

COMMERCIAL SPONSORSHIP/ADVERTISING IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Decisions involving commercial sponsorship and promotional activities need to be made in the context of the values upheld by the Catholic community. Catholic schools need to be aware of the more limited purposes upon which commercial sponsorships and promotional activities are based and to be sensitive to the impact of their decisions on the wider community. In fostering links with commercial and business organisations, the Catholic school community will need to keep in mind the educational reasons for the existence of the Catholic school.

PURPOSE

These guidelines are intended to assist Catholic school communities engaged in sponsorship and promotional activities with commercial and other outside organisations:

- to be responsible in decision-making.
- to gain the greatest benefit from the possible educational opportunities to be obtained through the school's participation; and
- to avoid activities which are inconsistent with the ethos of a Catholic school.
- Commercial sponsorship arrangements and promotional activities are not intended to be used as alternatives to or substitute for government funding.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of these guidelines, sponsorships and promotions are defined as:

Commercial Sponsorship - The negotiated provision of funds, goods or services to students, teachers, schools or school sector in exchange for advertising, publicity or other benefits.

Promotion - A scheme or arrangement conducted by organisations which is intended for commercial or other benefit, and which involves and rewards students, teachers, schools or the school sector for participating in the scheme or arrangement.

These guidelines do not relate to normal commercial dealings between organisations and schools, to simple donations of goods and services, to the customary fundraising activities schools undertake, or to materials developed independently by an organisation for use in schools.

PRINCIPLES

The Catholic school is not only a place where one is given a choice of intellectual values, but a place where an array of values are presented which are actively lived.¹ Therefore it is important for schools to take into consideration issues of social justice. It is the school's responsibility to take all reasonable measures to ensure that it does not enter into commercial sponsorship arrangements with an organisation which is engaged in exploitative activities, either in Australia or internationally.

This is the context in which commercial sponsorship and promotional activities must be undertaken in Catholic schools. Schools should ensure that the policy which the school has developed in this area is communicated clearly to commercial and business organisations before negotiations have begun. It cannot be assumed that these comprehensive intentions of the Catholic school are understood and appreciated by all members of business and commercial organisations seeking to develop sponsorships and promotional activities at the school level. Two important principles should govern the policies of Catholic schools in their dealings with the wider community:

1. The development of cooperative and harmonious relationships with the local and wider communities is part of the Gospel dimension of being open to all who wish to experience the Church in action.
2. The development of the whole person requires the Catholic school to foster links with those outside the school to enhance the learning opportunities of all students, and to broaden their understanding of the world of work in which all Catholics are called to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

BENEFITS OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES TO SCHOOLS

Catholic educators acknowledge the contribution of business to schooling by the provision of educational opportunities in such areas as:

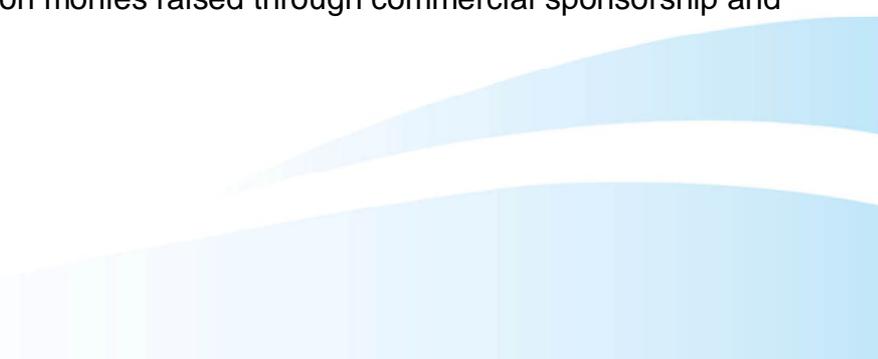
- experiencing and researching different work environments and occupational pathways;
- investigating the full range of potential work roles, including the relationship between paid and unpaid work;
- exploring educational and training opportunities including subject choices and further study options within career pathways;
- analysing the structure and organisation of the labour market and particular workplace conventions in local, national and international settings; and
- analysing historical and projected change in the labour market and workplace.

Catholic school communities acknowledge also the goodwill and support of business and commercial organisations in contributing in diverse ways to fundraising activities of schools. They do so in the full knowledge that such organisations use these contributions as a way of self-advertising and support this motivation by giving public acknowledgment such as references in newsletters and inserts in books.

¹ Catholic Church, Congregation for Catholic Education. *The Catholic School*, St Paul Publications, Homebush, NSW, 1977, n. 32 p.29.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

The following specific guidelines are intended to assist schools as they formulate their own policies in the area of commercial sponsorships and promotional activities. A comprehensive range is presented so that schools will be aware of the full extent to which commercial sponsorship and promotional activities may affect their operations. However, many of them will already have formed part of other school policies and therefore may not need to be referred to again in a specific policy statement in this area.

1. Acceptable arrangements for commercial sponsorship and promotional activities should be:
 - sensitive to the cultural composition of the local school community;
 - consistent with school policies of inclusiveness, particularly those dealing with gender;
 - based on peace and justice criteria, including:
 - aspects of morality such as respect for the law and the environment;
 - issues of justice such as exploitation of people in the process of production and fairness to other legitimate producers.
 2. Commercial sponsorships and promotions should:
 - be used to enhance educational programs and not to displace other funding arrangements on which schools depend;
 - be negotiated with organisations of which the public image, products or services are consistent with the ethos of a Catholic school;
 - be reached through negotiation. The agreement ought to specify the roles and responsibilities of individual parties, and the nature and level of the acknowledgment to be given to the sponsor;
 - be compatible with good educational practice. Time and resources allocated to these activities should be consistent with school priorities and the overall educational program;
 - not involve exclusive endorsement of particular products or services by schools;
 - be mindful of any potential impact on local small businesses;
 - not be displayed on articles which form part of school uniform. If schools choose to engage in sponsorship and promotion activities, the discretionary use of logos, names and slogans should be considered.
 - not offer inducements which detract from the essential purpose of a charitable appeal as it relates to students;
 - not generate undue pressure on children, parents or schools to purchase particular products or services, or to adopt particular beliefs, attitudes or courses of action.
 3. Acceptance of a sponsor's product should not be a condition of an individual student's participation in sponsored activities.
 4. Any educational materials provided as part of a commercial sponsorship or promotion should be clearly identified as being those of the sponsor.
 5. Students should not be involved in fundraising activities connected with commercial sponsorships or promotions which involve door-to-door canvassing or the offer of prizes to individuals or groups raising the largest amount.
 6. Schools should avoid dependence on monies raised through commercial sponsorship and promotions for recurrent costs.
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7. Schools should encourage companies to give schools money in the form of scholarships to ensure control over how money is spent.
8. Catholic schools should monitor the impact of commercial sponsorships and promotions on their education programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each Catholic school should formulate a school policy for sponsorship and promotional activities with commercial or other organisations based on these guidelines.
Boards and administrators of Catholic schools should consider offers of commercial sponsorships or promotions in the light of the school policy before granting approval.

REFERENCES

Catholic Church, Congregation for Catholic Education. *The Catholic School*, St Paul Publications, Homebush, NSW, 1977, n. 32.

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