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ST JAMES  
THE APOSTLE  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
*Learning with strength  
and in gentleness*

## *School Governance Policy*

### *Rationale*

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St James the Apostle Catholic Primary School is within the Parish of St James the Apostle, Hoppers Crossing. As one of four Catholic Primary schools within the Parish, the school offers an authentic Catholic vision that proclaims Gospel values.

To achieve this vision, it is essential that the school delivers the best education possible for its students.

The Governance and leadership of a school need to operate in ways that optimise opportunities for the school's development and for the enhancement of learning opportunities for students.

### *Governance Structure*

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The Parish Priest is the leader of the Parish and the Parish school. The Principal is employed by the Parish Priest to delegate for the Parish Priest in the day to day running of the school. The Principal works with the school staff to organise the delivery of quality educational experiences to students.

### *The Parish Priest*

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The Parish Priest is the Canonical Authority and administrator of the school. He has the ultimate responsibility to the Archdiocese of Melbourne for the management, faith development and pastoral care in the school.

As leader of the Parish community, the Parish Priest has the responsibility of ensuring that the school offers a Religious Education program that reflects Archdiocesan guidelines and policies. He also ensures that a proper educational environment is established at the school.

In his role as Spiritual leader in the Parish and in our school, the Parish Priest contributes to the life of the school by his leadership and guidance in prayer, liturgy and sacramental celebrations.

The Parish Priest has the role of providing a safe and secure environment for students and children in the school, as per the Child Safe obligations of the school. The Parish Priest, assisted by the School Principal has the duty of ensuring that all Child Safety requirements are understood and observed by all staff and volunteers in the school.

## *The School Principal*

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The Principal of a Catholic primary school has the duty and privilege being the leader of the school community and of promoting the Catholic ethos within the school community.

The Principal has the responsibility of administering the parish school within the framework of diocesan and parish policy, government regulation, regulations that apply to schools within the Catholic Education sector and community expectations. The Principal's role is to implement the efficient running of the school and to provide for an effective education program for the students.

The Principal has the role of providing a safe and secure environment for students and children in the school, as per the Child Safe obligations of the school. The Principal has the duty of ensuring that all Child Safety requirements are understood and observed by all staff and volunteers in the school.

The Principal is appointed by the Parish Priest, and is authorised to delegate for the Parish Priest in the leadership of the school.

## *The Parish Leaders Group*

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The Parish Leaders Group is made up of the Parish Priest of St James the Apostle, Hoppers Crossing Parish as well as the Principals and designated school leaders, including Deputy Principals, Learning Leaders and Religious Education Leaders, from each of the four parish primary schools. The group meets each term and is guided by a prepared agenda.

The purpose of the Parish Leaders Group is to build schools of excellence and enhance relationships between St James the Apostle Parish and Schools that strengthen our commitment to mission and celebrate our Catholic identity.

Through this forum the schools:

- Meet in a spirit of collegiality and support
- Work together to strengthen the Catholic Identity of the schools within the parish of St James
- Are responsive to local and global needs
- Facilitate the shared vision and practice that aspires to excellence
- Build partnerships of support and exchange between schools in the area
- Provide a forum for discussions on matters concerning education in the parish primary schools
- Promote community development by fostering strong interrelationships between parish and the primary schools, Catholic secondary colleges, pre-schools and the wider community
- Meet to promote the profile of the school in the wider community

## *Regulatory Bodies*

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The Commonwealth and State Governments have direct input into schools with regard to funding and how funds are managed and spent. They also apply regulations on a range of issues that pertain to education,

safety, wellbeing and civic duty. The school is bound to adhere to legislation and regulations issued by Governments.

Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) supports the school in working with governments, special services, staff professional development, audits and the general running of Catholic schools.

The school works with these bodies and other reference groups to provide for the wellbeing and learning of the students at the school.

### *Managing Financial and Legal Obligations*

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The Parish Priest is responsible for the financial management and legal obligations of St James the Apostle Primary School. The Parish Priest delegates the authority of management of the school finances to the Principal. The Parish Priest and Principal engage an accountant whose responsibility it is to ensure the school's financial and legal obligations are met. The school's Bursar and administration staff have the responsibility of managing the school's day to day finances and preparing documents as required according to CEM guidelines and directives from the principal.

The School Accountant will complete the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) in consultation with the Parish Priest and the Principal. The Parish Priest and Principal will sign the completed AFS as being true and correct. From the AFS, the school will complete the Australian Government's online Financial Questionnaire. Support and advice is systematically given by finance consultants from CEM.

An annual audit of the school's finances is conducted by independent auditors. The Parish Priest, Principal and School Accountant are present for the annual audit and subsequent discussions regarding the auditors' findings (exit meeting). The Parish Priest and Principal are required to attest to the honesty, accuracy and integrity of the AFS at the audit exit meeting.

### *Review*

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Processes are regularly reviewed as advised by CEM in the guidelines for legal obligations and financial management of schools.

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*Authorised by: Mary Abbott (Principal)*

*Date: September 2017*

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1.0: Original publication