

Related Policies

Religious Education Accreditation to Work, Teach and Lead in Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn

Religious Education Coordinator: Role and Responsibilities, Employment and Professional Development

Rationale/Purpose

Religious Education is the making accessible of the traditions of the religious community and the making manifest of the intrinsic connection between traditions and transformation.

Therefore, in a Catholic School, the term 'Religious Education' refers to all aspects of learning about religion (the classroom teaching and learning program), as well as the processes of teaching students to be religious, thus enabling them to respond in faith through opportunities for faith growth and spiritual formation in the religious life of the school.

Religious Education is a lifelong process to which Catholic schooling contributes. All parts of Religious Education – all learning which is planned, guided and implemented by the school – are designed to ensure that the student knows, understands and values the living faith tradition and mission of the Catholic Church. This lies at the heart of Catholic Education, defining its culture, its curriculum and its classroom based Religion programs which aim to:

- develop an appreciation of the love of God revealed through the person of Jesus Christ, the wonders of God's creation and the dignity of the human person
- promote growth in self-knowledge and in knowledge of the life, faith and mission of the Catholic Church
- increase understanding of the nature of religion and of different religions
- foster skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking, judging and deciding how to act in accordance with conscience
- develop the capacity to critique the surrounding culture in the light of the Catholic Faith and Tradition.

This policy describes the elements of Religious Education that contribute to the Catholic School being a religious school where evangelisation, catechesis, Catholic religious literacy and the teaching of an effective religion curriculum (*Treasures New and Old*) contribute to the distinctive Catholic character of the school enabling students to learn about religion and enabling students to learn to be religious.

This policy will provide guidelines for the implementation of Religious Education in Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese through:

- the classroom Religion teaching and learning curriculum
- the liturgical and sacramental life of the school
- prayer and worship
- retreats and reflection experiences
- outreach, social action and justice programs
- the embedding of a Catholic perspective or worldview across the full curriculum.

The policy will also provide guidelines for the professional and spiritual formation of staff in Catholic Schools.

Definitions

Faith Formation

refers to all activities that assist students, parents, and staff in understanding the revelation of God. This involves putting names, categories or symbols on what has already been experienced, and opportunities to experience and understand God in their lives. Catholic Christian faith formation fosters a personal knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Formation

an ongoing process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others. (M. Robert Mulholland in 'Catching Fire: A Guide For Spiritual Transformation' Albert Haase, OFM).

School Community

refers to the students, parents, teachers, support staff, school executive, priest and/or parish administrator, School Community Council and other individuals, groups and organisations involved with and/or concerned about the learning and well-being of students enrolled at the school.

Catholic Religious Literacy

is described as students knowing '...the core teachings of our faith, our Scriptures, history and tradition...and how these are to be lived in the world.' It is aimed at enhancing students' religious knowledge and understanding, its application to life and demonstration. The goal of developing religious literacy should be situated within the broader goals of new (renewed) evangelisation and formation of Christian disciples (Catholic Education Commission NSW, 2010).

Policy

The Catholic Education Office requires each System school of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn to base their educational vision in the ideals expressed in the Archdiocesan *Treasures New and Old* Religious Education Core Document and Supplement and to develop Religious Education Core Documentation that provides the framework for a systematic, holistic, comprehensive school Religious Education program that will teach students about religion and that will teach students to be religious.

Policy Principles

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn participate under the leadership of the Archbishop and, in partnership with parents and parishes, in the Church's mission to provide quality education in the Catholic faith and Tradition.

The Catholic School "responds to its mission by offering a particular cultural experience that is grounded in '...a Christian view of the world, of culture and of history". (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997, n. 14)

This translates into a Christ-centred orientation that permeates all aspects of school life including relationships, structures, celebrations and routines, as well as the formal curriculum.

Catholic Schools are called to form students as disciples of Christ. In the words of Pope Francis (June 7 2013),

"School is one of the educational environments where one grows by learning how to live, how to become grown-up, mature men and women...the main element in school is learning to be magnanimous ... This means having a big heart, having a greatness of soul. It means having grand ideals, the desire to achieve great things in response to what God asks of us and, precisely because of this, doing everyday things, all our daily actions, commitments, and meetings with people well. [It means] doing the little everyday things with a big heart that is open to God and to others."

"School broadens not only your intellectual dimension, but also the human one."

All members of the school community are invited into a closer personal encounter with Christ through the proclamation, witness and service of those who work in Catholic Schools.

The school based Religious Education Core Documentation provides a systematic, holistic and comprehensive Religion teaching and learning program concerning the faith and Tradition of the Catholic Church which is appropriate to the developmental and individual needs and abilities of students. It is in accord with Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and its Compendium and Catholic Social Teaching, based on the Treasures New and Old Syllabus and endorse a critical and creative use of Shared Christian Praxis.

A systematic, holistic and comprehensive Religious Education program includes the liturgical and sacramental life of the school, prayer and worship, opportunities for retreats and reflection experiences, outreach, social action and justice programs and the embedding of a Catholic perspective or Catholic world view across the full school curriculum.

The Catholic School is an ecclesial community. It is part of the wider Catholic community and does not function in isolation. In this context, the tasks of Evangelisation, Catechesis and Religious Education are shared by home, parish and school, with each having its own distinct contribution to make in a sense of genuine partnership. All three are called to partnership based on a common vision.

Church documents relating to Catholic Education stress the importance of the continuing theological, religious, professional and spiritual formation of teachers as being imperative to the success of the mission of the Catholic School. The responsibility lies with Catholic employers to ensure effective formation programs are offered for staff.

“By their witness and their behaviour teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is, therefore, indispensable to ensure their continuing formation ...to animate them as witnesses of Christ in the classroom...their apostolate, especially regarding a Christian vision of the world and of education...the art of teaching in accordance with the principles of the Gospel” (The Catholic School n.78).

Procedures in Relation to the Implementation of the Religious Education Policy

1. The Religion Curriculum: *Treasures New and Old*

the Religion curriculum for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn is determined by the Archbishop of the diocese.

the *Treasures New and Old* Religious Education Curriculum K-10 was promulgated by Archbishop Francis Carroll in 2000 for use in all Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese.

since its launch teachers have taught, modified and developed new units and curriculum content has been summarised in a syllabus.

in 2009 Archbishop Mark Coleridge endorsed the Supplement to the Core Document of *Treasures New and Old*. This document responds to new challenges presented in Catholic Schools from a pluralistic and complex world and a changing Church and enables Catholic schools to meet these changes with a new sense of mission. This document draws on the past, reasserts essential truths and uses contemporary approaches to curriculum and pedagogy to ensure the place of Religion in the broader curriculum.

each Archdiocesan School implements an educationally credible, structured classroom Religion teaching and learning program which provides guidance in content, pedagogy, assessment and reporting based on the *Treasures New and Old* Religious Education Curriculum K-12. This program is supported by adequate and appropriate teaching resources.

2. *Treasures New and Old* Curriculum Documents

individual schools draw on the following documents in the development of their educational vision and Religion Education policy.

Core Document

- this places the Religion curriculum in its religious, educational and social context and outlines the curriculum model that is followed.

Syllabus

- the syllabus is structured around stage outcomes and key concepts in four core strands or content areas.

Stage Teacher Support Documentation

- this provides stage-specific information and support to teachers working with students in the different stages of schooling.

Unit Outlines

- the unit outlines translate the required key concepts for each stage into practical 'modules' that support the classroom teacher in developing sustained, sequential, high-quality learning.

Catholic Education Office Web Site

- all sections of the curriculum, *Treasures New and Old*, are accessible from the Catholic Education Office website www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au

3. Shared Christian Praxis

Shared Christian Praxis is the framework for teaching and learning in Religion. It places the learner at the centre of all activity and engages students in a cycle of reflection and action.

4. Pedagogy

Treasures New and Old identifies a range of approaches and strategies to ensure quality teaching and learning in Religion.

5. Time Allocation

as the teaching of the Religion Curriculum (*Treasures New and Old*) is the priority learning area in the Catholic school curriculum Archdiocesan schools give first priority to the teaching of *Treasures New and Old* in the development of the school timetable, the allocation of class teachers and the allocation of resources in the school budget.

6. Indicative Hours

Preschools

teachers in Archdiocesan preschools raise the religious awareness of children through providing an atmosphere where 'God talk' permeates all learning experiences as a natural part of the day.

the *Treasures New and Old* pre-school units are taught across the year in Archdiocesan preschools making optimum use of quality teaching time.

Primary Schools

in primary school classes (K-6) as a minimum, the equivalent of one half hour per day (150 minutes per week) is set aside for the teaching of the Religion Curriculum *Treasures New and Old*. This is exclusive of other religious celebrations and experiences such as Masses, prayer gatherings, retreats and reflection days, choir practice and performances and should be timetabled to make effective use of optimum learning time during the day.

Secondary Schools

in Years 7-10, as a minimum, the equivalent of 100 hours per year is set aside for the teaching of the Religion curriculum *Treasures New and Old*.

in Years 11 and 12, as a minimum, the equivalent of 60 hours per year is set aside for the teaching of the Religion curriculum.

7. Teachers of Religion

all teachers of Religion are Catholic and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to their own faith journey, the Catholic faith community, the Catholic Tradition and the teachings of the Catholic Church in the area of faith and morals along with regular participation in Sunday Eucharist and, more generally, in the life of the parish.

teachers of Religion possess a formal teaching qualification and have the necessary background knowledge and a professional commitment to the Vision and Mission of Catholic Education.

all teachers of Religion have attained Religious Education Accreditation Category D: Accreditation to Teach Religious Education.

if a teacher who is from another faith background is in charge of a class, arrangements are made to enable a suitably qualified Catholic teacher to take the Religion teaching and learning program in that class. This only applies to the classroom Religion teaching and learning program. All teachers are expected to prepare class prayer and participate in and support the religious life of the school.

principals endeavour, wherever possible, to employ relief teachers who are suitably qualified to teach Religion.

8. Liturgical and Sacramental Life of the School

liturgy and Sacraments are part of the official formal, public prayer and worship of the Church. Schools can celebrate the Liturgy of the Church through the celebration of the Sacraments, Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Hours (Daily Prayer of the Church).

school liturgical celebrations always contribute to the life of the parish as a worshipping community. Preparation of school liturgical celebrations are coordinated with the parish priest and take into account the needs of students, parents, teachers and parishioners whilst remaining faithful to the Church's directives for liturgical celebrations.

in cooperation with their parish priest schools identify and provide opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Penance within the life of the school.

Sacraments, special moments of meeting with Christ, are at the heart of the living of our Catholic faith.

parents, as the first educators of their children, have prime responsibility for the faith development of their child (Code of Canon Law, Canon 226). The role of the school is to assist the parish in supporting parents in this task. Schools support the parish-based Sacramental programs according to the local custom. Schools support the students and families engaged in sacramental preparation and first reception of the sacraments through recognition and prayer.

the Church encourages full, active participation in liturgy. Archdiocesan schools:

- educate staff and students about the principles, structures and preparation of liturgical celebrations in accordance with the Church's directives for liturgy
- provide formation for staff and students to undertake appropriate roles of ministry within the liturgy
- negotiate with clergy clear, agreed expectations about the celebration of liturgy and Sacraments within the school
- teach appropriate skills in liturgy through the development of clear expectations about procedures and practices for the reverent celebration of liturgy e.g. entering and leaving, proclaiming and responding, movement and gestures, receiving communion
- prepare students for full and reverent participation in liturgies e.g. practise reading and reflecting on scripture, rehearse music, explain and practise particular actions and gestures
- teach the liturgical responses in accordance with the Archdiocesan Scope and Sequence of Liturgical Responses (see Catholic Education Office intranet)

9. Prayer and Worship

prayer and worship are integral to the everyday life of a Catholic School and have the potential to nourish the spiritual growth of all members of the school community. Prayer and worship provide the context and the resources for individuals and groups to celebrate their life and identity as members of the school community and to nurture their relationship in faith with God and with one another.

staff in Catholic Schools participate in ongoing formation in understanding prayer and worship in the Catholic tradition and in developing knowledge and skills needed to prepare experiences of prayer and worship with students.

prayer is relevant and meaningful for the student's perceived level of faith and incorporates the use of appropriate symbols.

Catholic Schools teach students formal prayers and also assist the students to develop an attitude of prayerfulness and sense of the sacred. Students learn to pray by praying.

the need for silence as a form of prayer is introduced from Kindergarten.

in the primary classes students are taught the traditional prayers of the Catholic Church and are introduced to the three expressions of prayer in the Catholic Tradition as identified in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. These are:

- Vocal Prayer
- Meditative Prayer
- Contemplative Prayer

in addition, at the secondary level, students experience the following:

- Lectio Divina
- Scriptural Prayers (e.g. Psalms)
- Prayers of the Mystics
- Prayers of the Fathers of the Church
- Prayers of the Desert Fathers
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Ignatian Examen

traditionally in Catholic Schools, prayer enfolds each session of the day in accordance with the traditions of the Catholic Church. In primary classrooms prayer is integrated into the everyday life of the students. Expressions of prayer are common practice to begin the day; before and after recess and lunch; and at the end of the day. School prayer is an integral part of the faith life of the community, including prayer at all assemblies and whole school gatherings.

in secondary schools students pray together each day in their home room or pastoral care class, school assemblies and the beginning of each Religion lesson.

when planning prayer and worship the timing takes into consideration the liturgical season and other events such as Catholic School's Week. Teachers should be aware of those occasions throughout the year to which the Christian community brings a spiritual dimension e.g. ANZAC Day, Shrove Tuesday, Grandparent's Day, Remembrance Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day etc.

Archdiocesan schools:

- access professional learning opportunities and formation for staff to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understandings about Catholic prayer and worship: its purpose, meaning and expression

- teach the Catholic traditional prayers in accordance with the Archdiocesan Scope and Sequence of Traditional Prayer (refer to CEO intranet)
- teach and use a variety of devotions for individual and communal use (e.g. Stations of the Cross, Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration)
- identify appropriate times and occasions for different forms of prayer (e.g. prayers of praise, intercession, blessing, adoration, petition, thanksgiving)
- immerse students in diverse experiences of prayer including meditation (Christian meditation, Ignatian meditation, Lectio Divina and guided meditation), contemplation, silence, labyrinths, mandalas, praying with scripture, litanies and mantras and using the arts as a stimulus for prayer
- create a culture and climate that values and emphasises a sense of the sacred during communal prayer times
- make effective use of music and the visual arts to enhance prayer experiences.

10. Retreats and Reflection Experiences

a Catholic School has the responsibility to provide for its members community faith experiences beyond those which constitute a part of the classroom Religion program. The student is offered further opportunities whereby they can consider ways to apply what they have learnt to their personal life e.g. retreats or reflection experiences.

these experiences encourage students to reflect on moral and spiritual growth as members of the faith community.

it is highly recommended that such experiences be offered for primary students.

for secondary students retreats are an integral part of their religious experience at the school.

11. Youth Ministry

the Catholic Education Office regards the Archdiocesan Youth Team (NET Ministries) as the peer-to-peer retreat provider of choice. Therefore Archdiocesan schools are requested to employ the service provided by the Archdiocesan Office for Youth (NET Ministries). If schools seek to employ the services of another youth ministry team it is required that they check with the Archdiocesan Office for Youth (CatholicLIFE) and subsequently inform the Director of Catholic Education prior to engagement of the outside provider.

12. Outreach, Social Action and Justice Programs

Religious Education provides an opportunity for students to understand their responsibility, as disciples of Jesus, to reach out to others and to work for the promotion of justice in their world.

social action is the striving to bring authentic moral values to the organisation of society and to the social institutions – educational, economic, political – by which society functions (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2426-2436). Social action finds its foundation in the scriptures, particularly the Gospel, and in the Church's Social Teaching.

action for justice is integral to the Christian vocation. Action for justice, peace and ecological sustainability is based on the mission of Jesus to establish the Kingdom of God.

Catholic School communities act for justice when they demonstrate a commitment to the poor and marginalised, actively work for peace and practise stewardship of the earth.

13. Fund Raising

in accordance with the directive to all Australian dioceses from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (1997), all schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn endeavour to support the fund raising efforts of the major Catholic organisations of Catholic Mission, Caritas and St Vincent de Paul before providing support for other charitable works.

Catholic Schools always give preference to Catholic charitable works. If schools elect to raise money for other charitable works sponsored by secular or other Christian organisations they ensure that this does not conflict with

Catholic social or moral teachings. In this case schools seek clarification from the Catholic Education Office to confirm that the goals and methods of the charity are consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and directives of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

14. Catholic Perspectives and Catholic Worldview Across the Curriculum

Catholic Schools have a particular task of offering quality education in all areas of the curriculum and presenting that quality education as an expression of the Catholic worldview.

every curriculum area that is taught within a Catholic School has a religious dimension, a capacity to assist students to examine the world of human culture and the world of religion, providing knowledge and skills and fostering attitudes and values that are life-giving and that assist young people to search for meaning and truth.

the Catholic worldview is a comprehensive perception of the universe revealed in Jesus that provides insights into the meaning of life and how to live it.

the Catholic worldview is experiencing life through the eyes of our Catholic faith.

Catholic Schools transform the individual by informing the student about, and forming the student in, the Catholic vision and story. Catholic Schools offer opportunities for students to apply that worldview to all aspects of school life, and life outside school. The task for the teacher in the Catholic School is to ensure that all pedagogical and pastoral decisions in all key learning areas are founded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Catholic Social Teaching and offer students the experience and knowledge necessary to develop a distinctive Catholic way of being in and seeing the world.

15. Theological, Religious, Professional and Spiritual Formation of Staff

‘The transmission of the Christian message through teaching implies a mastery of knowledge of the truths of the faith and of the principles of spiritual life that require constant improvement’ (Educating Together in Catholic Schools, n. 26)

‘Catholic educators need a formation of the heart: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others so that their educational commitment becomes a consequence deriving from their faith’ (Educating Together in Catholic Schools n. 25).

‘The achievement of...(the)...aim of the Catholic school depends not so much on the subject matter or methodology as on the people who work there’. (The Catholic School, n.45)

‘The instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine; teachers are to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life’ (Code of Canon Law, Canon 803.2)

‘As some teachers have received limited faith formation themselves, they need particular support and professional development. We commit our Catholic Education Offices and parishes to providing this’ (Catholic Schools at a Crossroads, Bishops of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory).

In a recent address Pope Francis insisted upon the importance of formation, which he presented as founded upon four fundamental pillars: spiritual, intellectual, communitarian and apostolic. “formation is an artisanal craft,...”, he commented; “its aim is to form religious persons with a tender heart...”.(Meeting with the Superiors General, 29 November 2013, Pope Francis)

it is expected that all staff in Archdiocesan Catholic schools undertake appropriate ongoing theological, religious, professional and spiritual formation appropriate to their role. This is a shared responsibility between the school and the Catholic Education Office.

in cooperation with the Catholic Education Office, schools support the individual initiatives of teachers furthering their knowledge, skills, expertise and own personal and spiritual formation. Schools offer opportunities for training and formation to meet specific needs of the school’s Religious Education Program.

as a Catholic School, concern for personal and spiritual formation extends to all members of the school community. Hence, adequate provision is made for staff to engage in personal reflection and faith development. Staff retreat

times, staff meetings devoted to adult faith development topics, spiritual reading, regular opportunities for staff prayer, reflection and celebrations of the Eucharist are recommended.

16. Mandatory Spirituality Days

each year every school in the Archdiocese allocates, as a minimum, one full professional development day for the purpose of faith/spiritual formation of staff. Such days have a clear and obvious formation focus and are approved by the Religious Education and Curriculum Services Senior Officer: Catholic Identity, Religious Education and Faith Formation, at least three months prior to the day being held.

17. Protocols for Guest Presenters

schools seek approval from the Archbishop of the diocese through the Catholic Education Office Senior Officer: Catholic Identity, Religious Education and Faith Formation, before inviting anyone into the Archdiocese to facilitate any form of Religious Education, Faith Formation or Spiritual Formation activity for staff, students or parents.

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Forms

Nil

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