



# **Religious and Educational Philosophy**

**Version 1.0**

**December 2006**

## Document Version Control

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.0	Dec 2006	Original Version

Glenstal Abbey School forms an integral part of the wider community associated with the Benedictine monastery at Glenstal. Central to its culture as a six-day teaching and seven-day boarding school, the school, its staff, students and parents share in much of the life of the community. Many monks work in the school and join the boys in prayer. The school joins the community for the most important event of the week, Sunday Eucharist. With these fundamental ties the school reflects the values of the Benedictine tradition: the search for God in the company of others, guided by the Rule of St Benedict, under the care of an Abbot.

A monastery is a community brought together by God for a life of prayer and mutual service. Similarly, our school is a community brought together by God for the education of young men. Responsible freedom should characterise its life. The keynotes of the monastic tradition are the unceasing worship of God, discretion, moderation, respect for other people and the environment, in an atmosphere of freedom and maturity. The presence of a stable and thriving monastery gives the school a special quality of stability, peace and harmony. The monks and other staff seek to enable the school community to flourish by working together under the inspiration of the Gospel.

The monastery, in the Rule of Benedict, is described as a ‘school of the Lord’s service’. Many of the values of the Rule are applicable to education and to the life of the school. The school is a place of personal and spiritual growth, where the love of learning is continually fostered. Students are encouraged to develop their talents as much for others as for themselves and so serve both God and neighbour. The life of the school is structured “so that the strong have something to strive for, and the weak nothing to run from” (Rule of Saint Benedict [RB] 64.19).

Glenstal Abbey School exists in order to help young men grow in knowledge and grace. Grounded in the Catholic faith and the Benedictine intellectual tradition, the school seeks to foster:

- Reverence for God and the human person
- Respect for learning and order
- Responsibility for the shared experience of community life

## **REVERENCE for God and the human person**

At Glenstal Abbey School, we believe that God is at the centre of the human search for meaning and that the perennial human questions - Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? How do I get there? - all find their answer in God. Accordingly, we seek to promote in the lives of our students a lifelong search for God as the beginning and end of their lives. This spiritual education of the heart, soul, and mind is the basis for intellectual and academic work at Glenstal Abbey School. We believe the gift of faith and a relationship with God is offered to each one of us every day, and we desire to create an environment in which it is possible to respond to that. We hope to communicate and share a faith that is lively, articulate and critically aware – a faith that is celebrated in our prayer and worship, and lived out in our daily lives. At the heart of this faith is a sacramental view of the world that sees the universe as being charged with the presence of God.

## **RESPECT for learning and order**

We believe it is important to introduce our students to the best of the Western intellectual tradition, which includes both the humanities and the sciences. Glenstal Abbey School seeks to develop the mind, heart, and body through an integrated and ordered progression of learning in a structured environment. Our students are provided excellent opportunities to discover fundamental truths, beliefs, and texts that have challenged every generation since antiquity, and to develop an abiding love of learning.

The Rule of St Benedict provides a structure for monastic living and so it should be in the school. School life is structured by various codes that legislate for different challenging circumstances. In

his Rule, St Benedict dedicates a whole chapter to the subject of “impossible tasks” (RB 68). When someone is faced with a “burdensome task or something he cannot do” he should try it, and only if it is really found to be impossible should he ask to be relieved of the burden. Students in the course of their studies and in school life will be faced by challenges that can seem impossible. In such challenges we seek to support and guide our students, and it is often in these difficulties that students learn most and flourish most abundantly.

## **RESPONSIBILITY for the shared experience of community life**

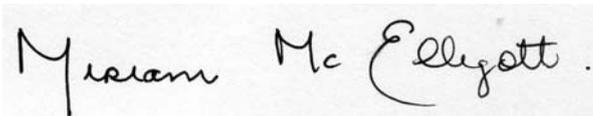
We are committed to living as a community that values each of its members. Glenstal Abbey School, as a six-day teaching and seven-day boarding school allows for a rich community life to be developed. This is inspired by a monastic presence and the Benedictine tradition of common life that includes prayer, study, work, and recreation. We welcome students from diverse Christian traditions, while encouraging an appreciation for the intellectual, moral and spiritual tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. We seek to honour the dignity of every student as a child of God, and strive to nurture the talents of each individual for service and leadership in our own community and in the wider world.

Living the common life means learning to live with the talents and challenges presented by the other individuals. The challenge is for each person to flourish and grow in unity. St Benedict says that, “the Abbot must know what a difficult and demanding burden he has undertaken ... serving a variety of temperaments, coaxing, reproving and encouraging them as appropriate. He must accommodate and adapt himself to each one’s character and intelligence that ... he will rejoice in the increase of a good flock” (RB 4.31-32). This is a task for the whole staff and all students – not just the Abbot or the Headmaster. The school seeks to provide an environment wherein the diverse talents of all of our students many find a voice to express themselves.

In Glenstal Abbey School what we seek to do above all is to encourage all to achieve the fullest potential that God has granted them, utilising all their talents to the full benefit of all. The efforts of all our staff are directed to this common goal, that “we may do now what will profit us forever” (RB Prol.44).

**This document approved by the Abbot of Glenstal and adopted by the Board**

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Miriam Mc Ellyott." with a period at the end. The handwriting is cursive and somewhat stylized.

**Chairperson Board of Management**

**Date: December 2006**