



Good Shepherd Catholic School

— Lockridge —

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Rationale

'Religious Education is the first learning area in the Catholic school curriculum. This is so because, though a classroom activity, Religious Education is a form of the Ministry of the Word. Unlike the other Learning Areas, it is an activity of Evangelisation in its own right' (Mandate, 62).

The Bishop is responsible for handing on the faith in his diocese and has the right and duty to oversee the Religious Education program and those appointed to teach it. (CCC 803-806). 'The Religious Education program to be taught in the Catholic school is that promulgated by the diocesan Bishop. Like Christian witness and catechesis, Religious Education expresses 'the divine power of the Message' (Mandate, para 62). The Religious Education program aims to help students learn the teachings of the Gospel as proclaimed by the Catholic Church and to develop a sense of the nature of Christianity and of how Christians are trying to live their lives. It seeks to show non-Christians something of the mystery of Christ.

Definitions

Religious Education is a learning area which focuses on the knowledge and understanding of the Gospel as it is handed on by the Catholic Church.

Catechesis provides experiences which deepen faith; it is the lifelong apprenticeship in Christian formation. "The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ" (GDC 80).

Principles

1. Religious Education complements Catechesis offered in family, school and parish
2. The Religious Education program to be taught in Good Shepherd is that promulgated by the diocesan Bishop
3. Religious Education in the school shall always respect parents as the prime educators of their children, particularly in the area of faith education
4. The Religious Education curriculum shall be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as all other learning areas
5. Religious Education shall serve the evangelisation process by taking the students and their needs as the starting point for teaching and learning
6. Religious Education shall relate the knowledge and understandings of the Catholic faith to students' real life situations and experiences
7. Religious Education shall always present Catholic beliefs and practices in the context of the Christian Promise of Salvation and the questions and aspirations of the human heart that God alone can satisfy completely
8. Teachers of Religious Education shall be committed Catholics and shall give active Christian witness to Catholic beliefs

Procedures

1. Within the normal hours of instruction the time allocation for teaching Religious Education Learning Area shall be:

Primary schools (Minimum Time)	
PP – 1	15 Minutes per day
Years 2 – 6	30 Minutes per day

- In three year and four year old programs, teachers are required to plan and provide quality programs, environments and pedagogical practices to raise the religious awareness of children.

Liturgies and other activities of catechesis including Christian service are essential for the effective evangelisation of students but are separate from the Religious Education program and are not part of the time allocation. There needs to be at least 60 minutes per week of such experiences averaged over the particular year level's academic year.

2. The Religious Education program, as promulgated by the diocesan Bishop, shall be implemented with reference to the principles and procedures of the CECWA Policy statement 2-B2 'Curriculum'
3. Teachers of Religious Education shall have the necessary accreditation stipulated by the CECWA Policy statements 2-C1 'Accreditation'
4. Schools shall keep parents/guardians informed on an ongoing basis as to the content of their child's Religious Education program
5. Schools shall work closely with parents/guardians and parishes to support the sacramental programs of the parish
6. Appropriate professional development shall be available for teachers of Religious Education
7. Appropriate resources shall be made available for the Religious Education Learning Area

RETREATS

Rationale

Good Shepherd Catholic School retreats are an integral part of the life-long faith formation of young people. They promote systematic, intentional catechesis as part of the comprehensive evangelisation of students.

Catholic school retreats are relational at heart. To be effective, retreat programs acknowledge the individual's unique reality and bring the power of the Gospel into contemporary culture in a way that engages and empowers young people.

The Catholic school retreat aims to put students in 'communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ' (GDC 80).¹ Through the retreat experience students come to know Christian love and are exposed to a Gospel centred way of life. Students hear the Gospel and are empowered to connect the Gospel message to their lives and to find ways of continuing the Church's mission. They participate in the life of the Christian community through liturgy and through activities which emphasise growth in Christian faith.

Principles

Retreats:

1. Provide experiences for students to know, contemplate and celebrate Jesus
2. Are an integral part of Catholic school life. They need to be inclusive, purposeful, meaningful and take into account the culture, developmental needs and experiences of students
3. Complement the catechesis experiences offered by the school
4. Planning needs to take into consideration the charism, ethos and mission of the school
5. Need to be planned in a way that engages students in rich experiences of Catholic symbol and ritual

Procedures

1. Retreats shall be provided for Sacramental programs for the Eucharist and Confirmation
2. Parents and students shall be informed about the nature and purpose of the retreat and the level of student involvement required
3. Programs shall consider the religious and cultural backgrounds and the developmental needs of the students
4. Programs shall include appropriate prayer and liturgical experiences
5. Program shall include creative and engaging activities and approaches with young people which connect to systematic catechesis
6. Staff involved in a school retreat shall be familiar with the retreat program and its expectations prior to and during the retreat
7. The retreat program shall include appropriate evaluation procedures, including feedback from students