



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### RATIONALE

The ecclesial mission of the Catholic school is the foundation for Religious Education and the core work of Catholic educators:

*Catholic schools were founded to proclaim Jesus' message of God's love for all. Our Catholic faith calls us to embrace the contemporary world with a Catholic imagination, and a particular hope-filled view of the human person and all of creation. Catholic educators invite students to make sense of their world and their lives within a faith community that is faithful to the mission of Jesus*

*(Horizons of Hope: Context 2016, p. 9).*

Religion is an essential characteristic of many societies and religious knowledge is fundamental to an understanding of self, others, the world and God. Religious Education promotes an understanding of story, ethics, ritual and symbol that have shaped humanity from the earliest times. It helps students appreciate the role of prayer, beliefs, sacraments and sacred texts in people's lives.

Religious Education invites our students to engage in the knowledge and understandings that are essential for a rich spiritual life and for informed and committed participation in a global Church, working for the common good.

At Our Lady of Lourdes the individual is encouraged to develop as a whole person, with Catholic values as the foundation of all learning. The Religious Education program endeavours to enhance students' knowledge of God within the Catholic principles and beliefs, while acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and their families. At Our Lady of Lourdes we believe that formation in faith is a lifelong journey with the family at its centre. We acknowledge that parents are the first educators of their children in the Catholic faith and therefore we promote and encourage partnerships with them and with the parish community.

Religious Education is taught through story, and learning and teaching experiences based on the inquiry process which encourages the students to wonder and explore. Whilst Religious Education is taught as a subject area it is an aspect that forms the umbrella of our school life and is interconnected through the modelling and practising of our school's motto, 'Serve the Lord with joy.'

All that we do at Our Lady of Lourdes and our 'way of being' is centred upon the *Horizons of Hope Framework* which has been developed by Catholic Education Melbourne to support Catholic schools and their teachers in the planning of learning and teaching.

*Horizons of Hope* gives shape to the way in which we engage with our students, colleagues and parents. This document comprises four elements:

- Vision and Context
- Curriculum
- Pedagogy

- Assessment

This framework underpins the way in which we implement both our learning and teaching programs across the school and our pastoral care processes, enabling the students to develop deep understandings and make authentic connections between themselves and the broader world and the person of Jesus.

## **AIMS**

- To teach as Jesus did so that each student comes to develop a relationship with God and experiences Him in their lives.
- To nurture in an environment of trust and intellectual inquiry, inspired by points of contact with the Catholic faith as a way of clarifying the important questions and issues that arise for teachers and our students.
- To acknowledge a sacred aspect to teaching and learning, finding God at work in the forming and transforming power of learning.
- To create a sense of 'who I am' and 'how I can be in the world'.
- To model the Catholic Faith, Tradition, principles, beliefs and values in our daily lives.
- To appreciate the value of Catholic Faith and to respect other faith beliefs, practices and worldviews that permeate Australia's diverse society.
- To be proactive towards social justice issues by living out the Gospel values of Respect for Human Dignity, Respect for Creation and the Environment, Love, Justice, Care and Compassion, Forgiveness, Service, Peace, Faithfulness and Honesty and Integrity.
- To support our students so that their behaviours reflect the Gospel values.
- To support each individual's Faith journey.
- To celebrate and encourage a supportive relationship between parish, school and the wider community.
- To continue to foster links between home and school.
- To expose the students, mostly through story, to the ways in which spirit-filled people live and have lived.
- To engage the students through contemporary learning and teaching practices.

**PRINCIPLES** The Religious Dimension of the school is built on the following guiding principles:

1. Honouring the sacred dignity of each person.
2. Engaging with the deep questions of life.

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3. Honouring equitable access and opportunity for all.
4. Making a difference in life

These guiding principles are taught under the umbrella of:

- Scripture and Jesus
- Church and Community
- God, Religion and Life
- Prayer, Liturgy and Sacrament
- Morality and Justice.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Religious Education takes place throughout all learning in our Catholic school.

- The Gospel values form the basis for all learning.
- The Religious Education program is taught with specific Faith concepts, signs, symbols and gestures relating to the Inquiry unit. Units are chosen in line with the Liturgical Year of the Church and the Faith life of the school and Parish.
- The *Religious Education Curriculum Framework*, Archdiocese of Melbourne, forms the basis of dialogue between teachers in preparation for and the planning of units of study.
- Students learn about the teachings of Jesus Christ through Story, Wondering, Responding and Praying the Word.
- Opportunities for meditation, reflection, prayer and liturgy are presented to enable staff, students and the community to grow and deepen their personal faith.
- Students are prepared for the sacraments by their classroom teachers and actively participate in the planning and celebration of these liturgies:
  - Year 3 - Sacrament of Reconciliation
  - Year 4 - Sacrament of Eucharist
  - Year 6 - Sacrament of Confirmation
- Students actively participate in class Masses, Sunday Masses, sacramental reflection days and liturgies.
- Students from Years Three to Six have the opportunity to regularly receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
- Sacramental Programs are conducted for eligible students. These programs are school and parish based and include:
  - Information Evenings.
  - Interactive parent/child faith workshops.
  - School based preparation with support from the home context.
- Students are encouraged to respond to the needs of others in practical ways.

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- The school continues to support social justice fundraising initiatives. Students also learn about and participate in local community projects connected to Caritas (Project Compassion) and St. Vincent de Paul.
- Sunday Scripture is incorporated into the weekly class program.

### **ASSESSMENT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Assessment of individual student achievement is made in the area of their knowledge and understanding of the content of Faith only. It does not extend to judging the personal faith response of students. At Our Lady of Lourdes we believe the response to the invitation of Christ is each student's own personal, free decision.

An essential element in the education of Faith is the continuing growth of individuals in the Catholic Community and in the sacramental life of the Church. Opportunities are provided at regular times during the child's education at Our Lady of Lourdes to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's cyclic review process.

### **History of Updates to Policy**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)</b>
2015	Written and ratified
2019	Minor update