

# St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

Chisholm



## Religion Education Policy

*Last Reviewed*

2015

*Next Review*

2018

## **ST ALOYSIUS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL VISION**

***At St Aloysius Catholic Primary School we are called to be the face of Christ through living, loving and learning together. We dare to empower all to wonder, hope, thrive and be proud witnesses of our faith.***

### **RATIONALE**

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School is part of the Catholic Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We are placing the teachings of Jesus and our Catholic traditions into our contemporary and diverse culture. In an ever changing world we are guided by the Holy Spirit and we are called to “act justly and love mercifully and walk humbly with our God” Micah 6:8. We embrace the charism of our school and through our RE curriculum, we endeavour to follow in the footsteps of Aloysius Gonzaga, Caroline Chisholm and the Sisters of Mercy, who were also called, and did their best to live like Jesus and help others in need.

### **CATHOLIC DIMENSION**

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.

As a Catholic School, we are dedicated to the integrating of our Christian beliefs and values into all that we do. We participate and support St Vincent de Paul, Catholic Mission and Caritas. We regularly participate and promote social justice initiatives such as Project Compassion, Vinnies Winter and Christmas Appeal, and Children’s Mission Month.

### **AIMS**

As a school community we promote the teachings and vision given to us by Jesus in both the formal and informal curriculum. We nurture the talents, abilities and spirituality of our students by instilling in them an understanding and appreciation of the charism of St Aloysius Gonzaga, the Mercy Sisters, and Caroline Chisholm. This policy provides a framework to enhance and promote knowledge and understanding of the traditions of the Catholic community: its story, its experiences and its teachings, through the following four strands: Jesus and Scripture, History and Beliefs, Celebration and Prayer, Justice and Morality.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Personnel:**

- Each classroom teacher develops a program for their class that is consistent with the diocesan Programming Policy.
- All staff must complete their FEA Accreditation to work; all teachers have either completed or are in the process of completing their RE Accreditation to teach RE.
- Teachers are encouraged to approach the REC when they have questions or queries about the teaching of RE. The REC supports teachers and assists them with their programming, assessing, reporting and locating resources.
- The REC is responsible for the annual Liturgy Plan and Calendar
- The parish priest, Fr Paul O'Neill, Peter Street, and Derek Garner lead Masses and liturgies when possible. They are invited to our school and into the classrooms regularly to engage with the students and staff.

### **Time /Procedures**

#### **Informal Curriculum**

Gospel Values are at the core of our Religious Education Program. They permeate all aspects of the school curriculum. Students through the harmony and the quality of relationships experienced at school and in their families, come to understand that they are loved by God. It is through the celebration of our faith through prayer, song and liturgy that students begin to understand that we are part of God's family, the Church.

- Time is regularly allocated for Mass, liturgies and prayers.
- The Making Jesus Real Program is taught alongside our regular curriculum and provides a framework for the students and staff to experience a positive school culture.
- The Mini Vinnies take an active role in promoting social justice initiative in raising awareness for the marginalised in our society. Mini Vinnies meet regularly once a week.
- We regularly celebrate our faith through Mass, liturgies and prayers. This provides students, teachers, families and members of our community an opportunity to develop our relationship with God and forms a connection with the wider Catholic community. Teachers are actively encouraged and involved in leading Masses, liturgies and prayers.
- We acknowledge, celebrate and embrace Aboriginal and other cultures. Students participate in and attend Masses and liturgies (Harmony day, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week). Our Peer Support group also take part in leading activities for these special occasions.
- We model Gospel values to one another through our words and actions.
- The REC and School Principal regularly attend the Parish Council Meetings in an effort to build and enhance the partnership between the school and parish.
- Staff attend a spirituality day once a year and are regularly encouraged to participate in prayer and Christian Meditation offered through the CSO.
- Staff also participate in staff meetings and Professional Development led by the REC or CSO personnel (Mark Spencer, Brad Fuller, Bernadette Gibson).

- We have student led prayers in the morning and teacher led prayers of an afternoon.
- Staff meet once a week for staff prayer.
- The school supports the Parish Sacramental Program. Class units are taught in conjunction with parish preparation. Information is distributed through our school newsletter.
- The REC regularly promotes items in the school newsletter that keep the community and parents informed.

### **Formal Curriculum**

- Religious Education is allocated for 30 minutes per day.
- A scope and sequence for the teaching of Religious Education is provided and teachers plan units of work based on the school scope and sequence.
- Our Religious Education programme is sequential and age appropriate. Increasing knowledge and understanding of our Catholic Faith is ongoing. At each level students will be provided opportunities to respond to what has been taught and to give examples of how they can relate knowledge and understandings to their own life and experiences.
- Religion units of work will provide opportunities for students to use higher order thinking skills and engage in deep assessment opportunities. The students work will reflect pride and achievement and their work will mirror the classroom teacher's Religious Education Program Planning.
- RE resources (print and electronic) are easily accessible. Religion units and support material are arranged in boxes that are kept in the RE resource cupboard.
- Teachers will differentiate their learning activities to meet the learning needs of all students. Differentiation adjustments will be recorded and documented in each class teacher's program.
- Teachers have access to regular professional development in the teaching of RE to build expertise and skills and to comply with Faith Accreditation.

### **Assessment/Assessment strategies**

Assessment and reporting practices are consistent with all other Key Learning Areas and conform to our school's assessment and reporting policy. Assessment is ongoing and is embedded into the teaching program. It may occur at any stage during a unit of work. Assessment informs the teaching process. Year 6 participate in the annual Religious Education Literacy Assessment.

Assessment is based on the learning outcomes and content of the Religious Education Program and specifies what students know, understand and are able to do. Teachers use both formative and summative assessments. Opportunities for assessment for, as and of learning should be included in units of work providing opportunities for:

- self-assessment and peer assessment
- strategies for students to actively monitor and evaluate their own learning
- feedback, together with evidence, to help teachers and students decide whether students are ready for the next phase of learning or whether they need further learning experiences to consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills

Assessment Strategies will include the following:

- the monitoring of student achievement in relation to outcomes and content of the syllabus
- ongoing feedback to students to improve learning

**Each unit of work in Religious Education will include:**

- Written, spoken or role plays as a means of assessing outcomes
- Evidence will include teacher observation, questioning, peer evaluation and self-evaluation.
- Students' work samples at various stages of an activity, including anecdotal records and students' oral, written and multimedia work samples
- providing students with authentic and contextual learning opportunities
- analysing the quality of student assessments against criteria, including rubrics
- observing students during learning activities and participation in a group activity
- observing students participation during formal and informal prayers

Teachers will maintain a record of student achievement. These assessment data records are to be maintained for the calendar year.

Teachers will plan for and gather evidence about student achievement in a variety of ways at key points during, and at the end of, a unit, a term or a semester. This evidence can assist teachers in making professional judgements about a student's progress and achievement of syllabus outcomes, and provides feedback about how students can improve their learning.

**Reporting**

The school report (Maitland Newcastle Catholic Diocesan format) makes provision for the Religious Education strands. Reports are provided to parents at the end of Semester One and again at the end of Semester Two. Teachers are expected to collect data from their assessment tasks to make informed decisions for grading A-E.

**Resources**

The main resources used for teaching Religious Education are:

- Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle K-12 Religion Syllabus for K-Year 4
- The new Stage 3 units for Years 5 and 6
- From Term 4, 2015, Kindergarten will begin implementing the new Early Stage 1 units

Other main resources include:

- The "To Know, Worship and Love" series of texts books and Big Books
- "Into the Deep" by Dan White and Kate O'Brien
- "Deep Thinking" by Dan White and Kate O'Brien
- Music by John Burland, Michael Mangan and Monica O'Brien & Richard Cootes
- <http://www.liturgyplanning.com/>
- <http://liturgyhelp.com.au>
- Labora

- Diocesan Faith Education Accreditation Policy
- Diocesan Classroom Teaching of Religion 1999 Policy
- Catholic Schools at a Crossroads
- The Catholic School on the threshold of the Third Millennium.

A full list of books and resources purchased for the school available is from Alice. Resources to be purchased as needed. These include: teacher resources, symbols associated with liturgical rituals, liturgy books, CD's, DVD's.

**BUDGET**

The amount assigned to Religious Education is determined as part of annual school planning.

**EVALUATION**

This policy will be evaluated as per the School's Policy Review Plan, or prior to this in response to student or community needs.