Justice and Solidarity
One of the Touchstones of a Catholic Education in the Edmund Rice Tradition

We are committed to justice and peace for all, grounded in a spirituality of action and reflection that calls us to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalised and the Earth itself.

I would like to make an appeal to those in possession of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity!

Pope Francis World Youth Day 2014
Understanding Justice and Solidarity in Our Sacred Story

We are inspired in our commitment to Justice and Solidarity by our deep connection to our sacred story:  

The loving creator God  
The life of Jesus  
The charism of Edmund Rice  
Our own story

In each we see justice and solidarity coming to life...

Our creator God loves the world intimately and desires all humanity to be one. The prophets of the Old Testament were so aware of this desire that when society violated this, they were called to speak out and challenge oppression that diminished human dignity. Our modern understanding has enabled us to realise that God’s love and desire also reaches to all of creation and we are called to live in respectful harmony with the Earth itself.

Jesus proclaimed God’s love and articulated how we can honour this love: by creating a world of justice, peace and solidarity, especially for those made poor and marginalised. Through his relationships of solidarity with others, he modelled inclusion, advocating for them, by speaking out against injustice. He also practiced a spirituality of action and reflection, by continually being nurtured by God’s love as he undertook his mission of transformation.

Edmund Rice believed in the liberation of not just the students he taught, but also the society in which he lived. Reflecting on his own brokenness and the injustices he faced as an Irish Catholic living in an occupied land, Edmund aimed to provide an education that would fundamentally change the world. Deeply aware of God’s love and a sense of providence, Edmund risked much to stand with those most oppressed in Ireland of the 19th Century.

We in our own story are invited to embrace justice and solidarity, grounded in a spirituality of action and reflection. It provides us with an active way to live out our Christian vocation and follow in the footsteps of Jesus and his mission. It opens our hearts and minds to a world yearning for liberation and provides us with opportunities to build deep relationships of solidarity with others.

However, remaining committed to justice and solidarity is a difficult endeavour. Becoming aware of the suffering of the world and our own personal limitations and contradictions in relation to these is challenging. Nurturing our spirituality and an awareness of God’s love provides a strong support in staying committed and enabling us to actively create the type of world that God has envisioned for all.

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1 The Good Seed Will Grow: A Formation Framework for Edmund Rice Communities in Oceania, 2014, pp 8-9
Engaging in Justice and Solidarity
Our Charter Touchstone of Justice and Solidarity is richly described:

We are committed to justice and peace for all, grounded in a spirituality of action and reflection that calls us to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalised and the Earth itself.

We are committed to justice and peace for all

by making a choice to commit ourselves to the journey of justice and solidarity
through a commitment that proclaims justice and nurtures peace
that is not just for ourselves and our students, but for all creation.

grounded in a spirituality of action and reflection
that is nurtured by a Catholic/Christian spirituality
to serve those in need both locally and globally
by taking the time to reflect on our actions in light of the Gospel

that calls us to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalised

through building respectful relationships of solidarity
by working in partnership ‘with’ rather than ‘for’ those who are marginalised
through advocating for just causes and helping others to find their own voice

and the Earth itself

by nurturing our own relationship and love for the natural world
through working towards a sustainable and regenerative future for all creation

The success of the Church’s educational mission will also be judged by how well it helped the Catholic community to see the dignity of human life with the vision of Jesus and involve itself in the search for solutions to the pressing problems of society. Christians are obliged to seek justice and peace in the world. Catholics individually and collectively should join whenever possible with all persons of good will in the effort to solve social problems in ways that consistently reflect Gospel values.

Congregation for Catholic Education, To Teach as Jesus Did, n. 10
Being Faithful to Justice and Solidarity

A Catholic School committed to justice and solidarity would ask these questions:

Where are the opportunities to integrate the themes of justice and peace into the curriculum?

What important justice issues that Catholic Social Teaching highlights in our world today can our school community advocate for?

What impact does service and solidarity learning have on our community and for those we are serving?

Do we provide opportunities for our students and staff to immerse themselves in other’s realities and build relationships of solidarity with those on the margins?

In what ways can we lead the way in promoting reconciliation in Australia and walking alongside Indigenous people?

Take the time to read and reflect upon Laudato Si. How can we be more environmentally aware and instigate programs that allow us to care for God’s creation?

How do we build relationships of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world and learn with, from and about them?

Do we nurture prayer as an essential way of reflecting on injustices in our world and discerning appropriate actions to take?

Those who teach justice shall be like the stars forever. Daniel 12:3