November 2011

Dear Members of the MSB Community

Background

Mount St Bernard College is currently in the process of putting together a submission for funding under the Australian Government’s National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program (NSCSWP). Details of the program can be found at http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NSCSWP/Pages/NSCSWP_Overview.aspx. The NSCSWP guidelines state that:

The objectives of the Program are to assist school communities to provide pastoral care and general spiritual, social and emotional comfort to all students, irrespective of their faith or beliefs. This can include support and guidance about ethics, values, relationships and spiritual issues; the provision of student welfare; and enhancing engagement with the broader community.

The following general principles apply to the Program:

- Participation in the Program by school communities is voluntary.
- It is not compulsory for students to participate. Schools must inform students and parents of the voluntary nature of the Program and of the choice of whether or not to utilise the services of a school chaplain/student welfare worker.

Chaplaincy/student welfare is a service that complements the care offered by other helping disciplines and aims to assist school communities through the provision of help and care to support the personal and social wellbeing of students and the school community. Services and actions could include:

- Assisting school counsellors and wellbeing staff in the delivery of student welfare services.
- Providing students, their families and staff with support and or appropriate referrals, in difficult situations such as during times of grief or when students are facing personal or emotional challenges.
- Supporting students to explore their spirituality and providing guidance about spirituality, values and ethical matters or referring students to, or sourcing appropriate services, to meet these needs; and facilitating access to support agencies in the community, where applicable.
- Supporting students and staff to create an environment which promotes the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development and wellbeing of all students.
- Supporting students and staff to create an environment of cooperation and mutual respect, promoting an understanding of diversity and the range of cultures and their related traditions.
• Being approachable to all students, staff and members of the school community.
• Supporting students, their families and staff of all beliefs and not seeking to impose any beliefs or persuade an individual toward a particular set of beliefs.

Consultation and Feedback
It is our belief that the offering of Chaplaincy services under the auspices of this scheme will complement the mission and ethos of MSB:

Drawing our inspiration from the Gospel of Jesus and the Mercy Tradition, we at Mount St Bernard College empower young people through our commitment to education to become persons of faith, learning, and hope and so contribute to their communities.

We welcome to our Day and Residential College young people and their families who desire:
• Quality educational pathways, which nurture spiritual, academic, emotional and social growth.
• A sense of community and belonging where Christian values are lived
• A safe, caring and supportive environment which fosters well-being, enhances confidence and develops potential.
• Dedicated, enthusiastic specialist staff who provide professional support and direction in educational and residential environments.

We are seeking the support, views and feedback of the school community regarding this proposal. Please provide this feedback to our peak community body, the MSB Parents and Friends Association. Written responses can be sent via the College reception or email office@msb.qld.edu.au. P&F President, Mr Tim Jackson would be pleased to receive verbal feedback if this method is preferred.

MSB intends to submit an application in early March 2012.

Yours faithfully

Mr Luke Reed
MSB College Principal