

CHAPEL AND CHRISTIAN MINISTRY FRAMEWORK

Preamble:

St Andrew's Cathedral School aims to be a lighthouse school for the gospel. As the only Cathedral school in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, it is aware of its responsibility and unique opportunity to represent and advocate Christian faith within the doctrines and principles of the Anglican Church of Australia as taught and lived in the Diocese of Sydney. SACS actively seeks to fulfil this mission. It accepts its long standing statement of purpose to lead evangelical education. To this end, the school has developed a major *Teaching Christianly Framework*.

Mission:

St Andrew's Cathedral School is a leading city-based, globally connected learning community that seeks to be authentically Christian.

Vision:

To inspire students to be passionate, creative learners, who engage with the message of Christ and fully develop their gifts and abilities in order to serve in the world.

Implementation of the framework:

1. At SACS a missional outlook appears appropriate to our candidature. SACS accepts its reality as a school which draws mostly on families who do not hold an active Christian faith. Some regard themselves as generically Christian, some are members of other religions, some are actively hostile to the Christian faith, while most are not engaged or particularly interested. Nonetheless, the ministry of faith to young people in this school and in other Anglican schools (and Christian schools of other governance) is vital and highly strategic. This is because, in the main, young people are not to be found in churches in the 21st Century, but they are all in school. Their experience of Christian faith at school may be the only substantial experience during all of life. Schools are becoming the shopfront of faith and increasingly are in an Acts 17 style situation, where ideas are contested in the marketplace

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of belief formation. In that respect, we accept that our mission is cross-cultural. The implications of this reality are:

- a. Evangelism will be to the fore
- b. In a society where knowledge about the Christian faith and the contents of the Bible has become minimal, the school accepts the need to provide a basis of evangelical theology (appropriate to the age and stage of students) in order for evangelistic messages to be comprehensible.
- c. The school has a responsibility to winsomely advocate the Christian faith. In this endeavour, cognitive and affective approaches will be complementary as staff engage students with Christian ideas, while also exhibiting the love of Christ.
- d. Christian ideas in this environment must be seen as contestable by our clientele. For this reason, simple assertions of truth are unlikely to be accepted, particularly at high school level, by students or their parents.
- e. Consequent upon this, the school must find ways to actively engage students in the Christian faith and to distinguish their often hostility towards institutional religion from the salvation and life found in Jesus.
- f. One approach the school can adopt is to apply the concept of a 'Tent of Meeting' where students with different viewpoints, under the guidance of staff, have opportunity to articulate their views in an environment of mutual respect and with staff able to respond to expressions of opinion.
- g. Apologetics will have an important place in the ministry of the school. It is recognised that apologetics is not evangelism, but sometimes a necessary precursor to engaging seriously with Christian faith. The school is committed to, in partnership with other schools and Christian organisations, bringing world class Christian apologists to SACS every 2 to 3 years, as funding allows. Recent guests have included Professor John Lennox, Professor Dale Kuehne, Professor Simon Conway-Morris, and Dr Amy Orr-Ewing.
- h. As well as teaching the Christian doctrine, it is vital that Christian staff model authentic living, including the grace and love found through the gospel. As time and resources permit, visible authenticity provides an

opportunity to reach out to our community. This is done in part by inviting parents into our services. It is also done through the combined Cathedral/School Ministry Committee, which seeks to host several events a year of an Apologetic and Evangelistic nature. The target audience for these activities includes parents, Cathedral members and the broader community.

- i. Service Learning is an important outreach opportunity to the community, wherein Christian students can exhibit the love of Christ in serving and other students can reach an enhanced understanding of what it means to enact Christian love. Structured opportunities currently include Senior Students assisting at the Rough Edges Café, an outreach of St John's Anglican Church, Darlinghurst. They also include international opportunities through service agencies such as TEAR.
- j. The years embraced by school are formative years when young people establish their own personal credo and make important decisions which will play out through the rest of their lives. In a lecture to the Anglican Education Commission in July 1997, Professor Trevor Cooling described a regular stage in a teenager's life as one of 'bafflement', where previous formularies of faith no longer seem to answer the big questions of life they are exploring. Such questions include the problem of pain and suffering in a world under the sovereignty of God, and the notion that science provides an alternative and better explanation of reality. Dr Cooling maintained that where schools fail to assist students to wrestle through these issues in a context of faith understanding, instead presenting glib assurances, one of two very unsatisfactory outcomes is likely to occur. The first is a cessation of faith, which no longer seems to be credible, and the second is a retreat into the ideological enclosure of fundamentalism, where faith bears little relationship to the real world. SACS is therefore committed to working sensitively with students, to relate the Christian faith to their growing understanding of the world around them.
- k. It is vital that chaplaincy staff have a real interest in people and hence demonstrate the love and compassion of Christ to students. This

implies that they will engage pastorally with young people, often in conjunction with Year Coordinators, Heads of House, Heads of Division and School Counsellors. Similarly, involvement in the co-curricular program provides further options for demonstrating an authentic life as they engage deeply with an area of interest and importance to young people. Moreover, it is helpful for chaplaincy staff to have some stake in the curriculum programs as teaching accredited subjects will increase their legitimacy as teachers and sources of authority in the eyes of students.

Furthermore, it will also be important for chaplains to engage with culture, and particularly with youth culture, in order to know how best to communicate with our young people. Indeed, chaplains will need to be students of culture, understanding the zeitgeist of the times in order to know how best to speak into this culture.

- I. Every effort should be made to establish the importance of Christian Development as a subject rather than allowing it to be regarded as an irrelevant addition to the real teaching program. For this reason, the setting and marking of homework and assignments, and reporting to parents on the subject, are seen as desirable. Similarly, linkages between Christian Development and the rest of the curriculum will assist in establishing the relevance of Christian studies.
- m. The school is aware of the research, observation and anecdotal evidence which suggests that students can be inoculated against the gospel by excessive repetition of basic salvation doctrine. The school in its programs and in its chapel messaging will seek to avoid this problem by:
 - i. scaffolding content over time to build an understanding of Christian faith
 - ii. teaching the Christian message in all its breadth, variety and relevance rather than repetitiously reducing it to the essentials of salvation.
 - iii. varying the speaker to draw on highly regarded staff with relational credibility with students and highly skilled visiting speakers.

iv. Recognising that Evangelism is not just propositional and single event in focus, but is also relational and extends over time.

n. The school is aware of the research evidence which indicates that many church schools achieve little more than hardening students against the gospel so that they will never consider it post-graduation. For this reason, strategies enumerated above are important in this context. In this respect, it is seen as important to be invitational in messaging, to endeavour to persuade rather than coerce, and to model winsome and attractive Christian lives. For this reason, chaplaincy staff are encouraged to be students of culture, and particularly teenage culture, in order to know well how to relate the Christian faith to the stage, thought world and cultural artefacts of students.

o. The school is aware that for many Indigenous students, their approach to Christianity will be complicated by their perception of the role of the church during the time of the Stolen Generation. While it is acknowledged that this may include a jaundiced view of the often very positive work of Christian Missions, it may be necessary to disarm the notion of church as racial oppressor. It will also be important to find ways of expressing the Christian faith which make sense within Indigenous culture. This is not an argument to syncretise but simply to examine the cultural accretions we may otherwise apply to the Gospel. It is necessary to stress the importance of students having access to Indigenous Christian adults and role models, and connections to congregations which include Aboriginal people.

p. The school maintains a concern to funnel graduating Christian students into sustaining Christian tertiary groups on the various campuses of universities and TAFE colleges. To this end, it is seen as helpful to establish networks with AFES (Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students) staff workers and invite their representatives as well as university chaplains to meet with senior Christian students. The school also accepts the challenge of endeavouring to stay in touch with Christian graduates from time to time, in order to encourage their ongoing membership of a faith community and maintenance of their

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Christian faith. This is an issue of longitudinal concern for our students, given the notional dropout from faith rate of ostensibly Christian students of 70% to 75% during the course of an undergraduate degree. The school therefore seeks to prepare students to withstand the intellectual, ethical, cultural and even harassment onslaughts against Christian faith they will experience during university life.

2. St Andrew's Cathedral School is a school, not a church. For this reason, chapel does not accord in any exact way with a parish church meeting.

Features of chapel that should be taken into account are:

- a. Chapel is a very brief experience, usually 20 minutes.
- b. Chapel does not contain in this time all the usual components of a church service. It is normally restricted to a brief address of 10 – 12 minutes, some singing and a final prayer.
- c. Chapel does not represent the multi-age experience of church, but is entirely conducted for and peopled by school children.
- d. Attendance at chapel is compulsory and may be considered to be a gathering of the reluctant, some of whom are actively hostile and the overwhelming majority of whom are non-Christian, as distinct from a church, which is largely an optional gathering of usually mainly Christian people.
- e. Sacraments and church discipline are not aspects of chapel.
- f. Given the above, the basic nature of chapel as a group of non-believers needs to be reflected in the assumptions made about speaking and also on the choice of songs; there may be impediments and indeed ethical problems in requiring students to sing words which enunciate beliefs and doctrines they do not hold, and there may be questions to consider about the efficacy of choruses which may be described as emotive love songs to Jesus on the lips of non-Christians. Wisdom is required in this domain. The current approach, of not insisting students sing if they do not believe, is seen as having merit.
- g. Chapel is an opportunity to demonstrate aspects of Christian culture in terms of the message, the songs and prayer.

3. The school accepts that a small but very significant part of its clientele are children well tutored in the Christian faith, who have a vibrant faith in Jesus. Historically, most of these are the children of Sydney Anglican clergy.

Implications are:

- a. Nurture of these young people in the Christian faith is an important part of our commission.
 - b. Training and harnessing of these young people as peer evangelists is highly strategic.
 - c. CRU Groups are a very important aspect of Christian Ministry. CRU makes spaces where students can meet. CRU is designed to assist students to understand what it means to live as Christians, to shepherd and to nurture them. CRU is also a welcoming place for students who are considering Christian faith. An extension of CRU can be found in our ZEDGE Camps, which comprise three day gatherings for Christian students and those actively seeking, for purposes of Evangelism and nurture.
4. The school accepts the desirability of an interrelationship between what is said in Chapel, what is taught in Christian Development and the devotions conducted in Outdoor Education. In this respect, each of these domains can serve the others and promote a coherent development of faith understanding.
 5. The school accepts and seeks to apply the concept enunciated by former Archbishop, Dr Peter Jensen that the Chaplain should be the resident theologian of the school, speaking Christian faith into all subject areas as an adviser, and that Christian Development should provide a curriculum hub. This fits very well with the International Baccalaureate Middle Years programme emphasis on transdisciplinary education.
 6. Council delegates authority over all aspects of the school to the Head of School. This authority includes ultimate responsibility and accountability within the school for Chapel, Christian Development and other aspects of the school's Christian mission. For this reason, Chaplaincy and Christian Development staff are responsible and accountable to the Head of School. This is clear from letters of appointment and from Ordinances of the Sydney Anglican Diocese.

7. The school considers it appropriate for men and women to speak to K-12 students and staff in a co-educational school within the context of Christian ministry. This takes into account:
 - a. The recommendations of the Doctrine Commission to Synod in 1988 on the role of women, which allowed women considerable scope in speaking to mixed gender audiences, also allowing this was directed towards a church context and the school is not a church, hence greater opportunities may be presumed to exist.
 - b. The school is made up of school students who are enrolled through a contract with their parents and, irrespective of age, are subject to the discipline and authority of the school.
 - c. Neither men nor women who speak to students in short presentations such as Chapel are endeavouring to usurp the role of the senior Chaplain as the main Bible teacher in the school, nor are they seeking to preach and teach definitive doctrines of the Christian faith as understood through the Anglican Church. They are rather delivering short addresses which will usually be considered to form around a Bible passage or theme and mostly will fit within the categories of encouragement, exhortation, evangelism or commentary on society from a Christian worldview perspective.
 - d. The Head has the authority under the Ordinance by which the school is established to invite whomsoever the Head thinks is appropriate to deliver an address to students and staff.
8. While never resiling from teaching Biblical truth, the school endeavours to be wise in the topics it selects. This is because in our society there are trigger issues which will invariably be misunderstood and misconstrued by non-Christians and provide barriers to active consideration of faith. Where these are not central to Christian faith, the school, while dealing with them as appropriate to context, will not deliberately major on these areas in a way which is a distraction from and a barrier to hearing the Gospel.
9. The school has a distinctive approach to Christian formation, which requires an emphasis on Christian integration across the curriculum as a complement to the work of Chapel and Christian Development classes. This is set out in the school's *Teaching Christianly* framework. The rationale for this approach

is that in the total contact time of a student, including co-curricular, Chapel and Christian Development comprise only 3% of the contact hours. This makes it easy for students to present with compliant inattention and in effect to block out the Christian message. Accordingly, the school endeavours to make the Christian message inescapable and furthermore to weave it into the way students think about the world, which under the school's tutelage, is the whole domain of the curriculum. Accordingly, the school seeks to:

- a. Equip staff to think Christianly about their subject areas (high school) or all KLAs (Junior School and Gawura) and how they might seamlessly and authentically represent Christian worldview thinking. This will include a Christian critique of secular humanist curricula and textbooks. Such an approach needs to be robust, and while it may involve quoting the Bible, will not be contrived or consist of proof texting irrelevant to the context of lessons.
- b. It is acknowledged that Christian epistemology and ethics will relate most directly to some curriculum areas. These include:
 - i. English, where the selection of texts should avoid gratuitous blasphemy, swearing, depictions of exploitive sexuality and nihilism, unless these can be justified as intrinsic to the artistic merit of the work. Furthermore, the level of such demands on younger students should be less than on more mature students. Texts should, in terms of their corpus, demonstrate a range of views which may be critiqued from a Christian perspective. In this respect, the school stands not for prudish censorship or 'cocooning' of young people into a falsely comforting world, but for the sensible equipping of students appropriate to age and stage in their development to wholesome adulthood.
 - ii. Science, where the reduction of the interface of Science and faith to merely questions of creation and evolution should be resisted, although it is acknowledged that this area will need to be carefully addressed. The study of Science in a Christian school should also include issues of Christian ethics and the compatibility or incompatibility of scientific and Christian world view assumptions.

- iii. In Geography and Economics, the study of poverty, hardship and disadvantage is an opportunity to consider a Christian ethic.
 - iv. In Personal Development & Health, questions of sexual identity and sexual activity will invariably arise within a discussion of lifestyle choices. This discussion needs to be infused with a Christian ethic. The secular humanist assumptions of syllabus framers and writers of textbooks need to be challenged and a biblical view of personhood, gender and sexual ethics needs to be advanced.
 - v. Other curriculum areas present bountiful opportunities to reflect on the creator God, Christ the redeemer, humans as God's stewards and the God of order and design.
- c. Explore the relationship between philosophy and Christian faith as a vehicle for carriage of some Christian discussion. This exploration will include, but not be limited to, the Middle School elective subject Philosophy and the International Baccalaureate Diploma subjects of Philosophy and Theory of Knowledge. Further explanation of this interface is a curriculum imperative of the school.
 - d. Equip staff to think better theologically about faith as a precursor to helpful Christian thinking in their classrooms. This will include offering and encouraging the take up of classes in the Preliminary Theological Certificate or online Diploma courses, and, in due course, a Master of Christian Studies through Moore Theological College.
 - e. Assist staff to think about signature Christian pedagogy in their subject areas.
 - f. Support this enterprise by more intensively training:
 - i. A broad circle of Christian integrators who meet once or twice a term to discuss a resource in the area of Christian education
 - ii. Specifically designated faculty or Junior School and Gawura Christian integrators to work intensively on Christian worldview thinking within their faculties.
 - g. From time to time, as funds allow, bring outstanding Christian education scholars to assist staff in reflecting on Christian education. In recent years, guests have included Professor Trevor Cooling, Dr

Bruce Winter, Professor David Smith, Dr Beth Green and Professor John Shortt. Additionally, we work in partnership with our regular local Christian education scholars, Dr Richard Edlin, Professor James Dalziel and Rev Peter Wilson.

- h. Encourage staff to lead an authentic Christian lifestyle and demonstrate outstanding pastoral care for students in order to demonstrate the winsomeness of Christ.
- i. Conduct an annual Christian Colloquium, including scholars and leaders external to the school, with the intention of:
 - i. Holding the school firm to the gospel as an accountability mechanism.
 - ii. Discussing best practice in the field of Christian education.

SUMMARY

At SACS, Christian ministry will adopt a missional approach, which will include Evangelism, Apologetics, Service Learning as a means of demonstrating active faith, an invitational approach to consider Christianity and strong pastoral work which demonstrates the love of God. Key instruments will include Chapel, Christian Development classes and CRU Groups. The latter, while predominantly designed to nurture and equip Christian students, will also be invitational. Our desire is for Christian faith to permeate the entire school, and hence our Teaching Christianly Project is seen as a very significant element. The Head of School is responsible for all Christian Ministry in the School, assisted by the Chaplain, Chaplaincy and CD staff, and indeed the staff of the School, to whom much responsibility is delegated.

Attachments:

1. A paper on 'What is church' written by a Junior School Christian Development staff member, Emma Newling, and reproduced with her permission.
2. St Andrew's Cathedral School *Teaching Christianly Framework* (written by Deputy Head Brad Swibel and adjusted following helpful critiques from Professor Trevor Cooling and Dr Richard Edlin).

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29 November 2018, V.8

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