



catholic education commission of victoria ltd  
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# WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACHES TO *Supporting Positive Student Behaviour*



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# Foreword

The *CECV Whole-School Approaches to Supporting Positive Student Behaviour* has been developed by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) in the context of the values and beliefs of the Catholic Church and the mission of Catholic schools in their communities.

It aims to support schools in their work with **all** students, ensuring equitable access and inclusion. We acknowledge the Gospel truth that we are all called to 'have life and have it abundantly' (Jn 10:10) and our commitment is to the development of the whole person – spiritually, emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically.

Catholic schools are committed to providing equitable access and opportunity for all. Awareness of, recognition of, and response to the needs and rights of all individuals are essential to human dignity. These are also essential elements of the Catholic identity of schools. Inclusive practices embrace and celebrate diversity, invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

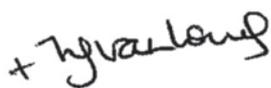
Foundational to Catholic schools and our work with students, families and communities is the building of genuine, authentic relationships. The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. Teachers, students, families, parishes and the wider community contribute to fostering life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity of each person.

The *CECV Whole-School Approaches to Supporting Positive Student Behaviour* assists schools in considering structures, processes and practices that are conducive to supporting positive engagement and behaviour for all students. Students in our schools today present with a diversity of needs and require support in a range of ways. Ensuring the set-up, design and function of schools to promote inclusive practices is essential if schools are to embrace and celebrate diversity, invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and the achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

Positive behaviour approaches are cohesive, collective and collaborative. They provide support and focus on the development of values, relationships and skills; they are embedded in the curriculum, organisation, ethos and environment, and in the partnerships and services within the school community.

The *CECV Whole-School Approaches to Supporting Positive Student Behaviour* reflects the values of Catholic education, and supports the development of the 'whole person'. I hope you will find this resource useful in your ongoing support of students.

I commend this publication to you.



**Most Rev. Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFMConv STL DD VG**  
Chair, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd

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# Preamble

The focus of this publication is to provide schools with context regarding whole-school approaches that support positive engagement and behaviour for all students.

While schools develop policies and practices to support positive student engagement, it is recognised that some students present with highly complex and challenging behaviours which directly impact on their engagement and achievement. The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) recognises that schools require guidance and support to work effectively with these students and their families.

## Guiding Principles

A number of guiding principles that support whole-school positive behaviour:

- The life and teachings of Jesus provide inspiration, guidance and strength in all relationships and interactions. Jesus provides the ultimate expression of love, justice, compassion and reconciliation. It is in authentic relationship with one another that Catholics truly come to know the love of Jesus.
- A positive school environment is guided by Gospel values and honours the dignity of the individual, the family and the school.
- The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. Teachers, students, families, parish members and the wider community contribute to fostering life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity of each person.

- Whole-school approaches are those involving ethos, relationships, communication, management, physical environment, learning strategies, curriculum, support procedures and responses, relationships with parents and the surrounding community (Weare 2009).

This document is informed by:

- Australian and Victorian legislation:
  - *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
  - *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* (Vic.)
  - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
  - *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth)
  - *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
  - *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.)
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) policy requirements
- National Safe Schools Framework [www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0](http://www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0)
- Health Promoting Schools Framework [www.ahpsa.org.au](http://www.ahpsa.org.au)
- CECV Intervention Framework 2015 [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/publications/CECV-Intervention-Framework.pdf](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/publications/CECV-Intervention-Framework.pdf)
- Diocesan policy and regulations.

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# The Catholic Context

## Catholic Social Teaching

Pope Francis, at the World Youth Day Guarnabara Presidential Palace welcoming ceremony in Rio De Janeiro, on 23 July 2013, outlined what, in essence, Catholic Social Teaching needs to be to the youth of today:

[We have to] give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education to be everything they can be; to pass onto them lasting values that make life worth living; to give them a transcendent horizon for their thirst for authentic happiness and their creativity for the good; to give them the legacy of a world worthy of human life; and to awaken in them their greatest potential as builders of their own destiny, sharing responsibility for the future of everyone. If we can do all this, we anticipate today the future that enters the world through the window of the young (Francis 2013).

A fundamental belief for Catholic schools is that Jesus is seen in God's image and likeness in its human expression, and that Jesus' life and teachings show all people 'the way, the truth and the life' (Jn 14:6). In accordance with this belief, values to be promoted within a Catholic school's understanding and practice of pastoral care include love, respect, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice.

To acknowledge the Gospel truth that all are called to 'have life and have it abundantly' (Jn 10:10) is to commit to the development of the whole person – spiritually, emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically.

Wellbeing in Catholic schools supports the development of all members of the school community. It is reflected in many aspects of school life, and especially in a school's vision and mission statements, policies, procedures, programs, teaching and learning curriculum, student activities, student support and wellbeing services, behaviour support processes, family engagement, community partnerships and school climate.

Catholic schools are committed to providing equitable access and opportunity for all. Awareness and recognition of, and response to, the needs and rights of all individuals are essential to human dignity. They are also essential elements of the Catholic identity of schools. Inclusive practices embrace and celebrate diversity, invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and achievement of appropriate learning outcomes. Schools, striving to cater for the wide diversity of student needs and talents, determine and use a variety of programs and practices that are based on solid research and which effectively engage all students in their whole development.

The teacher in a Catholic school acknowledges that the experience of being known, valued and understood fosters students' sense of belonging and connectedness to the school, their teachers, their peers, and to school learning. In this context, the significance of authentic relationships cannot be underestimated.

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Inclusive practices embrace and celebrate diversity, invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

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# Whole-School Approaches to Supporting Positive Behaviour

A whole-school approach requires a school community to have a clear, coherent documented approach to promoting positive student behaviour. This is supported by strategies and plans that engage students in respectful relationships, provide strong organisation in classrooms and playgrounds, and effectively manage risk (Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group 2015).

Positive behaviour approaches are cohesive, collective and collaborative and provide support and focus to the development of values, relationships and skills. They are embedded in the curriculum, organisation, ethos and environment, and in the partnerships and services within the school community.

Research shows that increasing a young person's connection with school will have a positive impact on academic achievement. This sense of connectedness reduces bullying, emotional distress, absenteeism and violent and disruptive behaviour, and it increases school retention rates. There is strong evidence to suggest that this increased connectedness will promote educational motivation and classroom engagement and will improve school attendance (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs 2011).

All members of the school community have a significant role to play in a whole-school approach to positive behaviour. Students need to feel valued and have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the creation of an environment where respectful and safe conduct is expected of everyone and where all members of the school community work collaboratively to facilitate successful learning.

Positive behaviour is most effective when policies, practices and resources include:

- a health-promoting approach of creating safe, supportive, motivating and caring learning environments
- behaviour being understood in the context in which it occurs and in relation to the behaviour of others
- evidence-informed and research-based programs and/or interventions
- inclusive practices that cater for the differing potentials, needs and resources of all students
- high but realistic expectations for learning and behaviour
- focus on the whole student, including personal, spiritual, social, emotional and academic elements
- understanding and acknowledging that student behaviour and wellbeing are linked to learning
- helping learners set goals for their learning and behaviour
- acknowledging that fostering good relationships, particularly between students and teachers, is critical to fostering positive behaviour
- understanding that behaviour support and change are enhanced through establishing clear and essential boundaries
- valuing parental engagement and recognising the significant role families play in the education of their children (Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth 2012)
- understanding that behaviour support and change are enhanced through school support structures and partnerships with parishes and the community (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane 2013).

## Policies

Policies assist schools to make informed decisions that optimise wellbeing. In addition to this, school policies are required to meet school registration requirements through the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

Schools have a range of policies, some of which relate to:

- staffing
- enrolment
- student safety
- behaviour support
- occupational health and safety.

A Behaviour Support Policy presents behaviour support guidelines that clearly articulate positive behaviour expectations, support systems and consequences, in order to create learning environments in which all students are included, feel safe and are supported.

Policies typically include sections that outline the rationale, principles, definitions, procedures and expected outcomes, and will clearly state when a policy is to be reviewed. Dioceses and schools will differ in the specific policy structure and content, so for further information and guidance schools are encouraged to contact their local Catholic Education Office.

## Practices

### High-Quality Teaching

...Educators must strive to create school environments that maximise the probability of academic and social success (Scott 2001, p.316).

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) identifies and makes explicit the specific elements of high-quality teaching. Through a range of initiatives, the CECV has provided support to teaching staff to develop their knowledge and skill base in alignment with AITSL standards and to support high-quality academic outcomes for all students.

The AITSL *Professional Standards for Teachers* identify elements of high-quality teaching as including:

1. knowing students and how they learn
2. knowing the content and how to teach it
3. planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning
4. creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments (AITSL 2011).

Students exhibiting challenging behaviour in schools are often students who are also struggling academically. Building school-wide and classroom environments that proactively support positive student behaviour can significantly impact on student academic outcomes and achievement.

A focus on inclusive curriculum and systems that support all students is central. Effective, targeted instruction and time engaged with learning is linked with academic outcomes. Students are more likely to remain engaged academically and socially if they are experiencing success.

Key elements of effective instruction include:

- developing a learning environment that is supportive and enabling
- curriculum designed at student level
- teachers having clear understanding of student ability
- daily structure, routine and organisation
- 'academically engaged' time
- frequent opportunities to respond throughout the lesson to maintain engagement
- opportunities for repetition, practice, mastery and automaticity
- regular formative and summative assessment.

### Curriculum Differentiation

All students require curriculum that meets their individual needs, preferences and learning styles, recognising the diversity of learners. This can be achieved through the development of an adjusted / differentiated curriculum that allows for maximum engagement, challenge, development and opportunities for success for all.

Differentiation has been defined as '... the process by which curriculum objectives, teaching methods, assessment methods, resources and learning activities are planned to cater for the needs of individual pupils' (Kronborg & Plunkett 2012, p. 19).

A report on curriculum differentiation produced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) makes it clear that differentiation can occur through:

- changing the content
- changing the methods for teaching and learning the content
- changing the methods of assessment (UNESCO 2004, p. 14).

Schools need to ensure that curriculum planning and provision are flexible and meet the needs of all students. They also need to ensure that effective access to the curriculum is provided in a way that provides development and progression for all.

Foreman (2011) identifies a number of key factors essential in encouraging positive interactions. Included among these are curriculum and teaching methods, while significant research demonstrates the clear link between social behaviour and academic issues.

### *Universal Design for Learning*

When applied to education, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) considers the development and design of curriculum to include alternatives that support a variety of learning styles and learning profiles, ensuring accessibility for all. The focus is not on sameness for all or trying to make students 'fit' into pre-existing structures, but a much more flexible approach that allows for a student to be considered along a continuum of learning rather than in separate and distinct categories (Meyer & Rose 2000). UDL applies to all facets of education – curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and classroom and school design.

A key tenant of UDL is flexibility. Bernacchio and Mullen (2007) state that:

... flexibility requires variation in the modalities through which information is presented, in the opportunities provided to students for expressing their knowledge and demonstrating competencies, and through engagement among students in a learning community that offers choices, incentives, supports and learning choices (p.167).

In using UDL, teachers can identify all students' learning along a continuum, rather than highlighting and identifying individual difference. UDL sets the environment in such a way that facilitates maximum engagement and learning for all students (Center for Applied Special Technology 2014).

### *Effective Use of Environment / Space*

A student's positive experience of school is shaped by adults, peers and, ultimately, by the places and the physical environment where the learning happens.

The concept of Universal Design is also applied to learning spaces and environments. Universal Design in this context is an approach to designing environments, products and communications that are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialised design.

Inclusive classrooms occur through intentional design, with the teacher having a well developed understanding of the diverse needs of learners in the classroom, particularly in relation to environmental considerations. With this knowledge, a space can be shaped to invite participation, facilitate self-regulation, and provide comfort and a sense of safety and belonging for all individuals

who occupy the space. A well constructed, inclusive learning environment has a variety of spaces within the classroom, each offering a unique sensory experience in recognition that individuals require differing conditions for effective learning.

Good design affords students an opportunity to access the learning experience and to develop essential life skills such as mediation and moderation of their own behaviours.

When students feel ownership of the classroom there is an increased sense of responsibility. Providing a variety of work spaces, seating arrangements and breakout areas support self-regulation and personalised learning requirements. In addition, student choice has the potential to mitigate anxiety and negative behaviours sparked by noisy group arrangements that can lead to an overwhelming feeling of sensory overload and crowding.

## Partnerships

### **Family–School–Community Partnerships**

When schools know their families and communities, it becomes easier to develop a shared approach to supporting positive student behaviour. Authentic, open and honest relationships are vital. At a school, community, parish and individual level, this can be particularly useful when difficult conversations need to be held.

When young people feel valued by the school as a unique individual in the context of their family, parish and community, they are more likely to be engaged and connected to school, peers and learning.

All schools exist within the context of a broader community in which students and families live and learn. Partnerships enable schools to integrate school life with the richness of a student's life, faith and culture. Schools that recognise, value and connect all aspects of a young person's life begin to create a culture of mutual respect and a positive learning environment for all.

When parents are valued as the primary educators of their child, and schools work strategically to develop strong partnerships with families, academic and wellbeing outcomes and achievement for all young people can improve.

Effective partnerships between families and schools at an individual level and at a whole-school level are based on shared expectations and aspirations,

and lead to a cohesive approach to learning and wellbeing that nurtures each individual within a positive school environment.

Partnerships have the greatest impact when building relationships is the core work of the school and is focused on:

- developing positive attitudes to learning
- building student motivation, enjoyment and confidence as learners
- holding high aspirations for all learners
- building relationships as core work of the school (Fox & Olsen 2014).

### Supported Transitions

In a school context, transition is traditionally viewed in a formal way – from pre-school to foundation entry, from primary to secondary school, and to a lesser degree from year level to year level. Managing these key transition points is essential for students to achieve positive outcomes.

Successful management requires a clear understanding of students' needs and what supports they require. Clear communication between the family and school, and across multiple layers at the school, is also necessary.

There is also a need to consider the impact of smaller transitions – moving from activity to activity, classroom to schoolyard and reverse, and to and from specialist classes. For students who exhibit challenging behaviour, these smaller changes and transitions, if not managed well, can result in the incidence of challenging behaviour increasing. Students who are supported in their daily transitions are more likely to have positive learning and engagement experiences, and display less challenging and disruptive behaviour.

In a report for the Centre for Adolescent Health Melbourne, titled *Doing it Differently*, Butler et al. (2005):

... Genuine engagement with learning and with others within the school environment is a key to positive outcomes across a range of immediate and long-term health, academic and life outcomes (p. 4).

The CECV publication, *Transition for Students with Diverse Needs* (2015a) identifies the evidence base of successful transitions:

- new friendships, enhanced self-esteem and confidence
- appropriate adjustments have been implemented
- active engagement in a safe and supportive contemporary learning environment
- confidence with new routines and school organisation
- curriculum continuity through all stages of transition (CECV 2015a, p. 4).

### Effective Enrolment Processes

The beginning of a student's educational journey is an important and significant time. The impact of this transition, and how it is handled, can set up patterns for a student's ongoing engagement at school.

As is the case with many families and students, commencing at a new school can bring forth a range of emotions – excitement, fear, happiness, anxiety and so on. This can be further heightened when the student has exhibited challenging behaviours, either in the home or in an early childhood or other educational setting.

Working in partnership with parents and families in the beginning stages of the enrolment process is essential. Having a complete understanding of the students and their specific needs will ensure the student:

- has the opportunity to succeed
- feels safe and supported
- is able to engage and learn in a way that suits him/her best
- is supported in the development of skills that enable him/her to engage effectively and reduce the incidence of challenging behaviour.

A number of processes that can assist with effective enrolment processes include:

- 1) **The Catholic Education Melbourne Enrolment form.** Catholic Education Melbourne has developed an enrolment form template that has been expanded to include specific questions regarding any additional needs the student may have, and any services the student has previously accessed. The [form](http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au) is available on the CEVN website <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au> under *Finance, Legal & Operations / Legal / General* (Catholic Education Melbourne 2014).

2) **The DET Transition Learning and Development Statement.** The Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) has developed the statement (a form) to be completed by families as a way to 'support the consistent transfer of information, irrespective of the school a child is going to. It provides an opportunity for children, their families and the professionals working with them to contribute and have their views reflected.' The [statement](#) is available on the DET website. (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development ND).

## Guidelines for Conducting Program Support Group Meetings

The education of each student in a Catholic school is a partnership between parents as the first educators of their child and the school to which they entrust their child. As the active engagement of parents is critical to each student's wellbeing and learning, Catholic schools aim to create welcoming environments where schools are core community centres.

Effective communication between home and school is essential for developing and maintaining a positive partnership. This partnership is of critical importance when planning programs for students with diverse learning needs. For these students, formal communication takes place through regular Program Support Group (PSG) meetings. A PSG may also be referred to as a Student Support Group (SSG).

In planning for a Program Support Group meeting, schools will have followed the steps outlined in the CECV Intervention Process (CECV 2015) and have worked through the processes of Identification, Assessment and Analysis, and Interpretation. They will be ready to commence specific planning for the Learning and Teaching stage.

At the Learning and Teaching stage, schools will have identified students with diverse learning needs and will be in the process of planning and documenting 'where to next' for this student. The Program Support Group may decide that the identified student requires a Personalised Learning Plan and/or Behaviour Support Plan.

The aims of a Program Support Group are to:

- ensure that those with the most knowledge of – and responsibility for – the student work together to establish shared goals for the student's educational future
- plan reasonable adjustments for the student to access the curriculum and participate in his/her education
- provide educational planning that is ongoing throughout the student's school life
- monitor the progress of the student.

Program Support Group members include:

- the parent/guardian/carer(s) of the student
- an advocate for the parent/guardian/carer(s) (where nominated by them)
- the student's teacher(s) or nominated responsible teacher(s) (secondary)
- the principal or nominee (to act as chairperson)
- the student (where appropriate)
- relevant diocesan staff (e.g. school advisers and visiting teachers)
- consultants, including:
  - psychologists
  - the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
  - community agencies
  - speech pathologists
  - occupational therapists
  - physiotherapists.

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## Guidelines for Developing a Student Behaviour Support Plan

Students learn best in environments in which they feel safe and supported and where their teachers have high expectations for their learning.

A Student Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is a working document designed to clearly outline the adjustments that will be implemented in order to maximise the student's engagement, thereby increasing academic outcomes.

Educational adjustments are changes or supports to teaching, learning and assessment practices that can be made to allow all students to learn and to demonstrate what they know. The types of adjustments provided will be dependent on the needs of individual students. These adjustments will be outlined in a targeted plan that focuses on the teaching of skills and desired behaviours through the implementation of proactive, positive strategies.

An effective BSP will support the student in developing skills required for positive social interaction, along with the ability to become a more effective and successful learner.

BSPs must be based on an understanding that all behaviour has a communicative function and on the knowledge of the strengths and needs of the individual student. BSPs should be developed through a collaborative problem-solving process and be consistent with practices outlined in the PSG process.

In designing a BSP, the following key elements need to be considered:

- the BSP is developed through the Program Support Group, with the responsibilities of each key person clearly denoted
- all those directly involved with the student need to contribute to the gathering of relevant information
- underlying triggers/function of the behaviour are to be identified and target behaviour/s listed
- goals set are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-referenced (Doran 1981)
- the plan needs to be succinct and easy to interpret
- a coordinator is appointed and will be responsible for writing up the plan and leading the review
- the emphasis of the BSP is on proactive adjustments, teaching replacement behaviours and reinforcing positive behaviours
- the BSP needs to be consistently implemented by all staff who engage with the student and across all learning areas
- a timeline for the proposed intervention(s) is established and a date set for review through a PSG
- the BSP can be terminated when the student concerned is demonstrating significant positive change over a sustained period
- regular follow-up monitoring will ensure evidence of sustained achievement of positive change in the student's ability to self-manage and better engage in his/her learning.

## Resources

When schools are designing effective pathways for students with a diversity of learning needs, school leaders and teachers need to consider existing school curriculum, policies, resources and practices that impact on the roles and responsibilities of teachers and learning support officers carrying out the intervention.

The key structures, policies, resources and practices include the following:

- The Australian Curriculum in Victoria (AusVELS) <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>
- The Australian Curriculum [www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)
- Learning and teaching policy – in particular an understanding of the principles of inclusive education
- Assessment policy – in particular an understanding of the principles of assessment, including summative and formative assessment
- Evaluation processes – including school-based assessment schedules
- Effective and efficient procedures are in place for the identification and assessment of the educational needs of all students

- Provision for a diversity of learning needs is planned, well managed and regularly reviewed
- Curriculum – the educational needs of all students are met through the provision of an appropriate curriculum (including Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs))
- Resources and contexts – the accommodation and resources are suitable
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005* <http://education.gov.au/disability-standards-education>
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* [www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act)
- Guidelines for conducting Program Support Groups (see *CECV Intervention Framework 2015*)
- Guidelines for designing Personalised Learning Plans (see *CECV Intervention Framework 2015*).

## Shared Terminology

### Challenging behaviour

The descriptions of challenging behaviour are many and varied and, depending on the perspective, the focus is either quite broad or relatively specific. Consideration needs to be given to the objective or subjective nature and understandings of challenging behaviour and the impacts this can have.

A number of definitions have been established in the research. The most commonly held definition is that developed by Emerson and Bromley in 1995:

... culturally abnormal behaviour of such an intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour that is likely to seriously limit use of, or result in the person being denied access to, ordinary community facilities (p. 4).

From an educational perspective, the definition by Smith and Fox (2003) provides a useful context:

... any repeated pattern of behaviour, or perception of behaviour, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults (p. 7).

### Differentiation

Students work on the same curricular area, but interact in different ways with teachers and resources. They have some or all of the assignments, learning targets, resources, teaching methods and student groupings planned to differentially take account of their aptitudes and levels of their current strengths, attainments and needs.

### Inclusive education

Inclusive education reflects the values, ethos and culture of an education system committed to excellence by enhancing educational opportunities for all students. Inclusive education relies on a school community's ability to embrace diversity and be flexible in its approaches – where the school system and structures change to fit the needs and strengths of a child, rather than attempting to change the child to fit the system, and where the benefits derived from overcoming barriers to the access, participation and achievement of particular students have a positive impact upon the learning and teaching environment for all.

Today within the Catholic education system, increasing numbers of parents are choosing their local Catholic school for the education of their children with diverse learning needs. While legislation such as the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth) support this right, gospel teachings and the principles of social justice and equity for all underpin the practice of inclusion within Catholic schools.

Classrooms in Catholic schools in Victoria are multidimensional, made up of students of differing ability, gender, ethnicity, age, physical attributes and backgrounds. The challenge for educators is to provide learning environments:

- that celebrate these variations
- where positive learning outcomes are the goals for all students
- where everyone, regardless of ability, belongs
- where all kinds of learning takes place and is valued.

## Positive Behaviour Support

A positive approach to Behaviour Support is essential in facilitating student engagement and improved academic outcomes. Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) focuses on strategies and methods that aim to assist students to reduce challenging behaviours and increase success through the teaching of new skills. Proactive strategies are aimed at decreasing behaviours of concern and replacing them with pro-social skills that lead to the enhancement of positive social interaction.

Schools work towards creating a climate where positive behaviour is explicitly taught and reinforced, and prevention approaches are emphasised. Incidences of negative behaviour are responded to systematically and consistently, with behaviours viewed as skill or performance deficits. Support for individuals with challenging behaviours is focused on the teaching of skills and desired behaviours. Support provided to students is in line with the goals and targets set out in their Personalised Learning Plan and/or Behaviour Support Plan.

The Victorian Department of Education (DET) notes on *Developing A Behaviour Guidance Policy* support the view that a PBS benefits and supports individual students by:

- valuing the student and their attempts at positive interaction
- concentrating primarily on preventing the occurrence of an identified behaviour by avoiding or adapting the circumstances that usually trigger this behaviour
- focusing on building skills and developing alternative preferred behaviours
- considering the motivation for or functions of behaviours
- using the student's strengths and interests to increase success
- increasing an individual's quality of life by supporting increased access and engagement (DET 2013).

## Whole-school Approach

A whole-school approach is cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community that has been strategically constructed to improve student learning, behaviour and wellbeing, and the conditions that support these (DET Western Australia ND).

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A positive approach to Behaviour Support is essential in facilitating student engagement and improved academic outcomes.

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## Abbreviations

**AITSL** – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

**ARACY** – Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

**AusVELS** – Australian Curriculum in Victoria

**BSP** – Behaviour Support Plan

**CAST** – Center for Applied Special Technology

**CECV** – Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd

**DET** – Department of Education

**DHHS** – Department of Health and Human Services

**MCEECDYA** – Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs

**NSSF** – National Safe Schools Framework

**PBS** – Positive Behaviour Support

**PLP** – Personalised Learning Plan

**PSG** – Program Support Group

**SMART** – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-referenced

**SSG** – Student Support Group

**SSSC** – Safe and Supportive Schools Communities Working Group

**UDL** – Universal Design for Learning

**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**VRQA** – Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

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