affirm the mutual obligations and support required of each other. Although management of these schools is the immediate concern of the Archdiocese, as distinct from management by the parish, it becomes imperative that the pastor and local parish community identify the school as central within the life, faith journey and 'mission' of the whole parish.

Statement of responsibilities of Archbishop John A. Bathersby DD and

Father _____
(insert name of parish priest or administrator)

This statement concerns the primary school at _____
_____ (street address of school)

and the pastoral care of the children who attend that school.

Following discussions between Father _____ and Brisbane Catholic Education the decision was made to develop a primary school at _____ (street address of school). Responsibility for developing and running the school belongs to Brisbane Catholic Education. Even though the school lies within the geographic boundaries of _____ (name of parish) canonical administration and ownership of the property and buildings remain with the Archdiocese as a public juridic person and not with the parish. Archbishop Bathersby is the canonical administrator of the school. The Archbishop fulfils his responsibilities through Brisbane Catholic Education.

Pastoral care of all the Catholics living within the territorial boundaries of _____ (name of parish) is the responsibility of Father _____ (insert name). This is especially true of the education of the young¹.

As many of the Catholic children who attend the primary school come from _____ (name of parish) parish, Father _____ (insert name) acknowledges the claim these children have on him as their pastor. He undertakes to do all he can in collaboration with the school principal to further the education and development of these children.

Father _____ (insert name), on behalf of the parish acknowledges that management of the school's finances and care of the property and buildings is the sole responsibility of Brisbane Catholic Education. This management and care forms no part of the responsibilities that are his as the canonical administrator of the temporal goods of _____ (insert name) parish. This agreement on behalf of the parish will remain in force for as long as the Archbishop remains the canonical administrator of the school and cannot be revoked by any future pastor of _____ (insert name) parish.

This statement of responsibilities is accepted by the signatories as accurate and binding.

Signed: _____
The Most Reverend John A. Bathersby DD
ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

Signed: _____
Reverend Father (insert name)

Signed: _____
Very Reverend Father Kenneth Howell, Notary

¹(Can.[528]

1. The pastor (parochus) is obliged to see to it that the entire word of God is announced to those living in the parish; thus, he is to see to it that the Christian faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith, especially in the Sunday and holy day homily and through the catechetical formation which he is to give; he is to foster works by which the spirit of the gospel, including issues involving social justice, is promoted; to take special care for the Catholic education of children and of young adults; to make every effort with the aid of the Christian faithful to bring the gospel message to those who have ceased practising their religion or who do not profess the true faith.)

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Legislation

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