



Good Shepherd Catholic School

— Lockridge —

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EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY

Rationale

Each child is a precious and sacred gift from God created as an individual with their own unique talents and abilities. Catholic education seeks to create environments that nurture this individuality while enhancing learning and empowering young people to live the Catholic faith in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Childhood as “a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world” and recognise that quality service provision in the early years provides an opportunity to foster the development of the whole child (Early Childhood Australia, 2009).

Catholic education celebrates parents as children’s first and most influential educators and recognises that strong, collaborative partnerships between parents and educators are essential. Educators and educational leaders work collaboratively with parents to foster children’s spiritual, physical, cognitive, social and emotional learning and growth. Catholic schools assist parents who wish to develop their children as Christian men and women. Also they support parishes with their responsibility of supporting parents as the first educators of their child” (Mandate, para 6).

Principles

1. Leaders and educators in Catholic education recognise parents as children’s first and most influential educators. They develop collaborative partnerships with families based on understanding one another’s expectations, attitudes and strengths.
2. Each child has individual needs and potential that shall be recognised, valued and responded to within a safe, caring and positive Catholic learning environment that fosters a sense of community.
3. Early Childhood Education and Care promotes learning as a lifelong process.
4. The learning environment, curriculum and pedagogy offered shall be inclusive of all children and be developmentally and culturally appropriate.
5. Early Childhood Education and Care shall be aligned to current research on development, learning and teaching as it applies to children from Birth - 8 years old.
6. Early Childhood Education and Care in Catholic schools shall recognise the influence of relevant system, state and national documents.
7. All children enrolled in Early Childhood Education and Care in Catholic schools shall be the responsibility of the principal and other designated staff.
8. The early childhood programs in Catholic education involve learning that is a balance of intentional teaching and play based learning, that provide children with opportunities to explore, discover, imagine and engage in purposeful and meaningful experiences.

Procedures

1. Procedures for enrolment shall be in accord with the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) policy statement 2-D5 ‘Student Enrolment’ and Government policy.
2. Early Childhood Education and Care programs shall be appropriately staffed according to the:
 - Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-C6 ‘Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools’
 - Current early learning and care legislation relevant for Western Australia

3. All educators, educating and caring for children from birth to preprimary age, shall hold an early childhood qualification in accordance with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) approved list. It is highly desirable for teachers of Years 1-3 to hold an Early Childhood Education qualification.
4. All educators in the early years and principals of primary and composite Catholic schools shall implement evidence based early childhood pedagogy and be engaged in appropriate ongoing professional development.
5. Early Childhood Care and Education services, in conjunction with Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, shall develop and periodically review written policies and procedures as outlined in current legislation relevant for Western Australia.
6. **School**
Period of operation:
 - Catholic schools shall provide Kindergarten children with a minimum of fifteen hours per week from commencement of the school year.
 - Catholic schools shall provide Pre-Primary children with five full day sessions from the commencement of the school year.
7. **Licensed Services**
 - Catholic schools providing before and after school care shall operate that service on each school day (DEEWR, 2012-13).

Other Documents to refer to for further information for ECE:

- Good Shepherd Philosophy
- Good Shepherd Play Charter
- Good Shepherd QIP Plan



Good Shepherd Early Childhood Philosophy



Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School is dedicated toward creating a warm, welcoming environment that provides our children with relevant and challenging learning opportunities, allowing them to grow and develop to their full potential in all areas of human development. Our Early Childhood programme recognises all children as strong, competent and unique individuals.

Good Shepherds Early Childhood Philosophy recognises that every child develops at a different rate and in their own unique way. As parents are first educators of their children, we recognise the need to foster strong school-home communication links by establishing a working partnership with parents. Parents are encouraged to actively form working partnerships with their child's educators.

Early Childhood Programme is directly guided by the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being and Becoming (2009). This document clearly states that a child's learning and development happens in three phases of Belonging, Being and Becoming.

- Belonging- acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging
- Being- recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life.
- Becoming- children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances.

Good Shepherd Catholic School has created indoor and outdoor environments which ensures that children are challenged, whilst being supportive and responsive to their strengths, learning styles and capabilities. The children are invited to explore, take-risks, engage and stimulate their imagination and encourage their desire to learn and think critically in a safe and secure manner. The children are given opportunities to develop their acquisition of social skills such as cooperation, persistence and problem solving as they share and converse with others. We support all children as they begin to make sense of their world and the new and exciting discoveries and connections they encounter.

Early Years Learning Framework

An Australian Government Initiative 2009

The Early Years Learning Framework is Australia's first national framework for early childhood educators. It aims to extend and enrich children's lives and enable children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity. It also aims for children to develop connections with their world and to become confident in their learning and communication

