



Our Lady of the Way Primary School

17 Troy Street, Emu Plains NSW 2750

Phone: (02) 4777 7200

Email: OLOW@parra.catholic.edu.au

Web: <http://www.olowemuplains.catholic.edu.au>



STEWARDSHIP POLICY

1.0 Rationale

"In our ministry in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Parramatta we strive, as a work of love, for the full human development of our students, grounded in the teachings of Christ and at the service of society" (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium).

The achievement of this vision requires the application of substantial resources provided in the main from: grants from the Commonwealth and State Governments; fees and charges paid by the parents of students; and from the wider Church community.

As staff members of *Our Lady of the Way School* we are entrusted with the responsibility of managing and safeguarding these resources, which the Catholic community and the Governments of Australia devote to the provision of Catholic education in the Diocese of Parramatta.

We are called to exercise wise stewardship: the exercise of this responsibility in ways which exemplify the virtues of honesty, justice and integrity as well as ensuring the efficient and effective use of limited resources. It is this stewardship that is the focus of this policy.

2.0 Aims

- To ensure that appropriate systems and controls are in place and operating, to guarantee that the goals and objectives of Catholic schools are efficiently and effectively achieved.
- To provide the highest standards of accounting for all resources entrusted to schools and the highest standards of personal and professional integrity by all school and CEDP staff.
- To care for and effectively use of equipment, building and grounds.
- For all staff members to display a personal and professional attitude toward their official duties.

For staff to be aware of the Stewardship Policy, Procedures and Guidelines and avoid being involved in, and report to the nominated person any conflict of interest; corrupt conduct; maladministration or serious and substantial waste.

3.0 Implementation

3.1 Personal and Professional Behaviour

In performing their duties and fulfilling their responsibilities all staff are required to ensure that their actions reflect the best interests of Catholic education and they perform their duties efficiently, effectively, honestly and with integrity and fairness at all times, including the exercising of delegated financial or administrative authority.

3.2 Use of and Security of Administrative and Financial Information

Staff are expected to maintain the integrity and security of all administrative and financial information and/or documents for which they are responsible or to which they have access. All staff are required to use the information gained, utilised or accessed in the course of their employment, for proper and appropriate purposes only. All staff are expected to ensure that premises are secure and that suitable arrangements are in place to maintain the security of confidential and sensitive documents.

3.3 Use of School and CEDP Facilities and Equipment

All staff are expected to ensure that resources, funds and/or equipment entrusted to them, are used effectively and economically in the course of their duties. **Each year, staff will be responsible for completing an Asset Register Audit, where they must be able to account for items assigned to their learning spaces.** Under normal circumstances, and without seeking approval, it is not appropriate to ask other staff members to carry out private tasks during their hours of duty, to do this oneself or to use facilities and equipment for private purposes. The school must not make private purchases on behalf of staff, parents or any community or parish members.

3.4 Personal Interests

All staff have an obligation to ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict between their personal interests and their professional duties. In general, if any personal advantage is obtained or may be perceived to be obtained, there is potential to bring the actions of the member of staff into question.

To assist in the clarification of this point, some examples where conflicts of interest will or may arise are included. The examples have been categorised into main three types:

A. Activities which automatically result in a conflict of interest and therefore MUST be avoided:

- Acting as a supplier (either in a personal capacity or through your business) of goods or services to your school or for CEDP based staff, acting as a supplier to the CEDP or any of the schools you deal with in a professional capacity;
- Being involved anywhere in the purchasing process when an associate's business is the supplier of goods or services;
- Being a member of an interview panel where a spouse, partner or near relative is an applicant.

In the examples given above, the position you hold in the organisation is significant and it is inappropriate for you to delegate the arrangements to a subordinate and expect that any conflict is automatically removed.

B. Activities which will result in an actual or perceived conflict, unless formal procedures are followed, for example:

- Accepting a discount on a personal purchase from a business you deal with in your professional capacity;
- Providing private paid services in your own time, for which you are already being paid by the organisation;
- Accepting gifts, including hospitality, which may be linked to or be perceived as a link to the letting of a contract or tender?

In these types of cases, it is important to declare your interests to a supervisor who should ensure the processes are documented and transparent to the community and all interested parties.

C. Activities where a conflict of interest may occur or be perceived, depending on the circumstances, for example:

- Assessing applications for community use of the school's hall when you are an active member of the local drama society which is seeking to book the hall.

All staff have an obligation once they become aware that **there is, or may be**, a potential conflict between their personal interest and professional duty (whether real or apparent) to immediately inform their supervisor / principal or an appropriate delegated staff member and seek guidance on how or if to proceed.

It is not necessary for staff to obtain permission to be involved in voluntary or unpaid activities. Where a conflict of interest arises between these activities and official responsibilities, staff have an obligation to raise the issue with their principal or an appropriate delegated staff member.

3.5 The Principal will not purchase equipment, material, goods and services from any other person or business they have a conflict of interest with, and which they have declared on the annual declaration nor from any employee or from a business in which an employee has an ownership interest.

3.6 Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits

It is expected that staff will never solicit any gifts or benefits. Nor should staff accept gifts or benefits either for themselves or for another person, which might in any way, either directly or indirectly, compromise or influence them in their professional capacity. Gifts of a nominal value generally used for promotional purposes by the donor or moderate acts of hospitality offered as a genuine “thankyou” may be accepted by staff as long as they have not been solicited. Gifts or hospitality offered as an inducement to purchase, provide information or treat favourably are not acceptable regardless of their monetary value.

Examples of inducement include a bookshop offering teachers a personal dinner for two for every textbook order placed and an employment agency offering administrative staff theatre tickets for each temporary person employed.

Acceptance of gifts and hospitality is a matter of judgement for the individual staff member who must be satisfied that their position will not in any way be compromised or appear to be compromised by acceptance of the gift or hospitality. If accepted, staff must consider what is ‘reasonable’ and if made public knowledge, how would they be perceived, what may be the impact upon their personal or professional reputation, and how might it impact upon future dealings with other Catholic education stakeholders, contractors, and clients.

3.7 All staff should be made aware of the methods available to them in relation to the reporting of corrupt conduct, maladministration or serious and substantial waste. Reported disclosures must be made in writing to a ‘Nominated Disclosure Officer’ including the school principal; team leaders; Director or Executive Director.

What is Conflict of Interest?

Preferring personal interests over professional duties where this may result in:

- Obtaining personal or financial advantage outside the terms of one’s employment;
- Bringing the CEDP or the professional conduct of its staff into disrepute.

Conflict of interest, may be actual or perceived to give staff advantages, which are not part of their award or remuneration as employees.

What is Corrupt Conduct?

Corrupt conduct occurs when actions by a staff member involve (or could involve) a criminal offence, a disciplinary offence or reasonable grounds to dismiss the staff member.

Corrupt conduct includes:

- fraud;
- theft of CEDP/school money or resources;

- bribery;
- knowing doing something that has a detrimental effect on the duties performed by another member of employee;
- knowingly misusing CEDP information or resources;
- deriving a benefit, financial or otherwise, for themselves or any other person/s by misuse of their authority.

What is Maladministration?

Maladministration involves action or inaction of a serious nature that is:

- contrary to law or CEDP policy or mandatory procedures;
- manifestly unjust or oppressive;
- based on improper motives.

Examples of maladministration would include:

- staff providing mailing lists containing confidential details or other information not available to the general community, for whatever purpose, to persons not employed by the CEDP;
- allowing or facilitating persons not employed by the CEDP, physical or network access to computer records or files which are not available to the general community;
- wilful disregard of copyright laws.

What is Serious and Substantial Waste?

Serious and substantial waste is any use of CEDP resources which is:

- unauthorised;
- grossly inefficient;

and results in significant loss of resources. Factors which would be taken into account in addressing any complaint of serious or substantial waste include:

- the money value of the waste;
- the potential for savings;
- the interests of Catholic education stakeholders.

Examples of serious or substantial waste include:

- throwing out good or sound resources for no valid reason;
- spending on unnecessary resources merely to use all allocated funds;
- purchasing resources from one supplier which are greatly overpriced compared to a ready substitute.

3.8 The 'Nominated Disclosure Officer' must formally acknowledge receipt of the disclosure within twenty-one (21) days and notify the Head of Internal Audit of the date and nature of the disclosure.

3.9 The Head of Internal Audit will undertake the necessary preliminary investigation to establish the validity of the disclosure.

4.0 Relevant Documents

CEDP Stewardship Policy, Procedures, Guidelines

CEDP Conflict of Interest Procedures

CEDP NESAs Governance Procedures

Our Lady of the Way Conflict of Interest Procedures

Our Lady of the Way Governance Procedures

5.0 Evaluation

The Principal, with delegated responsibility to the Leadership Team will be responsible for the planning, implementation and review of this program.