

Trauma Informed Practices

The Catholic High School is committed to ensuring that our school develops a Trauma and Mental Health Informed Approach and to ensure our learners develop positive mental health and resilience, enabling them to fully engage in life and learning.

There is a growing body of research and understanding of the impact of Childhood Adversity on long term mental and physical health and the protective factors that lessen the potential impact.

It is our aim to maximise the protective factors at our school by creating an environment of safety that has strong, positive and supportive relationships at its heart. Teaching and associated staff at The Catholic High School will provide an environment of both physical and psychological safety and have the skills to respond to those who have been impacted by traumatic stress.

The school fully understands and supports the impact that connection with a trusted, emotionally available adult has on a child and seek to maximise this for those in our care who are identified as requiring additional support.

We use the PACE approach which focuses on building trusting relationships, emotional connections, containment and a sense of security.

PACE is a therapeutic approach developed by Clinical Psychologist Dan Hughes, which outlines four key principles for adults to use when supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma. PACE focuses on the whole child rather than just their behaviour.

P **LAYFULNESS**
'I can enjoy'
Being playful creates a fun, positive and calm atmosphere when communicating with a child.

A **CCEPTANCE**
'I can open'
Accepting a child as a person without judgement, shows a child you can see beyond their behaviour.

C **URIOSITY**
'I can make links'
Being open to discovering why a child is behaving the way they are, will help with developing a better understanding.

E **MPATHY**
'My feelings are valid'
Put yourself in a child's situation and try to show them that their experiences are important to you.

The infographic is a vertical rectangle with a light blue-to-green gradient background. At the top, it contains a paragraph of text. Below this, four horizontal bars represent the PACE principles. Each bar features a large, stylized letter on the left, the principle name in bold, a quote in bold, a descriptive sentence, and a small illustration on the right. The principles are: 1. Playfulness (blue bar, 'I can enjoy', illustration of two children playing), 2. Acceptance (pink bar, 'I can open', illustration of a man with his hand raised), 3. Curiosity (blue bar, 'I can make links', illustration of a man with a magnifying glass), 4. Empathy (pink bar, 'My feelings are valid', illustration of hands holding a heart).