



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

RATIONALE

'Religious Education is the first learning area in the Catholic school curriculum. This is so because, though a classroom activity, Religious Education is a form of the Ministry of the Word. Unlike the other Learning Areas, it is an activity of Evangelisation in its own right' (Mandate, 62). The Bishop is responsible for handing on the faith in his diocese and has the right and duty to oversee the Religious Education program and those appointed to teach it. (CCC 803-806). 'The Religious Education program to be taught in the Catholic school is that promulgated by the diocesan Bishop. Like Christian witness and catechesis, Religious Education expresses 'the divine power of the Message' (Mandate, para 62). The Religious Education program aims to help students learn the teachings of the Gospel as proclaimed by the Catholic Church and to develop a sense of the nature of Christianity and of how Christians are trying to live their lives. It seeks to show non-Christians something of the mystery of Christ.

DEFINITIONS

Religious Education is a learning area which focuses on the knowledge and understanding of the Gospel as it is handed on by the Catholic Church. Catechesis provides experiences which deepen faith; it is the lifelong apprenticeship in Christian formation. "The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ" (GDC 80).

PRINCIPLES

1. Religious Education complements Catechesis offered in family, school and parish.
2. The Religious Education program to be taught in Catholic schools is that promulgated by the diocesan Bishop.
3. Religious Education in the school shall always respect parents as the prime educators of their children, particularly in the area of faith education.
4. Religious Education outcomes shall be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as all other learning areas.
5. Religious Education shall acknowledge the stages of faith development of students.
6. Religious Education shall relate the knowledge and understandings of the Catholic faith to students' real life situations and experiences.
7. Religious Education shall always present Catholic beliefs and practices in the context of the Christian Promise of Salvation and the questions and aspirations of the human heart that God alone can satisfy completely.
8. Teachers of Religious Education shall be committed Catholics and shall give active Christian witness to Catholic beliefs.

PROCEDURES

1. Religious Education shall have priority in all planning, including the development of the school's timetable.
2. Within the normal hours of instruction, the minimum time allocation for the Religious Education Learning Area shall be:
 - In three and four-year-old programs, teachers are required to plan to raise the religious awareness of children through providing an atmosphere where 'God Talk' permeates all learning experiences as a natural part of the day.
 - PP – 15 minutes per day
 - Yrs 2-6 30 minutes per day

Liturgies and other activities of catechesis including Christian service are essential for the effective evangelisation of students but are separate from the Religious Education program and are not part of the above time allocation. There shall be at least 60 minutes per week of such experiences averaged over the particular year level's academic year.

3. The Religious Education program, as promulgated by the diocesan Bishop, shall be implemented with reference to the principles and procedures of the CECWA Policy Statement Curriculum.
4. Teachers of Religious Education shall have the necessary accreditation stipulated by the CECWA Policy Statement Accreditation.
5. Schools shall keep parents/guardians informed on an ongoing basis as to the content of their child's Religious Education program.
6. Schools shall work closely with parents/guardians and parishes to support the sacramental programs of the parish.
7. Appropriate professional development shall be available for teachers of Religious Education.
8. Appropriate resources shall be made available for the Religious Education Learning Area.

REFERENCES

Mandate Letter 2009-2015 Australia Religious Education: Facing the Challenges (Gerard J. Holohan)
Catechism of the Catholic Church (Vatican City 1994) The General Directory for Catechesis (Congregation for the Clergy 1997) Vatican documents: The Catholic School, Evangelii Nuntiandi, The Catholic School in the Third Millennium.