

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION POLICY

Purpose

The following policy aims to ensure that every member of this community is educated in the principles and practice of social justice, with consideration of the Catholic context and a reflection of Catholic Social Teaching Principles. Damascus College strives to be a community where the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth inspire Gospel-based action for mercy and justice in all aspects of College life and in engagement with the wider world.

Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si': Care for Our Common Home* (2015) challenges us to recognise the interconnection of all of creation. This inter-relatedness of everything, human and other than human, calls for an inclusive and broader appreciation of social justice, embracing the environment, the economic and the social dimension, in what is now understood as *integral ecology* (*Laudato Si'*, Ch. 4).

Scope

This policy applies to all activities undertaken by the Damascus College community.

Definitions

- Social Justice concerns the relationships between different groups in society. It examines whether all the groups in society receive what is due to them. It recognises the sacredness of life and the dignity of each individual human person by promoting understanding, freedom, fairness and equity for all people.
- Catholic Social Teaching covers all aspects of life – the economic, political, personal and spiritual - in all spheres human and other than human. It promotes a vision of a just society that is grounded in the Bible and in the wisdom gathered from experience by the Christian community as it has responded to social justice issues through history. Catholic Social Teaching sums up the teachings of the Church on social justice issues.

Policy Statement

Damascus College will:

- promote the personal, social, economic, cultural and political human rights of every person, especially the most disadvantaged and marginalised;
- provide for the study of the principles and practice of Catholic Social Teaching in the formal curriculum;
- ensure a response to injustice at local, national and global levels;
- take issues of injustice beyond charitable acts and into the questioning and challenging of social values and structures;
- be a steward for the environment and sustainability;
- promote participation and decision-making that is empowering of those involved in and affected by the process; and



- acknowledge that our responsibilities to each other span racial, cultural, economic and ideological differences.

Consequences

Damascus College will:

- encourage each member of this community to respect and foster the rights of all;
- establish programs that provide equitable access to resources;
- promote the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community;
- promote respect for and commitment to the environment;
- ensure that the College community organises special liturgies that focus on social justice issues or themes;
- ensure that opportunities are available to support all students, staff and parents to resolve conflicts and to encourage positive communication;
- establish a social justice group/s which may include staff, students and parents to be involved in raising awareness of and taking action on social justice issues;
- establish and foster links with community groups, including Diocesan and Mercy networks, involved in social justice; and
- provide feedback to members of the College community about decisions that have been made.

Responsibilities

While the Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy, all members of the College community are expected to support and uphold the Catholic culture of Damascus College.

Associated Documents

Damascus College Strategic Directions
Damascus College Religious Education Policy
Damascus College Enrolment Policy
Damascus College Environmental Sustainability Policy

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/social-teaching>

<http://www.faithdoingjustice.com.au/catholic-social-teaching/introduction.html>

<http://institute.mercy.org.au/>

<http://www.mercyworld.org/>

<http://www.caritas.org.au/>

<https://www.catholicmission.org.au/>

[School Improvement: External Review: Validation and Planning 2019](#)

[Australian Catholic Social Justice Council](#)

[Laudato Si. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)