

Learning and Teaching Policy

“Learning brings hope. In a Catholic school that hope is based on God’s love and care for all. Catholic educators see learning as a journey of possibilities, where students are energised to seek meaning and explore questions about the world around them.” Horizons of Hope. 2017, p. 5

RATIONALE

The Learning and Teaching Policy has been developed by MacKillop School and is mindful of the distinctive educational mission of a Catholic ethos. The Policy reflects the principles embodied in the Sanctuary Model and Rethinking Learning and Teaching Environments (RELATE); all of which are implicit in the curriculum, planning, teaching and learning. The Learning and Teaching Policy provides a reference point against which all curriculum and pedagogical innovation and change is assessed and is cognisant of the inter-connection between wellbeing and student outcomes. The Policy outlines how the school community’s vision of trauma-informed education is to be implemented, and this vision is clearly articulated to all members of the school community.

CONTEXT

MacKillop School is a specialist school providing targeted and personalised learning experiences for young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. Young people are referred from a variety of host schools. Supporting students to return to mainstream education is a high priority; often this pathway provides the best option for future learning and career choices. It is also recognised that return to a mainstream school may not be in the best interests of some students and they will be supported to access a rich learning environment or career pathways to meet their individual needs.

PHILOSOPHY

MacKillop School celebrates the transformative and liberating power of education and is committed to a system that promotes equity and access. MacKillop School is committed to working in partnership with families and carers and recognises the importance of a systems approach in response to adversity/ trauma and as a means of optimising health and healing. Consequently, we adopt an integrated approach to learning and wellbeing and staff work collaboratively as an inter-disciplinary team to enhance the educational outcomes and wellbeing for young people in our care.

“Curriculum in a Catholic school is illuminated by Catholic faith with the formation of, and reverence for the learner at its centre.” (Horizons of Hope, ‘Curriculum’ 2017, p3). Therefore, in a flexible learning environment and by implementing contemporary learning and teaching practices, we aim to develop the knowledge, skills and understandings of all young people and enable them to: experience success in learning; increase their opportunity to engage in mainstream education and/or pursue further training or employment. Students who are supported by teachers in this way, ‘exhibit an understanding of the concepts targeted in instruction that is more integrated, more coherent, and at a higher level of abstraction than the understanding achieved by other students’ (Hattie, pg. 15). Staff aim to empower children and young people:

- to be successful learners
- to be confident and creative individuals
- to be active and informed citizens
- to recognise, receive and model the values of respect, justice, hope, compassion, collaboration

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Therefore, curriculum development and implementation at MacKillop School is informed by the framework endorsed by ACARA – Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. The Victorian Curriculum is the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum that provides a single, coherent and comprehensive set of prescribed content and common achievement standards, which schools use to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to families/carers.

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 sets out what every student should learn during their first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship. The Victorian Curriculum F–10 incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian priorities and standards.



This ongoing cycle of Curriculum Planning and Development is implemented at MacKillop and is supported by processes and structures that are embedded in our practice.

The following website provides an overview of the curriculum and planning and teaching resources: <http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>. This curriculum framework is adopted to meet the individual learning needs of children and young people in a specialist setting. All staff receive extensive and ongoing professional development around the curriculum and its implementation. All staff are required to implement MacKillop’s Learning and Teaching Protocols (see resources and supporting documents) and Annual Action Plan goals. Assessment is both formative, summative and diagnostic and formal and informal reporting occurs throughout the academic year.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. 2018. Located at: <https://www.aitsl.edu.au>. Accessed: 18th September 2018.
- Bransford, Brown, & Cocking. 2000. How people learn: Brain, mind, experience and school. National Academies Press. Washington.
- Catholic Education Melbourne. 2017. Horizons of hope: Religious dimension of a Catholic school. The Archdiocese of Melbourne, Catholic Education. East Melbourne.
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- Duckworth, A. (2016). Grit: The power of passion and perseverance. New York, NY, US: Scribner/Simon & Schuster Dweck, C.S. 2012.
- Growth mindset: How you can fulfil your potential. Little Brown Work Group London.
- Respectful Relationships Curriculum and Resources DET Victoria 2017
- Hattie, J . 2003. Research conference. Located at: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=research_conference_2003 Accessed on: 18th September 2018.
- Victorian Curriculum, <http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/> (Access date: 22.01.18)
- Wiggins, Mc Tighe. 2007. Schooling by design: Mission, action, and achievement. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Alexandria.

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