FIRST IMPRESSIONS

First impressions are important in building relationships and sustainable partnerships. Whether intentional or not there is no excuse for a bad first impression of your school.

All schools strive to be welcoming and inclusive. What is the impression a visitor, parent or student gets when they arrive and enter your school? Is it the impression you wish them to have?

Have you considered a ‘first impressions audit’?

Have school board members conduct a walk through or seek the assistance of members of your community or parish who are not familiar with the school and environs.

Consider and add to the following:

General signage
• Is the signage in languages appropriate to your community? Is signage appropriate for those with sight problems and other disabilities?

• Is the signage easily read?

• Has thought been given to appropriate font size? colour? the height at which signage is placed?

Specific signage
• Is there ample street signage indicating the location of your school e.g. at the nearest intersection or main road?

• Is the name of your school and contact details clearly visible from the street?

• Are entrance to and exits from the grounds clearly marked?

• Are drop off zones clear?

• Are car parking areas signed?

• Are there clear directional signs to the office or main entrance of the building?

Grounds
• Are walking paths where they will be used, especially from the car park to the office or main entrance of the building?

• Is the landscaping well maintained?

• Is access available for all people?

• Are there clear walk ways?

• Is there adequate lighting?
Buildings
• Are the buildings well maintained?
• Are the building and open areas clearly sign posted?
• Is it clear that doors slide, open automatically, require to be pushed or pulled?
• Is the foyer welcoming to all of your community?
• Does the school’s artwork best reflect the schools values and aspirations?
• Do the publications in the foyer best reflect your school, Catholic education and the parish?

People
Everyone in the school is an ambassador for the school and for what it values.
• How do staff welcome visitors: manner, tone, language?
• How are queries dealt with: face-to-face, on the telephone, by email?
• How is confidentiality of queries and responses addressed on arrival?

What insights and questions emerged? What will you continue doing? What will you stop doing? What will you start doing?

Adapted from Board Business Number 26 Term 2 2013