



Sport in Catholic Schools – Our Particular Ethos

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

2.0 SUGGESTED RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Board:

- 2.1.1 is responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies are in place;
- 2.1.2 ensures, as a matter of pastoral care and justice, that the school provides safe equipment, satisfactory facilities and good coaches who subscribe to the school’s sporting code;
- 2.1.3 is responsible for overseeing appropriate financial arrangements for sports.

2.2 The Principal:

- 2.2.1 shows ongoing interest in the sporting programme (both practices and games);
- 2.2.2 promotes sports as a way of developing Christian values;
- 2.2.3 regularly promotes messages about fair play and other appropriate sporting values at assemblies and in school newsletters;
- 2.2.4 as part of annual planning, works with the person in charge of sports to budget for sports, set priorities for areas of improvement if appropriate, and ensure that procedures for dealing with incidents are clear and workable;

- 2.2.5 inevitably shoulders the burden resulting from public displays of bad sporting behaviour.

2.3 THE SPORTS CO-ORDINATOR

(OR TEACHER RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING SPORTING TEAMS):

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

2.4 Coaches:

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

2.5 Players:

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

2.6 Parents and supporters:

- 2.6.1 have similar values and behaviours promoted for them. They are made aware that they will be asked not to attend matches if they are not prepared to support these values and behaviours.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1. Schools are encouraged to make use of programmes such as the **Sportfit Sportsmark** to ensure the quality of their delivery of sports services.

- 3.2. Sporting activities provide an excellent area for the development of the whole person, in particular for the development of Christian values in action. It is worthwhile revisiting this vision regularly.

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