

ST PHILIP NERI CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Religious Education Policy

1. Introduction

St Philip Neri Catholic School was opened in 1925 as St Ciaran's Catholic School to serve the Northbridge parish. Renamed St Philip Neri Catholic School, we now meet the needs of the Northbridge and Naremburn parishes. We are, through Baptism, a community of disciples of Jesus. Working in partnership with parents and parish, we are inspired by our motto, *Deeds not Words*.

2. Rationale

We believe that we educate and form children in the faith by offering them a Religious Education that will provide them with an experience of knowing and following Jesus and living out what it means to be a disciple of Jesus with in our own community and in the wider world.

3. Aim

The aim of this Religious Education policy is to give direction for Religious Education teaching and learning within the school. It is developed in light of our school mission statement and the broader diocesan mission statement. This policy ensures that our school has a Religious Education program that is systematic, coherent and coordinated.

4. Beliefs about Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

Belief 1

All students have the capacity and the right to learn and the need to experience successful learning.

Therefore

Whole school Religious Education programs will be continually monitored and evaluated to ensure that the children have experience of quality teaching programs and successful learning outcomes.

Belief 2

All students are individuals who learn at different rates, with different strengths and with a variety of preferred learning styles.

Therefore

Class programs will be based on knowledge of individual learning needs and differentiated to cater for these needs.

Belief 3

Learning is lifelong, continuous, developmental and holistic; students need to learn how to learn and to actively evaluate their learning.

Therefore

Faith development is a life long journey. Understanding the traditions and teachings of our faith is best achieved when they are taught in a systematic, developmental, context-based and holistic way. Faith development and learning in R.E. is most successful when children are encouraged to reflect upon lived experiences; when teachings are made relevant; through the explication of good models and with quality teaching

Belief 4

Teaching and learning need to take place within a context of high expectations and within a positive, supportive environment.

Therefore

The teacher needs to provide structures, scaffolds and challenging learning contexts, where adequate and appropriate resources are provided and sufficient, dedicated time is allocated to the teaching and learning of Religious Education.

Belief 5

Effective learning occurs when students are engaged in learning contexts that are collaborative and draw upon prior experiences, knowledge, understanding and skills.

Therefore

Learning in Religious Education occurs best when it is in a collaborative environment that structures modelled, shared, guided and independent work and allows for the supportive and critical mutual sharing of experiences, skills and ideas.

Belief 6

Teaching and learning is informed by explicit assessment and feedback, which in turn will inform future learning pathways.

Therefore

Class programs are based on authentic assessment and evaluation.

5. Catholic Dimension

The Religious Education Curriculum is the foundation upon which our school curriculum is based. The traditions of our faith and our commitment to being disciples of Jesus in building the Kingdom of God are our fundamental reasons for being a Catholic school. Gospel values inform all elements of our school community life and are our guiding principles in all decision making. This policy seeks to foreground with our children and community the explicitly Catholic nature of St Philip Neri Catholic School and provide them with an experience of Catholic discipleship.

6. Outcomes

This policy will ensure that:-

The students will

1. develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in the beliefs of the Catholic tradition and of the scriptures as a source of God's revelation and God's word fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
2. identify, clarify, analyse and think critically about their own values and attitudes enabling them to understand and live out their faith.
3. learn about and participate in Catholic prayer and liturgical celebrations.

The teachers will

4. have guidance in developing systematic, coherent and coordinated teaching and learning programmes

The parents will

5. be informed of the systematic Religious Education curriculum offered at St Philip Neri Catholic School.

7. Appendices

The following Appendices have been developed in support of the Religious Education Policy.

Appendix 1: Programming and Planning in Religious Education

Appendix 2: Assessment and Reporting in Religious Education

Appendix 3: School and Parish Partnership

Appendix 4: Links with other Key Learning Areas

8. Evaluation of Policy

This policy is to be evaluated by the Religious Education Coordinator and the Principal every two years.

Programming and Planning in Religious Education

School Requirements.

Religious Education will be taught for a minimum of two and a half hours each week. This will be reflected in class timetables.

Children will have opportunities to participate in daily prayer as part of the Religious Education programme and as a regular part of the school day.

Each classroom will have a sacred space as focal point for class prayer. The sacred space ought to reflect the module being taught or the current Liturgical season. The sacred space therefore needs to be changed regularly.

Liturgical celebrations are an important part of the life of the school.

Programming

All Religious Education Programmes are based upon the CSO RE modules.

Teachers are expected to adapt these Modules to the specific learning needs of their classes.

The RE programme needs to be differentiated to cater for differing learning styles and learning needs.

Modules are to be evaluated on completion.

The following guidelines have been developed to assist teachers and are to be included in class programmes.

- ∞ Duration of RE times marked on programs
- ∞ Children's participation in prayer celebrations
- ∞ Attendance at Parish masses, school masses and class focus masses.
- ∞ Participation in sacramental programmes.
- ∞ Use of the class sacred space.

Teaching of Modules

- ∞ Planned, taught and assessed like all other KLAs.
- ∞ Assessment task ought to be related to outcomes.
- ∞ Module title ought to be displayed in classroom.
- ∞ Activities dated as they are completed.
- ∞ Integration links made explicit.

Assessment and Reporting in Religious Education

Principles for Assessment in RE

Faith responses are **not** a matter for classroom assessment (faith is a person's free response to a free and gracious gift of God).

Assessment in RE should be used in the same way as it is other curriculum areas i.e. to determine learning gains and needs; to inform future planning and to gather evidence of student achievement for Reporting purposes.

Assessment procedures and strategies used in other KLAs can also be applied to RE

A variety of assessment procedures ought to be used to determine children's learning and to cater for individual learning styles.

Outcomes for each module ought to be assessed.

RE ought to be reported on to parents like all other KLAs.

See attached suggested assessment strategies for RE. This is not an exhaustive or mandated list. It is merely indicative of the assessment possibilities in RE.

School Requirements

1. Each module requires assessment of outcomes.
2. An annotated work sample is to be included in each child's portfolio each term

Reporting in RE

Reporting is the process of the teacher providing information about student progress.

Reporting is the concerned with communicating the learning outcomes achieved and thus based upon authentic assessment of student progress.

Reporting is concerned in RE with knowledge and understanding and skills. It does not involve faith responses.

School Requirements for Reporting in RE

1. Reporting is conducted at the end of terms 2 and 4.
2. In Term 2 Religious Education is reported to parents in the Stage Report set down by CSO. A formal Parent/ teacher interview is conducted at this time. The child's portfolio is discussed. In Year 6 this is a three way interview.
3. In Term 4 Religious Education is reported to parents through a similar process to Term 2

Appendix 3

School and Parish Partnership

St Philip Neri Catholic School is an integral part of the parishes of Northbridge and Naremburn.

Parish sacramental programmes are supported by the school.

The Parish Priest is involved with the planning of whole school liturgies and class focus masses.

Each class attends one parish weekday mass each term. This usually happens on Monday morning. It is programmed onto the school calendar.

Each class has a focus mass once each year. This mass takes place as the regular Sunday parish mass. This celebration is planned in conjunction with the REC, the class teacher, the parish priest and the class parents.

The school Principal and Assistant Principal are part of the the parish Pastoral Council and attend meetings as representatives of the school community.

Appendix 4

Links with other Key Learning Areas

Religious Education informs all other Key Learning Areas.

Where integrative links exist between content, these links ought to be made.

The English curriculum offers skills to that can be applied to children's reflecting and investigating their faith.

ICLT ought to be used to enhance the RE curriculum.

The Creative Arts have a great deal to offer the RE classroom. Art, dramatisation and dance can enhance the RE curriculum. Opportunities ought to be provided to for children to express themselves during RE.

When integrating, it is vital that the integrity of the integrated KLAs be maintained. This is done by:-

1. explicitly stating outcomes for each KLA
2. explicitly assessing those outcomes.