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## Role and Responsibility of Parents

Living Waters Lutheran School acknowledges that parents have responsibility for and are the first educators of their children. Parents and family, in the home environment, strongly influence what and how children learn.

Living Waters Lutheran School, as an agency of the Lutheran Church, also has a responsibility to children, to those who are members of the Church as well as to others in the community who are not members. This responsibility is to proclaim and relate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the total life of children as students in order to equip them to live a godly life in all life situations, to serve both God and humanity throughout life and to live with the assurance of eternal life.

In order to coordinate these responsibilities, effective interaction between the school and parents is all important. Living Waters Lutheran School will endeavour to communicate clearly to parents what it accepts as its responsibility; will require the active interest and support of the parents and will maximize opportunity for parental involvement. In order to keep parents well informed on the progress and achievements of their children, Living Waters Lutheran School will initiate and maintain various forms of communication as required from time to time.

### **Commentary:**

Parent participation in both primary and secondary education has beneficial implications for the quality and success of the child's education. Parents need to know as much as possible about the school and teachers need to have an insight into the students' home life. Where communication between the two is open and productive, effective help and guidance follow.

Educational agencies, both government and independent, see parents as the first educators of children and recognise that learning occurs not only in school, but it is strongly influenced by the home, community and society generally. While evidence has shown that the school's ethos is important, home influence remains significant.

On the basis of Holy Scripture, Living Waters Lutheran School believes that the prime institution for the teaching and training of children is the home and family. Parents have the first responsibility for the spiritual and physical wellbeing of their children entrusted to them by God.

The "whole of life" educational philosophy requires Living Waters Lutheran School to be closely linked to parents and families and the interaction of teachers with parents is seen as highly important. Teachers do much more than sharing and passing on objective information to students. Teaching involves attitudes and values and parents need to know what is being taught and learnt.

Parents must therefore be genuinely encouraged and invited to play a positive part in their child's education at school. Such involvement is welcomed and recognised by the School Council, the Principal and teachers. This partnership between parents and school is encouraged and developed in the Living Waters Lutheran School community.

**Christian Education:**

As an agency of the Alice Springs Lutheran Congregation, Living Waters Lutheran School is part of the mission of the church. An important aim in all learning, playing and interaction with teachers, and fellow students in the school community is to bring children to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and to further their growth in His grace and knowledge.

A function of the church's ministry in Living Waters Lutheran School is directed primarily toward the child. At the same time the school provides bridges of contact between parents and the Church over which the Gospel can flow, both to those within the Church as well as to parents and others associated with the school who have not yet responded to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and become members of the Church. Living Waters thus provides a potential ministry to all families.

The critical word is 'potential'. When enrolment is accepted it is on terms and conditions defined by the Living Waters Lutheran School enrolment policy and procedures.

**Partnership in Education:**

Recognising that the school is part of the Church's Mission and that parents are partners in the Christian education process, the Living Waters Lutheran School community has an excellent opportunity to improve the quality of life and implement social justice as promoted by governments.

The life-style of parents has a vital impact on the schooling of their children. In playing their part in the partnership, parents should be encouraged seriously to consider participation in church life and by example, display the joy of knowing and sharing God's love. An open witness of the Christian faith in family life strengthens the Christian community of which Living Waters is an important part.

**Parent Involvement – Encouragement:**

Parents are encouraged and assisted to carry out their educational responsibilities toward their children and their involvement with the school.

A parent's first contact with the school may be a visit, telephone call or written request for a prospectus. Every effort is made to ensure that in each case a courteous, efficient, warm welcoming response is provided.

There are no right or wrong ways of involving parents. By the time their child commences school, parent are to be well informed about the school. We wish parents to feel confident that any educational or personal problem will be dealt with by an understanding and competent staff member.

**P.O.T.S. (formerly Parents and Friends Association)**

Living Waters Lutheran School has established a *Parents Organising Terrific Stuff* (POTS) Group which is a valuable means of communicating and sharing ideas for fundraising and social events with parents. This auxiliary body is encouraged as a voice of parents for the school community. Suggestions on behalf of the POTS group are placed before the Principal for consideration.

**Communication:**

Constant, open and on-going communication between Living Waters Lutheran School and parents is essential. Home/school diaries, class/school newsletters, calendars, teacher/parent interviews and information evenings, and family functions are all examples of methods successfully used in effecting good communication.

**Curriculum and Curriculum Changes:**

Parents of Living Waters Lutheran School are to be well informed about the School curriculum. If and when curriculum changes are proposed, information will be shared with parents. Well-briefed parents can provide valuable assistance and will more willingly give their support. Information evenings are held to provide parents with detailed information as to the planned educational programme for their child/ren.

**Active Involvement:**

Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the daily programme of the School and in school evaluation. Such practical involvement potentially enhances the quality of education and provides the school with valuable additional resources. Recognising the demands made on teacher time, parents are made aware of, and invited to participate in voluntary service opportunities that exist.

**Conclusion:**

Schooling is not an activity in isolation. It is an activity within the community that links together the Church, the home and the School. While the responsibility to clarify and coordinate the various aspects of 'the whole of life' education rests with the school, parents clearly need to know and recognise that in Living Waters Lutheran School they are partners in the education process of their child and in maintaining the specific Christian ethos of the school.