



**Australian Anglican Schools Network
2006 Conference**

Sydney: 15-17 September

3B In the Crucible

**Rev'd Paul Bland [Principal, Trinity Anglican School, Cairns]
Rev'd Naomi Cooke [Chaplain, Trinity Anglican School, Cairns]**

Task 1

Respond to the following incidents as a challenge or a difficulty in applying the ethos of the school community [eg, a 10 would indicate very great difficulty in applying ethos].

- a) A student is badly injured in an accident during a school excursion.
0 _____ 5 _____ 10
- b) A member of staff commits suicide after a long battle with a depressive illness.
0 _____ 5 _____ 10
- c) A past student makes accusations in the newspaper about a sexual abuse case some fifteen years ago at the school.
0 _____ 5 _____ 10
- d) A member of your maintenance staff is arrested for having child pornography on a home computer.
0 _____ 5 _____ 10
- e) You have a bleed in enrolment numbers and despite your best marketing efforts, you have to retrench staff.
0 _____ 5 _____ 10
- f) You have a very disloyal Head of House who gives confidential information to the media on a sensitive issue.
0 _____ 5 _____ 10



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Task 2

In small groups, work out a way of applying your ethos to these difficult and challenging situations.

Challenge 1

Your Outdoor Education program is one of the jewels in your curriculum. Every year the Year 9s are out of their classes for twenty days of challenge in the bush. One feature of the program is a wilderness walk and on this occasion, Brendan – one of the livelier Year 9s – defies a teacher's instruction and slips from a log crossing a mountain stream. He is concussed from the fall and may in fact have suffered some brain damage. He is helicoptered out of the site. You gather your team to plan a response.

Challenge 2

Jeanine Elliot has been your English Head of Faculty for twelve years. During this time she has had two eight week absences from work while she has been treated for depression. The last of these absences was last year and when she returned to work, it appeared that the illness was behind her. A new curriculum in English provided her with plenty of challenge; so too did an underperforming member of staff whom you supported when Jeanine wanted to begin Diminished Performance procedures. [The staff member was young and could come good with help.] Jeanine takes her own life on a weekend and you have the task of informing the school and taking appropriate action.

Challenge 3

The first you know about the problem is a call from the Chair of Council while you are driving to work. The story of a former student's sexual abuse allegations are in the newspaper that morning. They have come to light because at the Founder's Day service next Wednesday you were planning to name the new Boarding House after an old and much loved member of staff long retired from the school. It was your press release on this feel-good story that prompted him to come forward with the allegation. How do you use your ethos in forming a response?



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Challenge 4

You learn about this one when one of your maintenance staff calls you and immediately hands the telephone to his solicitor. He has been arrested for possession of child pornography images on his home computer. The man has had little access to children at school but he has close contact with the small team of students who work the tech box in the assembly hall. The information on the charge is likely to be made public sooner than later. This obviously demands an immediate response on your part.

Challenge 5

Your budget is always tight and over the last three years you have stripped away any fat there is to keep the fee rise down to a minimum. Even so, the rise is larger than some of your families can afford and you are left facing a \$250,000 shortfall in the operational budget next year. The Council tells you that the decision on how to resolve this is yours but they will not accept a budget that is not well in the black. You guess that you can make this work by shedding some staff – but it is already November and the last thing staff expect at this time of year is redundancies. How do you manage?

Challenge 6

The journalist who calls you will not reveal his source, obviously, but the information on student misuse of the school intranet system can only have come from a member of staff close to the story at school. [Most of the staff know only the barest outline.] By process of elimination, you trim the likely candidates down to two – both of them Heads of House whom you have trusted before and been disappointed by their want of discretion. The story really blackens the name of the school but it advances the need for more support staff in the Boarding House – something you have resisted for some time. It all looks very suss. Then you have one of the Heads of House come to you quietly to tell you that his colleague has been gloating about the incident. You cannot prove it but you know it must be this person. What do you do?