Definition & Aspects of Mission Statement:

The scriptures provide the Christian understanding of social justice. Central to the life and preaching of Jesus is the reign of God which symbolised God’s intentions for humankind and all creation – love and fullness of life, wholeness and holiness, community and interdependence, values personal and social, spiritual and political, to be “done on earth as in heaven.”

The John Paul College vision challenges its members to be disciples of Jesus: *With Him is the fullness of life*. It is imperative for a disciple of Jesus to work for justice in the world.

Policy

The John Paul College community seeks to be people who are formed, informed and encouraged to action in the ways of justice. “My mother and my brothers (and sisters) are those who hear the word of God and do it” (Lk 8:21).

Our Gospel values informing this policy include: Dignity of the Person; Community; Equity; Inclusiveness; Reconciliation; Justice; Freedom; Non-Violence; Peace; Option for the Poor.

Gospel Values along with the major themes of Catholic Social Teaching are central to social justice at John Paul College:

1. The Dignity of the Human Person
2. The Common Good and Community
3. The Preferential Option for the Poor
4. Rights and Responsibilities
5. Role of Government and Subsidiarity
6. Economic Justice
7. Stewardship of God’s Creation
8. Promotion of Peace and Disarmament
9. Participation
10. Global Solidarity and Development
11. Forgiveness and Reconciliation
12. Sacredness of Human Life

John Paul College programs, processes and entire curriculum are compelled by gospel values and the spirit of Catholic Social Teaching.

“It is charity, or love, that leads us to work with courage and generosity for justice, peace and development. We feel this impulse because it was placed in our hearts and minds by God”.

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2 These are the key principles from Catholic Social Teaching documents of the last century.
Students

Whilst it is the responsibility of all areas of learning to promote Gospel Values, particularly, though not exclusively, students are led through religious education programs to understand the need to live as just and peace-loving people. Religious education class is often the forum where students can voice their concerns for the world in terms of what they see as pivotal justice issues. For example: environment, water, health, individual and community freedom, sustainability, beginning and end-of-life questions, greed, rich countries stock piling and causing hardship to others, supremacy of technology, marginalised people, and reconciliation are only some of the issues students want to be engaged in discussion and be directed and challenged to live in a way that is more faithful to the Gospel.

Students can also elect to commit themselves to participate in special justice initiatives including but not limited to:

- John Paul College Young St. Vincent De Paul Conference;
- the annual regional St. Vincent De Paul schools conference day;
- the John Paul College student social justice group;
- the extensive volunteer program and opportunities:
  - soup van; Ozanam House;
  - Frankston Community Breakfast;
  - CityLife meals;
  - Classroom assistance Nepean school;
  - Red Cross blood donation and ambassadorship;
  - Catholic Youth Leadership Challenge with local parishes;
  - Youth ministry teams.

Mission Action Day is a highlight each year with its focus on education on issues of poverty; service and sacrifice to raise funds for John Paul College founding orders (Faithful Companions of Jesus; Marianists) overseas missionary activities and programs. Further to this, students are engaged in winter and Christmas appeals to supply goods to local St. Vincent De Paul Conferences to assist those in need. Independent of other fundraising initiatives is the College engagement with the annual Caritas Project compassion which is well supported by both students and staff.

Students are also provided with opportunities to attend various social justice conferences and workshops throughout the year which enable them to interact on justice issues with other students from other schools.

Parents and the wider community

Students particularly, encourage their parents to become involved in the John Paul College social justice initiatives. Parents are also informed of events through our community newsletter and through this and other means, staff inform and invite parents into matters of social justice. Parents can inform John Paul College about social justice needs within the local community.

Staff

All staff at John Paul College have a responsibility to be attuned to local and global needs in terms of social justice. Knowing the needs of the poor and then needs of the world can be the first step

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3 #1 Caritas In Veritate, Benedict XVI’s Encyclical: Integral Human Development in Charity & Truth, 2009. This is a key document given by Pope Benedict on 25th June 2009. Caritas in Veritate reflects on critical themes of all of the social documents of the last forty years of Catholic Social Teaching.
of bringing students to the point of conscientization. Teachers need to be informed and well prepared in order to confidently lead and explore with the students the ways of living justly according to the Gospels and Catholic Social Teaching.

Given the complexity of today’s world a high priority needs to be given to the professional development of staff in the area. The Biennial Conference: Peninsula Catholic Education Cluster held at John Paul College frequently offers formation in justice education for teachers as well as our staff spirituality days.

While education of justice cannot be reduced to only fund-raising activities nevertheless increasing awareness through fund raising is an important aspect of justice education. Every year it is necessary to have a school discernment process in order to prioritise on directions for support for that year.

Fundraising for justice at John Paul College is planned through the four Houses: Chaminade, D’Houet, Olsen and Turner and in keeping with the Archdiocesan Guidelines.

**Conclusion.**

John Paul College social justice policy truthfully directs us in the way of the Gospel. We keep in mind the following from Gaudium et Spes, Vatican Council 11.

*Solidarity of the Church with the Whole Human Family*

*The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts.* #1

*In every age, the church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its task. In language intelligible to every generation, it should be able to answer the ever recurring questions which people ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other. We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings, and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live.* #4

John Paul College needs to be alerted, enabled and empowered to act with justice. This can only effectively happen by taking all of the John Paul College community to the heart of Christ: *With Him is the fullness of life.*

*Policy review date: July 2014*

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4 This process of conscientization is Paulo Freire’s philosophy of education. Put simply this means educating for conscious-raising awareness towards action. A critical step of this process is reflection. See *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (the Seabury Press: NY: translated 1968).

5 Student Programs Coordinator prepares documentation and implementation of this each year.


7 Gaudium et Spes, Vatican Council 11, 1965

8 From the John Paul College Vision Statement. See the inside back cover of the Student Planner. These same sentiments are beautifully expressed in the concluding paragraph #79 of *Caritas in Veritate.*
**Bibliography**


**Church Documents**

2. Gaudium et Spes, Vatican Council 11, 1965

**Acknowledgements**

Ms. Mary Murphy and the John Paul College Faith Development Team.
Key principles of Catholic Social Teaching that underpin the contemporary mission and vision of the Church and guide discernment are:

**Human Dignity:** All people are created in the image and likeness of God.

**Community and the Common Good:** We are one Body: when one suffers, we all suffer.” – St Paul

**Rights and Responsibility:** All people have a fundamental right to life, shelter, health care, education and employment. All people have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

**Preferential Option for the Poor:** The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. We are called to look at decisions in terms of how they affect the poor.

**Solidarity:** We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice.

**Stewardship of the Earth’s Resources:** The goods of the earth are gifts from God. We are called to care for these as stewards and trustees, not consumers and users.

**CHURCH SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**ACTION AGENCIES**

**OF THE MELBOURNE ARCHDIOCESE**

Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and Opening the Doors Foundation work together to support financially the educational disadvantage of Koorie kids by encouraging enrolment in Catholic schools. Ph 9480 3849

**Caritas Australia** is the official Aid and Development Agency of the Catholic Church. Ph 9926 5786

**Catholic AIDS Ministry** serves people living with HIV/AIDS and aims to remove the prejudice associated with HIV/AIDS through workshops and a resource library. Ph 9417 7629

**Catholic Mission** is the international mission aid agency of the Church supporting children, pastoral work and Church leadership. Ph 9939 1344

**Catholic Prison Ministry Victoria** offers support to those in prison and their families in a relationship based on respect and dignity. Ph 9321 4142

**Catholic Social Services Victoria** is the peak body for about 80 Catholic welfare organisations in Victoria. It conducts research, engages in public advocacy and lobbies governments for social improvements. For a full list of members see www.css.org.au Ph 9287 5566

**Centacare Catholic Family Services** serves community members experiencing personal and family difficulties, relationship problems, loss and grief, employment, drug/alcohol and cultural/linguistic issues. Ph 9287 5555

**Melbourne Catholic Commission for Justice Development and Peace** aims to educate and give leadership to the Catholic and wider community in the gospel message of justice and in the social teachings of the Church. Ph 9926 5710

**Melbourne Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office** is concerned with the practical pastoral care of migrants and refugees, including people seeking asylum. Ph 9926 5720

**Melbourne Overseas Missions** provides funding, material goods and volunteer personnel to partner Catholic dioceses in Papua New Guinea and other developing countries. Ph 9926 5720

**St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Inc** assists many thousands of Victorians in need, offering food or material assistance, friendship and support. Ph 9895 5600

To access addresses and websites for these and other Catholic agencies go to: www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/organisations.asp

These guidelines are adapted from and used with the permission of the Sandhurst School Education Board. The Steering Committee also wishes to thank the Catholic Education Office Melbourne for its support for this project.
ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

The function of Catholic school and parish communities is worship, teaching and learning within the values, traditions and contemporary mission and vision of the Church. A focus on social justice provides an appropriate context to re-examine commitment to the Church’s mission. These guidelines are offered to assist communities in their discernment of the increasing requests for financial support through fundraising activities from a vast array of organisations.

Teaching and learning based on gospel values and as enunciated in Catholic Social Teaching include the concept of wealth sharing. Acts of solidarity and opportunities for wealth sharing should be tied to attitudinal formation that occurs within the curriculum and the co-curricular program of schools, as well as the various outreach programs of parishes. Such acts of solidarity are a core part of any Catholic community.

REFERENCES

Catholic education ‘promotes the full human development of every person according to the gospel of Jesus Christ.’ Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the 3rd Millennium.

‘Catholic schools are at once places of evangelization, of complete formation, of inculturation of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds.’
John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa, n. 102.

‘We seek to commit ourselves to the dignity of each child by developing awareness and tolerance for others in order that co-operation and respect may exist.’
Sacred Heart Primary School, Fitzroy.

‘We will practise justice through our activities and programs and seek to promote justice in the world.’
Sacred Heart College, Kyeton.

‘Alive to the urging of the Spirit, guided by our faith and our traditions, St Michael’s Parish...reaches out through active service to our and the wider community.’
St Michael’s Parish, Ashburton.

VISION STATEMENT

Given the plethora of fundraising requests that reach parishes and schools, the following criteria developed by a range of social justice-based Archdiocesan agencies is offered to assist for the process of discernment.

CRITERIA

Is the philosophy of the organisation in accord with Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching?

- Does the work of the organisation contribute to a more just world as articulated in the Gospel?
- Does the work/the philosophy relate to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching?

Is it educational?

Practical support should be tied to attitudinal formation. The following questions need to be considered:

- Does it assist students in developing their understanding of the mission of Jesus?

What educational materials are provided by the organisation?

Is awareness-raising the priority, and fundraising secondary?

Is the fundraising undertaken in a context of spirituality and prayer?

Are teachers and students enabled to understand the reality and causes of poverty?

Does the organisation offer opportunity for solidarity actions, for supporting advocacy campaigns and working towards broader solutions to poverty and injustice?

Is the organisation accountable?

- What percentage of the donated dollar reaches the project/community services of the organisation?
- What percentage goes to administration and fundraising?
- What percentage is spent on education and advocacy?

Parish, primary and secondary school communities are encouraged to prioritise their social justice actions. For example, do you support:

- Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and Opening the Doors Foundation during Reconciliation Week?
- Caritas during Lent?
- Centacare during Family Week in May?
- Catholic Mission in October?
- Melbourne Overseas Mission in December?

These five agencies are reliant upon community support, particularly at these times of the year.