

Policy Information	PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT
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Rationale

The Philosophy document is an important, foundational document for a school. It is the first of all documents and has an over-arching influence on every policy and document that follows. Its influence reaches to the most fundamental level of decision making in the school and shapes the spiritual, ethical and moral perspectives that direct the school's actions and of its employees and stake-holders.

Purpose

This document aims to outline the overriding principles that guide and support Grace Christian College. These principles express the core beliefs, goals and values of the College. Throughout this document, the term 'Christian' and related terms referring to faith and belief should be understood in reference to Orthodox Evangelical Christian faith.

Guideline 1 Christian focus and Vision Statement

The individual's relationship with Jesus Christ is an essential concern and focus for the Orthodox Evangelical Christian life. It is a core responsibility of the school to promote and educate students to understand how this relationship defines the Orthodox Evangelical Christian believer. As it is the Orthodox Evangelical Christian belief that a relationship with Jesus Christ provides emancipation from sin and guidance for daily living along with the provision of eternal life, the school holds a vision for the transformation of our community through each individual engaging in this relationship.

***Note 1 Vision Statement**

From the principles in our Philosophy statement Grace Christian College holds to the following vision statement:

"Our vision is for Christ to rule in the hearts and minds of our students so they are able to contribute as citizens to a peaceful and just society through a biblical understanding of family, community and human endeavour."

Guideline 2 Biblical Foundations

The Bible, viewed as the divinely inspired Word of God, is a central part of the Christian Faith. It is the Bible that delivers to us the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and gives historical accounts of his life. Given that the Bible is the sole rule of faith for the Christian, any person who wishes to establish a Christian College will aim to make the teaching of the Bible foundational to any decision regarding the life and teaching that will take place within the College. Our understanding of the nature of human thinking, behaviour, and learning will be informed by the Bible and then, in turn, direct us in our development of curriculum, discipline and teaching. To establish the base for our system of principles the following articles have been prepared into a "Statement of Faith" in Appendix 1.

Guideline 3 Mission Statement

To enact and achieve its vision, Grace Christian College has established this Mission Statement:

***Note 1**

Grace Christian College seeks, in cooperation with parents, staff and students to:

- *Provide a Christ-honouring learning environment*
- *Develop each student's God given potential*
- *Encourage students to have a life long commitment to be enquiring seekers of truth*
- *Inspire students to have compassion and understanding for the world as demonstrated by Jesus Christ.*

Guideline 4 Operational Implications

The underlying assumptions and beliefs of an organisation's philosophy influence that way it thinks and behaves. The following notes are intended to be general guidance for the school to make ethical and moral decisions within a Christian framework of thinking. This mission statement can be expanded into the following statements of practice:

***Note 1 Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ**

The school holds the view that each person is made whole and complete through their relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, for each child to develop their God given potential requires them to come into relationship with Jesus Christ as their creator, Saviour, Lord and God. The sharing of the 'Good News' with the students of the school is there for an outworking of the school's philosophy.

***Note 2 Call to 'Put on Christ'**

Christians are exhorted to "put on Christ" which is a request to imitate His behaviour.

12: The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. 13: Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. 14: But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Rom 13:12-14)

The theme of imitating Christ in his humility and submission to God's purposes is repeated in the New Testament with an emphasis on "conforming" to his image. Identity for a Christian is therefore found in who they are "in Christ" and not in who they were before beginning their relationship with Christ. However, this does not mean that an individual's personality or abilities are null and void, rather they are to be brought into line with God's purposes and Christ's example of a life lived well for God through the power of the Holy Spirit and God's grace.

***Note 3 Bible**

The Bible is a foundational document for the College. The study of the Bible is essential to the enacting of its Vision and Mission as knowledge of Jesus Christ comes to us through the Bible. Students will engage with the Bible in daily devotions and Chapel presentations where the Christian staff will assist them in understanding what it teaches about God, Jesus Christ, Salvation and Christian living.

***Note 4 Christian Growth**

Biblically, next to the home, the church is the prime means of developing Christian growth. Grace Christian College encourages students to be fully involved in their local church. At the same time, Grace Christian College is by its nature evangelistic, pastoral, and nurturing. Grace Christian College is in fact the wider church in action and fulfils in practice the role of nurture and growth for students yet to find a local church and in provoking all Christians within the College to Christian growth living. In particular, assemblies and pastoral care lead students in worship and provoke them to prayer, praise and Christian growth.

***Note 5 Fellowship Orientation**

For Christian families, enrolling their children in a Christian school is a matter of conscience and conviction believing the decision is a key part of their role to raise their children to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. For many families, the school will be a place of Christian Fellowship as they engage with Christian staff and other Christian families who are seeking to raise their children to 'love God with all their heart, soul and strength' as God has asked them (Deut 6:4-9). The school will provide a connection point to build community and allow families to share in a common vision and mission to create a place of learning and opportunity for its students around the teaching of Orthodox Evangelical Christian Faith. The school will seek to provide an environment where students can experience the fellowship of the Christian community which is supported and fostered by the Christian staff. The environment will be seen in the language, actions and beliefs of the community as expressed in 1 Thessalonians 5.

***Note 6 Mission Orientation**

God expressly states that it is His will for all Christians to be involved in outreach to others (Matthew 28:18-20). Thus as a Christian institution it is the task of Grace Christian College to encourage students towards personal evangelism and mission and to provide both training and opportunity for that mission work. The school will seek to inspire students to have compassion and understanding for the world as demonstrated by Jesus Christ and to seek to live a life of service to others.

***Note 7 Parents**

Because we believe Parents are the primary educators of their children, and have appointed Grace Christian College to help them fulfil part of that responsibility we will maintain close contact with parents regarding the academic, spiritual, social and behavioural progress of their children. The mission statement requires working with the parents, and a building into the lives of the families and parents of the students of the College to teach them what God asks of them and their families, and to encourage them to take responsibilities which God has given them both in spiritual leadership and in education.

***Note 8 Curriculum**

To achieve the school's Vision and Mission statements, the curriculum must be interpreted through a Biblical Worldview. Although developed externally to the school, the Christian staff are able to interpret and translate the Australian Curriculum framework to meet the needs of its students. Through this approach, the school can meet the expectations of its Christian families that the school's teaching and learning programs are suited for nurturing the faith of their children.

Because we believe that God has created each child with individual abilities and gifts, and desires that each individual lives in community with others, we will seek to provide a balanced curriculum that recognises both individual and co-operative learning. Grace Christian College aims to offer a wide curriculum which offers quality programs that provide pathways to careers or further study at the tertiary level and enables each student to achieve their potential.

***Note 9 Allowance for Individuals**

Grace Christian College believes that every person has been created by God to love and serve Him and God has a plan and purpose for each person. When Jesus refers to a blind man in John 9:3 he says "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him." With this thought in mind, Grace Christian College will aim to support all students to reach their full potential and support all students to learn and grow to the best of their abilities.

***Note 10 Staff**

To achieve its vision and mission, Grace Christian College must have staff who are called and equipped by God for this work and are able to present the curriculum framework within a Biblical Worldview. Such staff will be Christians who are walking close to God, obedient to God on a daily basis, who understand the vision statement and are dedicated to enacting the mission statement. They will be people who are involved in their local church and engage in prayer, bible study and devotion on a regular basis.

***Note 11 Australian Democracy and the rule of law**

Scripture teaches that every Christian should "be subject unto the higher powers" and that those in authority "are God's ministers". (Rom 13).

Therefore, Grace Christian College is committed to support elected governments, the rule of law, equal rights for all, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association and the values of openness and tolerance.

***Note 12 Publication of Philosophy Statement**

As stated in the Rationale, the Philosophy document is an important, foundational document for the school. It is therefore essential that this document is made available to the school community and to families making enquiries about enrolment. To provide access to the Philosophy Statement, the school will publish it on the school web site and in the Parent Handbook. The Enrolment Application Form will direct parents to consider the Philosophy document before submitting the form.

Guideline 5 APPENDIX 1 - Statement of Faith

In accordance with the Orthodox Evangelical Christian beliefs adopted by Grace Christian College, we confess that we believe the following statements to be true.

***Note 1 The Bible**

That the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments does not just contain the Word of God, but rather is the divinely inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original text, impeccable, authoritative and the sole rule of faith. Thus we believe that the Bible, rightly understood, is absolute truth against which all other 'truth' is measured.

***Note 2 The Godhead**

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

***Note 3 God the Father**

We believe that God is a sovereign, living intelligent rational being. He has a sovereign will, power and authority, and is actively engaged in carrying out His will to completion.

***Note 4 God the Son**

[a] We believe that Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Holy Trinity. He is God incarnate, the Word become flesh. He was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, a virgin, and is true God and true man.

[b] We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who trust in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood.

[c] We believe in the physical bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, His present life there as High Priest and advocate and in His personal, imminent return to judge the living and the dead.

***Note 5 God the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Holy Trinity, the divine Empowerer of all created life, the Source of true spiritual knowledge and of faith in Christ, and that He indwells every true believer, sealing them to redemption and empowering them to live a sanctified life in obedience to God's will.

***Note 6 Satan**

We believe in the person of Satan, created by God as a perfect being, yet being lifted up with pride, was cast out of heaven to exist as the unholy prince of this world destined to eternal judgement. He is the author of spiritual darkness, full of all subtlety and malignity, continually seeking to frustrate the purpose of God and to ensnare mankind.

***Note 7 Creation**

All things were created by God so that "what is seen was made out of things which do not appear" (Heb. 11:3). God created them in, through and for His Own Son by His Word and Spirit, to the glorification of His Holy Name. It is also by God's hand, power and care that all created things are preserved and controlled. In order to understand the world, humanity and history, they must be seen in their relationship to God as the Bible speaks of it.

***Note 8 Human Beings**

We believe that people were created in the image of God to enjoy true communion with their Creator. They were instructed to exercise dominion, to interpret all reality in accordance with God's Word and to reflect in their person and works the excellence of their Maker. Each person is a special creation of God whom he has gifted with abilities to achieve His purposes.

***Note 9 Sin**

The whole human race, through Adam, disobeyed God estranging themselves from God and bringing God's curse upon themselves and upon all creation. All people were from that point blind to life's true meaning and purpose, misusing their knowledge and abilities, adhering to fundamentally flawed philosophies, and making themselves false gods of their own imagination and desires. Thus all human beings are born with a sinful nature separated from God and spiritual life unable to save themselves.

***Note 10 Salvation**

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, thereby becoming children of God, cleansed from the power and penalty of sin and clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

***Note 11 Last Things**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the just (believers) to the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the unjust (those ignoring God's gift of salvation and grace) to everlasting punishment of the lost.

***Note 12 The Family**

God created the Family to be a place of nurture, growth and love. Parents have responsibilities before God for the discipline of their children and are a child's primary educators. God planned for the Family to live in harmony. (Eph. vi:1-4)

***Note 13 The Church**

We believe that the Universal Church is the mystical body of Christ, composed of all true believers of which Jesus is the living Head. We believe that the local church is a body of believers meeting together to observe the ordinances and to carry out the principles, precepts, and commission of Christ.