

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Policy 1000

1. Rationale

- a. Grace Christian College is a Christian college that conducts the entirety of its affairs in accordance with its Statement of Faith, which outlines God's good purposes for his people and how Christians are to live their lives in obedience to Him.
- b. Therefore, 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 stakeholders.

2. Purpose

- a. 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.

3. Christ focus and Vision Statement

- a. 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.

4. Vision Statement

- a. From the principles in our Philosophy statement Grace Christian College holds to the following vision statement:
- b. "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."

5. Biblical Foundations

- a. 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.

6. Operational Implications

- a. 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 that follows is a summary of the central principles the school aims to achieve as an educational organization.

7. Mission Statement

- a. To enact and achieve its vision, Grace Christian College has established this Mission Statement:
- b. Grace Christian College seeks, in cooperation with parents, staff and students to:
 - i. Provide a Christ-honouring learning environment
 - ii. Develop each student's God given potential
 - iii. Encourage students to have a lifelong commitment to be enquiring seekers of truth
 - iv. Inspire students to have compassion and understanding for the world as demonstrated by Jesus
 - v. Christ.

8. Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ

- a. 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 therefore an outworking of the school's philosophy.

9. Call to 'Put on Christ'

- a. Christians are exhorted to "put on Christ" which is a request to imitate His behaviour.
- b. *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. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.* (Rom 13:12-14)
- c. 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.

10. Bible

- a. 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.

11. Christian Growth

- a. 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.

12. Fellowship Orientation

- a. 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.

13. Mission Orientation

- a. 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.

14. Parents

- a. 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 at 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.

15. Curriculum

- a. To achieve the school's Vision and Mission statements, the curriculum must be interpreted through a Biblical World view. 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.
- b. 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.

16. Inclusion

- a. 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.

17. Staff

- a. 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.

18. Australian Democracy and the rule of law

- a. 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.

b.

19. Publication of Philosophy Statement

- a. 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.

20. 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.

(1) Statement of Faith

Introduction

- (a) Education, at its heart, is about exploring, discovering and embracing truth. Not only must the school impart knowledge, but teachers are called to enlighten knowledge with wisdom to help their students understand the world they live in and their purpose in it. (Psalm 19)
- (b) We believe that the ultimate meaning and purpose of life rests in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. The school is a beacon of hope, built upon the foundation of the redeeming love of God through Jesus Christ. (Genesis 3, 2 Corinthians 5:19)
- (c) The school plays an important role in the formation of students, at the invitation of their parents - in leading and nurturing them, spirit, mind and body, to lay hold of their unique purpose and potential in God's world, and to equip them for a life of fulfilment and significance. It is the aim of the school that graduating students will be transformational in their future callings and vocations. (Psalm 139:1-18)

Truth

- (a) The whole Bible is uniquely inspired by God and is therefore wholly trustworthy and of supreme and final authority in faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:21).
- (b) We believe that the Bible, comprising the Scriptures in the Old Testament and New Testament, teaches the truth about essential beliefs of the Christian faith including who God is, who Humanity is, what the Gospel is and what response God requires from his people. (Deuteronomy 10:12-13, Psalm 119:105, Mark 1:15; John 20:31, Romans 12:1-2)
- (c) The character and attributes of God; His everlasting power and divinity are shown in the created universe which is consistent with the specific teachings of the Scriptures. (Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20)

God

- (a) The sovereign God is one, in three co-equal eternal persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who act together in creation, providence, redemption, and restoration. (Matthew 28:19, Colossians 1:12-16)
- (b) Jesus Christ, the Son, is fully God and fully man. We believe in His virgin birth, His sinless life, His sacrificial death in our place, His bodily resurrection, His bodily return to heaven and His continuous role representing Christians before the Father, and His return to judge the living and the dead. (John 1: 1-14, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 8:34, Colossians 1:9-10, 1 Timothy 3:16)
- (c) We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement. The Holy Spirit unites us with Christ, indwells every true Christian, sealing them to the day of redemption. The Holy Spirit will glorify Christ and will empower those who believe to live a sanctified life of obedience to God's will. The Holy Spirit will produce in us His fruit, granting to us His gifts as He wills, for service in the world. (John 3: 5-7, Eph 1:13-14, John 16:13-14, 1 Cor 12:7)

- (d) In His death, resurrection and ascension, the Lord Jesus Christ took the place of humanity, making full payment for the sin of all people. For those who accept his gift of grace and exercise faith in Him, He secures forgiveness, a right relationship with God, a new life now and everlasting life at the end of history. (Romans 3:23-26, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 2:24)

Humanity

- (a) God has created humanity in His image and ascribed dignity, sanctity and worth to human life from conception until death. God requires human life to be accorded respect and to be protected from harm (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:13-16, Exodus 20:13)
- (b) God has created humanity as distinctly male and female and has ordained a normative connection between binary biological sex and a person's true self-conception as male or female. (Genesis 1:27, Matthew 19:4)
- (c) God calls some people to marriage, and some to a single state: one is not inferior or superior to another, and both have dignity, according to the Bible. God has instituted marriage between one man and one woman for life to be the only Scriptural covenantal, sexual and procreative union for humanity which signifies and mirrors the covenant love between Christ and his Church. Married couples must be sexually faithful to each other. Sexual relationships outside of marriage between one man and one woman are contrary to God's will and command for humanity (Genesis 2:23-24, Matthew 19:5-6, Ephesians 5:22-32)
- (d) God has instituted the family as the central social structure and parents have the primary responsibility for bringing up their children. God has also instituted the church to make disciples from all the nations and provide spiritual teaching. He has established civil government to make laws, keep civic order and promote human flourishing. Each of these institutions has distinct roles and responsibilities which overlap but one should not usurp the role of the other. (Genesis 1:28, Mark 12:17, Romans 13:1-7)
- (e) Humanity, originally created for a relationship with God, has turned away from God and thus become sinful by nature and practice, unable by any personal merit or effort to restore that relationship. This fall has corrupted human identity and purpose, impacted sexuality, family and social relationships and has separated humanity from fellowship with God. (Genesis 1:26-31, Romans 1:18-32, Romans 3:23, Titus 3:3-7)

The Gospel

- (a) Humanity's only means of restoring relationship with God is through salvation. Salvation is initiated in the Christian solely by the grace of God, accomplished through the work of Jesus dying on the cross and applied by the Holy Spirit. Salvation is a free gift accepted by faith and includes the removal of guilt, being set apart for God, a new life of increasing transformation into the likeness of Jesus and eventually the resurrection to everlasting life. (Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 8:28-30, Matthew 25:34-36)
- (b) Christians experience salvation when they are declared righteous by God as they commit their lives to Jesus in repentance and faith. This conscious commitment is made possible only by the work of the Holy Spirit within the individual; it is not a meritorious work. (John 3:16, Ephesians 2:1-10)
- (c) The Church is the company of all Christians who have received new life through faith in Christ, formed by His Spirit into one body, of which Christ is the Head. The Church is commanded by Jesus to make disciples in all nations. (Ephesians 3: 4-10, Matthew 28: 19-20)
- (d) Satan is a personal spiritual being, opposed to God and the salvation of humanity, sworn to enslave and destroy the human race but his ultimate purpose has been brought to nothing by the Lord Jesus Christ. (Genesis 3:1-15, Matthew 4:1-11, Revelations 20:10, Colossians 2:15)
- (e) A person who rejects the gift of eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ will be eternally separated from God. (John 3:36, Revelations 20:11-15)
- (f) The Lord Jesus Christ will personally return in glory and judgement to bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal destruction to the lost, establishing a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness, where there will be no more evil, suffering or death. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8, Revelations 22:12, 17-20)

The Response

- (a) Until Jesus returns, God calls Christians to respond to the Gospel by living as restored disciples of his Kingdom in a broken world with a commission to spread the Gospel, to make disciples and to engage in personal, relational, communal and civic conduct that is transformed by the Gospel and which serves as an example to the world. (Matthew 28:19-20, Matthew 5:13-16)
 - (b) Christians are called to personal conduct which:
 - i) conforms to the example of Jesus;
 - ii) rejects sinful actions and seeks to do good works;
 - iii) demonstrates the fruit of the Spirit; and
 - iv) recognises that the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit;
 - v) affirms and reflects the truth of the Bible about the nature of human beings, created, male and female, in the image of God. (Galatians 5:16-24, 1 Corinthians 6:19)
 - (c) Christians are called to relational conduct that conforms to and reflects the teaching of the Bible concerning human sexuality and marriage. Therefore:
 - i) outside of marriage, a Christian must live a life of chastity;
 - ii) children are a natural blessing of marriage; and
 - iii) parents must instruct and care for their children and provide for their physical, spiritual, and educational upbringing. (Genesis 1: 26-27, Psalm 127:3-4, Ephesians 5: 22-33)
 - (d) Christians are called to communal conduct which includes active participation in a local church and the use of their gifts for works of ministry, including communicating the gospel to others, making disciples, loving each other, loving one's neighbours including through ministries of mercy and compassion, and active witness in the world. (Hebrews 10:25, Romans 12:4-8)
 - (e) Christians are called to civic conduct which includes being salt and light to the world, obedience to the civil authorities in all things which do not contradict the Word of God and a commitment to living quietly and peaceably as a blessing to the community in which the Christian is placed. (Matthew 5:13-16, Jeremiah 29:7, 1 Peter 2:13-17, 1 Timothy 2: 1-4)
 - (f) Christians are still sinful by nature and practice, and they will never perfectly respond to God's call in this life so must continue in repentance and faith relying on the grace of God as well as extending grace to others. However, it is only by striving to respond in faith to God's call that Christians will find true meaning and purpose to live a fulfilled life. (Romans 7:23, 1 John 2:2, Jeremiah 31:34, 1 John 1:7)
- (2) Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of the beliefs of the co-operative and its members. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that the co-operative and its members believe.

21. Endorsement

Created date	May 2016
Last Review	March 2026
Consultation	School Leadership Team, School Board, SRC, School Community
Endorsed by	Grace Christian College Wodonga Board
Endorsed on	20/04/2026
Board Chairman	Matthew Hood
Signature	
Next review date	1/4/2027