



<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment Policy</b>
<b>DOMAIN 3</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>
<b>POLICY No.</b>	
<b>ORIGINALLY RELEASED</b>	<b>2014</b>
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### *Our Vision*

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School seeks to offer excellence in education, enlivened by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ in a school community where the dignity of each person is valued.

### *School Motto*

*'Honor Pretiosor Auro'*

**Honour is more precious than gold**

Our motto reminds us to look to Jesus Christ, whose life and teaching inspire us to live life with honour, seeking justice for all.

### *School Values*

*BELIEF      HARMONY      RESPONSIBILITY*

## 1. Rationale

Curriculum is dynamic and includes all the learning experiences provided for the student. It encompasses the learning environment, teaching methods, the resources, the planned experiences provided by school to facilitate students' learning, the systems of assessment, the school ethos and the ways in which students and staff behave towards one another.

Our school community recognises Jesus as our ultimate Head. His Gospel will be the basis for the school's shared outlook on life. The curriculum in a Catholic education and care community is distinctive in the way Gospel values are integrated into all aspects of school life (Mandate para. 87)

The **Melbourne Declaration** on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) has two key goals:

**Goal 1:**      ***Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence***

**Goal 2:**      ***All young Australians become:***

- successful learners***
- confident and creative individuals***
- active and informed citizens***

In addition, Our Lady of Lourdes School has the following goals:

1. Provide students with a positive outlook for the future through the development of their confidence and self-worth.
2. Provide an atmosphere which reflects Christ's teaching and projects him as a life model.
3. Accept each child's capabilities and help them realise their potential.
4. Encourage parents to play an active role in their child's education.
5. Affirm, respect, and develop the individuality and uniqueness of each child, staff member and school community member.
6. Provide a broad, balanced and developmentally appropriate curriculum for every child, recognising the uniqueness of each child.
7. Provide a curriculum that utilises the best practices of teaching and learning, making use of the latest technologies and educational research/ development.

These goals are recognised through our broad school values of **Belief, Harmony and Responsibility**. In addition, the **Western Australian Values of Schooling** articulate what educators in Western Australia believe all students should value as a result of the programs they undertake. These are:

- **Respect and concern for others and their rights** — This includes the right to learn in a friendly and non-coercive environment.
- **Pursuit of knowledge and commitment to achievement of potential** — Each student is encouraged to achieve his or her potential in all respects and, through critical and creative thinking, to develop a broad understanding of his or her own values and world views.
- **Self-acceptance and respect of self** — Encouragement is given to developing initiative, responsibility, ethical discernment, openness to learning and a sense of personal meaning and identity.
- **Social and civic responsibility** — the commitment to exploring and promoting the common good and meeting individual needs without infringing the basic rights of others, including respect for cultural diversity and social justice.
- **Environmental responsibility** — the commitment to sustainability in natural and man-made environments.

## 2. Definitions

Curriculum includes all the learning experiences provided for students and young children, including the planned and unplanned experiences which promote learning and development.

In accordance with the *School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act, 1997*, the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline (Outline) sets out 'the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes that students are expected to acquire and guidelines for the assessment of student achievement'.

Effective curriculum is derived from the interaction between the West Australian syllabus, the learning environment, the range of teaching methods, the resources provided for learning, the nature of assessment and the relational networks within the school community. In addition, the curriculum of a Catholic school is concerned with students' integrated development as Christian persons.

The church speaks of Catholic schools as aiming to foster the integration of faith and life, and the integration of culture and faith. Catholic schools seek to achieve this by seeking to create environments that enhance learning, nurture young people and empower them to live the Catholic faith in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

# ***Phases of Schooling***

The **Phases of Schooling** provide teachers with guidance about the sorts of curriculum experiences likely to support students at each phase, so the learning outlined in the *Early Learning Years Framework* and the Australian Curriculum is achieved and the aims of the **Melbourne Declaration** are met.

While every student will be immersed in a well-balanced curriculum there are different priorities for different phases of schooling.

## ***Early Childhood (Pre Kindy – Year Two)***

Young children have a natural curiosity about their physical, social and technological world. They have a strong desire to make sense of their world and to represent and communicate their experiences and understandings through language and various art forms. They develop their understandings through their relationships and interactions with others, indoor and outdoor environments and the use of their senses. Young children learn through a variety of means – including play and experimentation – to observe, manipulate and explore objects and ideas, materials, technologies and other phenomena.

In the early years of schooling, children should be provided with a holistic curriculum through which they are able to build, design, problem solve, represent and reflect on new learning in ways that are meaningful to them. This learning is supported through intentional teaching in planned and unplanned experiences to extend learning. They need frequent opportunities to develop shared understandings and dispositions as well as content knowledge. The emphasis on literacy and numeracy is encapsulated in a holistic approach to learning where key ideas and concepts in a range of learning areas are presented in phase appropriate ways. They should have opportunities to develop their control and understanding of the symbolic representations associated with written language and mathematics. Social and emotional development is emphasised so that children build strong relationships, can work with others and develop a positive sense of self.

Curriculum experiences will typically integrate knowledge, understandings, skills and values and attitudes across learning areas. Learning programs should be appropriate and connected to the child's current thinking, interests and ways of learning. They should encourage children's autonomy, intellectual risk-taking, responsibility, agency and control of learning. Effective teachers use a variety of strategies, including structured and unstructured play and explicit approaches with whole-class, small-group and individual encounters. It is important that learning experiences build upon each child's current understandings, skills, values and experiences.

Young children are intimately connected to their families so teachers need to foster strong relationships with families and communities and draw upon these strong relationships to provide culturally appropriate programs. Learning and teaching programs must be responsive to children's continuing growth and development.

## ***Middle to Late Childhood (Year Three to Year Six)***

As children grow, their sense of themselves and their world expands. They begin to see themselves as members of larger communities. They are interested in, and like to speculate about, other times, places and societies. They begin to understand and appreciate different points of view, develop the ability to think in more abstract terms and undertake sustained activities for longer periods. The ability of students to work collaboratively and to develop their social skills should be fostered by activities

that require group planning and decision making, and interaction with people inside and outside their classroom. They should be given increased responsibility for managing and organising activities, individually and in groups of varying sizes.

In exploring their physical, social, cultural and technological world, students should be encouraged to pose more focused questions and to carry out investigations in which they form predictions, hypotheses or conjectures, test them and reflect their findings. In late childhood, the investigation of their world should become more refined and include relationships, structures, systems and processes. This will include exploration of behaviours, values, language and social practices as well as physical phenomena and a wider range of technologies and forms of communication and representation. Students will experiment with them to investigate the advantages of different representational forms and technologies for different materials, purposes and situations.

The ability of students to draw on a wider range of sources of information will also be enhanced by introducing them to experiences beyond their immediate environment including those of people from other times, places and cultures. These learning experiences should emphasise and lead to an appreciation of both the commonality and diversity of human experience and concerns.

Students develop a sound grasp of written language and numeric conventions and use these in a range of different learning situations in purposeful ways to achieve outcomes across all learning areas. They reflect on their learning and work practices and consider ways in which these might be improved, modified or adapted for different situations.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all teaching and learning experiences that occur across the school including specialist lessons.

## 4. Principles

# Principles of Teaching & Learning

1. **All students should have an opportunity to learn.** Learning experiences should enable students to observe and practise the actual processes, products, skills and values that are expected of them. Students should have the opportunity to engage fully with the *concepts* they are expected to develop; observe people engaged in the processes which they are to learn; and encounter examples of high-quality products of those processes, so they can see what it is they are aiming to achieve. They are more likely to learn to respect and value the views of others if the school environment models such behaviours.  
Students should have the opportunity to engage as fully as possible in the *processes* they are expected to learn about or through. For example, if they are expected to learn to plan, investigate and make choices, then they must practise these skills, rather than carry out the plans, investigations and choices of others. Where skills need to be developed to a high level of proficiency, appropriate practice of the actual skill is needed in settings that approximate those in which the skill is to be used.

2. **Connection and challenge.** Learning experiences should connect with students' existing knowledge, skills and values while extending and challenging their current ways of thinking and acting. Learning should endeavour to ensure fresh challenges to students' existing knowledge, skills and understanding and new ideas are realistic. Sometimes existing conceptual frameworks and capabilities can be readily extended to incorporate new learning; at other times they need to be exposed (and possibly discarded) in order for new learning to occur. Either way, learners need to be able to connect new experiences to what they already know and can do, while at the same time reconstructing what they know and can do to take account of the challenge provided by their new experience.
  
3. **Action and challenge.** Learning experiences should encourage both action and reflection on the part of the student. Learning is likely to be enhanced when students engage actively with the task at hand. They should be encouraged to think of learning as an active process on their part, involving a conscious intention to make sense of new ideas or experiences and improve their own knowledge and capabilities, rather than simply to reproduce or remember. This means that learning experiences should be meaningful and involve students in both *doing* and *reflecting*. Students should learn to carry out relevant actions (do, imitate, plan, experiment, test, create, rehearse, make, choose, try alternatives) and reflect upon and make sense of the results of those actions (What does this mean? Why did that happen? Am I surprised by this answer? Does it make sense? How is this problem like others I have seen before? What worked? Why? How does this connect with other learning? Are these ideas related?). Language plays a major role in connecting doing and reflecting, and students need to learn to use language as a tool for their own learning.  
As part of the reflective process, students should be helped to make connections between apparently unrelated ideas and experiences and different areas of knowledge. Teachers should emphasise the interconnectedness of knowledge, skills and values, both within and across different learning areas. Schools should provide an environment in which knowledge, skills and values are seen as an integrated whole, and their development as a lifelong endeavour.
  
4. **Motivation and purpose.** Learning experiences should be motivating and their purpose clear to the student. Students should be provided with purposeful and relevant activities that stimulate thought, inquiry and enjoyment. They may regard such activities as purposeful and relevant if they have an immediate practical goal. Activities should be consistent with students' maturity and should endeavour to engage both their interest and challenge them to succeed. Students should be clear about what is expected of them, what they are trying to learn and why. Teachers can enhance motivation and purposeful learning by making clear to students the long-term outcomes expected from their learning.
  
5. **Inclusivity and difference.** Learning experiences should respect and accommodate differences between learners. Students develop at different rates and also learn new ideas more or less quickly. They should be provided with the time, conditions and encouragement they need to learn in stimulating ways, and be discouraged from superficial learning that gives the impression of keeping pace at the expense of long-term and sustained learning.
  
6. **Independence and collaboration.** Learning experiences should encourage students to learn both independently and from and with others. If students are to become autonomous learners, they need to experience regular opportunities for both individual and collaborative learning.

7. **Supportive learning environment.** The school and classroom setting should be safe and conducive to effective learning. A supportive learning environment provides the intellectual, social and physical conditions in which effective learning can occur. Further, the school and classroom should provide a cooperative atmosphere, free from harassment such as teasing, sarcasm or remarks that stereotype or denigrate students or their efforts. Difference and diversity should be respected and sensitivity shown to matters of gender, cultural difference, social class, ability and disability, family circumstance and individual difference.

In recognising the importance of these key principles of teaching and learning, Our Lady of Lourdes School acknowledges the following:

**4.1 The Catholic School curriculum shall help students to discover which values are absolute and deepen their understanding of these values through critical reflection and application (Mandate para. 69).**

**4.2 Religious education is the first learning area in the Catholic school curriculum.**

**4.3 Leaders and educators in Catholic education recognise parents as the first and most influential educators of their children and where appropriate, opportunities shall be provided for them to contribute to the school curriculum.**

**4.4 Curriculum delivery shall be characterised by high expectations, engaged learning and focused teaching by all involved in the processes of learning and teaching.**

**4.5 Catholic schools shall take students and their needs as the starting point for all curriculum decisions.**

**4.6 The curriculum shall be inclusive and flexible to respond to respond to the diverse developmental needs, interests and abilities of all children.**

**4.7 The curriculum shall create opportunities for students to learn to critique and respond to change.**

**4.8 The curriculum shall be informed by evidence-based educational and pedagogical practices.**

**4.9 Communication, cooperation and partnerships between schools and other education and training stakeholders, where relevant, can help to create a curriculum that caters for the needs of all students.**

**4.10 The maintenance of standards of educational instruction shall be ensured through the agreement between the State and Commonwealth Ministers for Education and the Executive Director of Catholic Education in Western Australia.**

**4.11 The curriculum of Catholic schools shall fulfil the requirements of all relevant Australian and State Government legislation.**

**4.12 Catholic schools shall implement relevant system, state and national documents.**

**4.13 The curriculum shall be developed to ensure rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses individual learning needs.**

# Principles of Assessment

## **1. Assessment should be an integral part of teaching and learning.**

Assessments should arise naturally out of the teaching and intended learning of the curriculum. They should be carefully constructed to enable judgements to be made about students' progress in ways that contribute to ongoing learning.

Assessments should provide information about fine changes in student learning related to specific aspects of that learning. They should help teachers understand where students are in their learning, what they need to learn next as well as identify any misunderstandings or misconceptions that the students have. It is this fine-grained information that enables teachers to plan programs that challenge students to go beyond what they already know, understand or can do in order to build new knowledge, understandings and skills.

Teachers need to give careful consideration to planning for assessment as well as planning for teaching. This preparation should include planning how they will draw on their own observations and planning for summative assessments. Teachers also need to consider how they will refine their teaching programs based on the information they collect.

## **2. Assessment should be educative.**

Assessment practices should be educationally sound and contribute to learning. Assessments may do this in a number of ways. Firstly, assessment activities should encourage in-depth and long-term learning. Secondly, assessments should provide feedback that assists students in learning and informs teachers' planning. Thirdly, where appropriate, assessment criteria should be made explicit to students to focus their attention on what they have to achieve and provide students with feedback about their progress.

Assessment needs to be comprehensive and balanced across various domains of learning and assess knowledge and higher order cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking. Assessments need to be aligned with the curriculum and use a variety of assessment strategies on the basis of their relevance to the knowledge, skills and understanding to be assessed and the purpose of the assessment.

Students need to be included in the assessment process. With expert support, students can learn to assess and evaluate their own learning in a way that further extends that learning. It is important that teachers are responsive to the unexpected ways students reveal their thinking. These opportunities can be used to extend or redirect teaching.

## **3. Assessment should be fair.**

Assessment needs to take account of the diverse needs of students, to be equitable with regard to gender, disability, background language and socio-economic status and not discriminate on grounds that are irrelevant to learning.

If assessments are to be fair they should provide valid information on the actual ideas, processes, products and values expected of students. A valid assessment is one that assesses what it is supposed to assess.

Assessments should also provide reliable indications of students' knowledge, understandings and skills and should be based on the integration of a range of types and sources of evidence.

## **4. Assessments should be designed to meet their specific purposes.**

Information collected to establish where students are in their learning can be used for summative purposes (assessment *of* learning) and for formative purposes (assessment *for*

learning) because it is used to inform subsequent teaching. The principles of assessment apply to all forms of assessments.

**Summative assessment** involves assessment procedures that aim to determine students' learning at a particular time, for example when reporting against the achievement standards, after completion of a unit of work or at the end of a term or semester. The aim of the assessment is to identify students' achievement at that point in time and it is particularly important that the assessments are fair and that teacher judgements are reliable.

**Formative assessment** involves a range of informal and formal assessment procedures used by teachers during the learning process in order to improve student attainment and to guide teaching and learning activities. It often involves **qualitative feedback** (rather than scores) for both students and teachers that focuses on the details of specific knowledge and skills that are being learnt. Therefore it is essential that the assessments provide fine-grained information about student performance that supports teachers to plan learning that challenges students to go beyond what they already know, understand or can do in order to build new knowledge, understandings and skills.

**5. Assessment should lead to informative reporting.**

Reporting happens at the end of a teaching cycle and should provide an accurate summary of the formative and summative assessment information collected for each student. The purpose of reporting is to provide feedback to students, parents, and teachers. The information is also valuable for school and system-wide planning. It is important that, in addition to providing an accurate synopsis of student performance, the judgements of student achievement are reliable.

**6. Assessment should lead to school-wide evaluation processes.**

Highly effective schools pay particular attention to teachers' qualitative and quantitative data and standardised test data. Teachers and school leaders need to understand current and past student achievement levels, be explicit about targets for improvement and be explicit about how progress towards those targets will be monitored. School leaders need to plan for how they will evaluate the effectiveness of school initiatives and programs. Teachers should plan for how they will reflect on and evaluate their teaching practices. This implies that schools and teachers need to be willing to identify and evaluate both the intended and unintended consequences of any initiative or program.

In recognising the importance of these key principles of assessment, Our Lady of Lourdes School acknowledges the following:

**4.14 A range of fair, valid, educative, explicit and comprehensive assessment processes clearly linking learning, teaching and assessment, shall be used to inform and evaluate the progress of student learning.**

## **5. Procedures**

**5.1 The Religious Education Program as mandated by the Archdiocese of Perth shall be implemented with reference to the principles and procedures of the CECWA policy statement 2-B5 Religious Education.**

**5.2 Where appropriate, opportunities shall be provided for parents to meaningfully contribute to and support the curriculum.**



**5.3 The curriculum developed by school shall be consistent with the system, State and Australian Government legislation and regulations and curriculum bodies. This includes the West Australian syllabus as mandated by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA WA).**

**5.4 Flexibility in the organisation of learning and teaching shall be demonstrated in order to address the particular developmental needs of students.**

**5.6 Appropriate support documents shall be used to design and implement a curriculum focused on the individual learning styles and needs of all students.**

**5.7 Regular communication shall occur between the school, parents/guardians and students regarding student progress and the curriculum offered by the school.**

**5.8 Data-informed evaluation shall be undertaken to ensure that whole-school planning is effective in meeting all students' learning needs.**

**5.9 A detailed Teaching, Assessment and Reporting Cycle will be in operation and reviewed annually.**

**5.10 There will be a commitment to ongoing professional development, both individually and as a collegial staff, including coaching strategies in the context of the classroom.**

## **6. Related Documents**

- Bishops' Mandate 2009-2015
- School Curriculum and Standards Authority, West Australian Curriculum & Assessment Outline
- Reporting Schedule
- Strategic Plan/ Curriculum Plan
- Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Reporting Cycle
- EYLF Charter
- National Quality Standards for Early Years
- Tally of Needs document
- Non-negotiables document
- AITSL Standards for Principals
- AITSL Standards for Teachers
- AITSL Performance and Development Framework
- Learning Conversations documentation
- CECWA policies: Justice Education (2-C11), Aboriginal Education (2-C1), Early Childhood Education (2-C4), Religious Education (2-A5) & Accreditation (2-B1)