



# ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

### **Rationale**

As the St. Patrick's faith community we believe that Religious Education is a fundamental priority and that the proclamation of our faith, development of the whole person and the integration between culture and life are the primary goals of all.

We believe that all peoples are created in the image and likeness of God and so are "imbued with a natural spiritual yearning. They seek to understand themselves in the light of the transcendent."<sup>1</sup>

In the baptismal ritual parents commit themselves to educating their children in the Catholic faith. As a Catholic School we commit ourselves to assisting with this education and to working in partnership with the parents of our parish.

Our personal and collective call to discipleship is reflected in our school motto, "In the Footsteps of the Lord", and as educators we acknowledge the significant role we play in the ministry of our Church. We strive to promote lifelong faith learning that will nourish and support the journey of our children and their families throughout their lives.

### **Goals**

At St. Patrick's School, the Religious Education of our children seeks to foster growth in their relationship with God and their knowledge and understanding of God as revealed by Jesus. We also seek to ensure that they have an understanding of Catholic tradition and their responsibility for having full participation in the life of the community, as well as a critical participation in society and its transformation in light of the Gospel and Catholic tradition.

### **Religious Education desired outcomes**

**As an individual, in a way appropriate to age, maturity and faith development, the child is...**

- confirmed in belief in a personal God
  - values themselves as gifted by God
  - is aware of God's presence in the world
  - has a personal spirituality
  - has an informed conscience
  - sees a purpose in life and hope for the future
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**As a member of our faith community, in a way appropriate to age, maturity and faith development, the child....**

- values and reflects on religious experience
- knows and values the Catholic Christian heritage
- experiences a welcoming faith community
- actively participates in its worship
- contributes to its life and work.

**As a Christian in society, in a way appropriate to age, maturity and faith development, the child.....**

- gives witness in everyday life to the Gospel
- critiques values, events and structures in the light of the Gospel and Catholic tradition
- participates in the Church's social mission and is actively involved in the betterment of the world.

## **Implications:**

At St. Patrick's School Religious Education of the children is a shared undertaking, and occurs in a variety of forms and settings appropriate to the age and understanding of the children.

As a Catholic Community we believe that the family is the first place where faith can be nurtured, and ideally the family provides occasions for education in faith for all its members right through life. School based programs can provide for Sacramental preparation, liturgical formation, and continuing personal spiritual growth.

We believe that the school is a proper setting for formal instruction in religion and in the teachings of the faith but collaboration is needed to ensure a comprehensive, relevant and acceptable Religious Education for our children. We believe that our young children have a responsibility to choose and actively participate in Religious Education suited to their age, faith development and personal needs.

Parents are described as "first educators of their children in the faith". In the home (The Domestic Church) they can introduce their children to the lived reality of faith through prayer, moral formation, everyday expressions of love and reconciliation, good example and simple sharing of the faith journey. They also contribute appropriately to their children's formal instruction in the faith.

St. Patrick's Parish is where children should learn the meaning of worship, encounter Christ in the Sacraments, and share in the practical outreach of the Christian community in mission to the world.

The Religious Education program in our school, provides a more formal teaching in matters of belief, values and practice that will equip the children according to each stage of development, for a free and intelligent expression of personal faith within the family, Christian community and wider society.

## **STATEMENT OF PRACTICE**

In the field of Religious Education, the staff at St. Patrick's value and observe the following procedural guidelines:

1. Throughout our school we use as an initial point of reference the texts books, "To Know Worship and Love". The Archdiocese of Melbourne has mandated each Catholic school to use these documents.
2. Religious Education units are planned and prepared collectively amongst staff at each level and such units are documented and filed into each teachers R.E. Curriculum folder.
3. It is recommended the evaluation of R.E. units be completed collectively as a team and documented on R.E. proforma. Such a process is required to address both the positives of the unit and "modifications" necessary for future implementation.
4. Religious Education lessons are formally timetabled and taught at least four times per week with 'prayer' being a daily feature of the educational program offered.
5. Both formal and creative prayer forms are facilitated and valued at St. Patrick's.
6. We foster prayer by providing each class with a supply of Religious icons to enhance classroom prayer (Consisting of; Crucifix, Rosary Beads, Candle, and Bible)
7. Daily class prayers including, Morning Offering, Grace Before Meals and Afternoon Prayer at dismissal are accepted practice in our school.
8. Assemblies held on Mondays and every second Friday commence with a brief prayer service which classes are nominated on a rotational basis to facilitate.
9. Staff are rostered on a rotational basis to conduct a prayer service at the beginning of each Staff Meeting.
10. Weekly prayer service each Thursday or Friday morning (8.40 - 8.55) for any staff wishing to attend (facilitated by R.E.C.)
11. Personal prayerful intentions are often published in weekly newsletter / staff bulletin.
12. Class Reconciliation is held on most Monday afternoons
13. The children and staff participate in regular involvement in liturgical celebrations: These times include.....
  - Start of School Year celebration
  - Ash Wednesday Mass
  - St. Patrick's Day Mass
  - Sacrament of Reconciliation
  - Mass for the Needy (Feast of the Sacred Heart)
  - Sacrament of First Holy Eucharist
  - Family parish Masses
  - Sacrament of Confirmation

- End of Year Mass

14. Staff are encouraged to contact our Parish Priest to discuss School-based initiatives or to clarify issues associated with the Catholic faith. Staff are also able to arrange for the R.E.C. to table important matters on their behalf at briefing meetings

15. Our "Super Person" awards are presented weekly and aim to provide acknowledgement to those students who demonstrate exemplary achievement in both pastoral and academic realms.

16. In each school year we celebrate the initial reception of Reconciliation for year three children and Eucharist for year four children. Confirmation is also celebrated each year.

Whole staff involvement in Sacramental program is encouraged through inclusion and participation in Sacramental Liturgies and Celebrations.

17. At St. Patrick's we value the work of the 'missions' and show our support by annually collecting funds to support this important area of ministry.

18. Children from the Parish who attend surrounding schools are invited to participate in our Sacramental program.

### **Assessment and Reporting in Religious Education**

At St. Patrick's School we believe that assessment in Religious Education signals clearly to students, parents and staff those elements within Religious Education which are most valued.

#### **Strategies we include for the collection of data include...**

- \* Graphic representations.
- \* Dramatic performances.
- \* Observations with anecdotal notes.
- \* Work sampling.
- \* Testing - written and oral.
- \* Essays.

#### **Strategies implemented to identify progress in terms of aptitudes and values are:**

- \* Oral / written presentations in which personal values are expressed.
- \* Samples of written work before and after a unit to indicate refinement of values.

- \* Student / teacher interviews.
- \* Questioning and observations.
- \* Creative writing, which contains attitudinal insights.
- \* Art, drama and role-play
- \* Student self-assessment

**Procedures associated with the evaluation of our Religious Education program revolve primarily around anecdotal information.**

We at St. Patrick's recognise the role efficient evaluation plays in providing an appropriate program and as such we value the following procedures.

- \* Both collective evaluation (in teams) and individual reflection upon units of work.
- \* Anecdotal comments and suggested modification.
- \* Provision for students to comment / respond to units of work implemented.
- \* Formal documentation in response to Sacramental programs and events, for example...research and project tasks.

### **Reporting to Parents**

To report to parents at St. Patrick's we have formal report formats, which are sent home at the end of each year and include a formal assessment of Religious Education.

Religious Education activities are also including as Homework tasks, which often involve family participation. This provides ongoing informal communication with parents.

