

Curriculum, Planning & Programming Policy

Rationale

It is the school that constructs the educational experience for our students. While the essential standards for achievement around which the curriculum is constructed are specified, the need for flexibility is well understood. Success in learning is more likely if the curriculum and the way it is taught excites and challenges students. The school and its teachers therefore need the capacity to tailor or personalise programs to student, parent, community and employer expectations.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the school provides all students with a planned and structured curriculum that might equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to complete their compulsory years of schooling and to make a successful transition from school to work, training or further education.

Definition

Curriculum

- Our school adopts the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) as its framework to guide and support student learning. By clearly specifying the standards appropriate at each of the six levels, the Standards provide a clear picture of the sequence of development a student should progress through at school in terms of the essential physical, personal and social, discipline-based and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills.
- Religious Education forms a domain within the VELS Disciplinary strand. Our school adopts the Diocese of Sale's Religious Education curriculum, "Journeying Together in Hope" for all year levels (P-6).

Curriculum planning processes will provide a strategic approach to addressing the needs of students and ensuring that the school is able to tailor programs to meet student, parent, community and employer expectations. Curriculum planning enables our school to monitor the coverage, continuity and development of desired knowledge, skills, understanding and values across the all levels of schooling.

Teaching and learning programs represent the implementation of school curriculum planning. They will include the focus being developed, learning experiences with suitable content and planned assessment. The teaching program documents a teacher's decisions about what to teach and what students should learn. The decisions made will be assisted by the teacher's knowledge of the students' learning needs

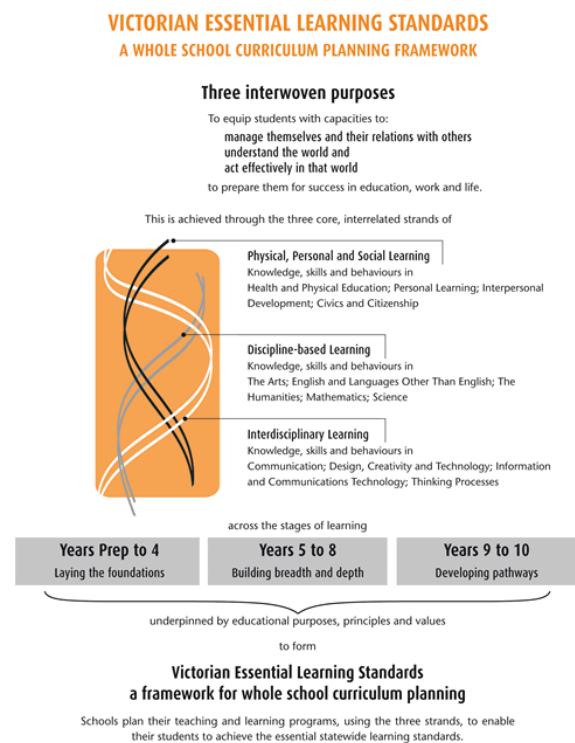


Figure 1: Whole school curriculum plan

Implementation

Our school has developed an agreed set of beliefs that our practice in the area of Curriculum, Planning and Programming is based upon. These beliefs are the drivers of our practice.

The practices that are expected to be adopted by the educators at the school are defined in the Table on the following pages.

Whole School Management

The following practices are implemented at the school in order to manage the curriculum, and its planning and programming.

a) Curriculum

- “VELS” and “Journeying Together in Hope” are the foundation to all curriculum
- The Standards are used to enable teachers, parents and students not only to determine the knowledge and skills a student currently demonstrates, but also what that student needs to know and be able to do to progress to the next level through to the end of Year 6.
- The Whole-School Curriculum Plan guides the implementation of VELs in all classes. The plan ensures that all domains and standards of VELs are comprehensively addressed with deep learning being the focus.

b) Time Allocations for Key Learning Areas

Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, LOTE, Mathematics, Religious Education, Science, Studies of Society and Environment, and Technology

- Religious Education is allocated 2 ½ hours of teaching time for all P-6 classes each 5 day week.
- English is allocated a dedicated teaching time of 10 hours for all P-6 classes each 5 day week.
- Mathematics has a dedicated teaching time of 5 hours for all P-6 classes each 5 day week.
- LOTE has a sixty minute time allocation for all P-6 classes when funding allows.
- Physical Education is allocated up to two hours for all P-6 classes each 5 day week. This allocation is adjusted accordingly to meet the requirements of extra programs being held throughout the year (e.g. cross country, swimming).
- The remaining key learning areas are allocated the remainder of available hours for all P-6 classes each 5 day week and are usually taught in an integrated or multi-domain approach to teaching and learning.

c) Planning

- The School Planning Guidelines for the key priority areas of Literacy, Numeracy and RE shape the planning of educators at our school
- All planning takes into consideration the needs of students.
- All classes adopt curriculum planning processes that support an inquiry approach within a multi-domain curriculum.
- A term and/or annual calendar overview will be developed each year to assist teachers in their planning
- An annual curriculum plan for each cohort is to be developed by the classroom teacher and submitted to the principal by the end of term one. This provides the structure and direction for all classroom planning.
- A minimum allocation of two hours APT is provided each week to support teachers in their planning and programming with the aim to provide more than the minimum when funding allows.

d) Programming

- All teachers will prepare a weekly or fortnightly Class Program that documents the teaching and learning that is scheduled for that period. This program directly links to the Annual Planner.
- Assessment will inform the design of class programs
- Teachers will develop Individual Learning Plans where necessary to support students with needs that are not met within the normal class program
- The class program (with ILPs) will be monitored by the principal.

e) Curriculum Review

- The Whole School Curriculum Plan is managed and monitored by the principal and curriculum coordinator
- The curriculum plan is reviewed annually by the teaching staff and adjustments made to the plan as needed
- The curriculum plan will be modified in response to new or revised curriculum requirements, in response to the changing needs of the students, in response to the regular analysis of student performance data.
- The curriculum plan will be subject to a major review every five years to coincide with the Catholic School Renewal Review Year.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's five year review cycle or as required.

Ratification

This policy was last ratified in October, 2009

Beliefs	Principles	Practices
<p>At our school we are committed to the following beliefs about teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Because of our beliefs, the following set of principles drive the practice of teaching and learning in the classroom. At our school it is expected that when implementing the <i>Victorian Essential Learning Standards</i>, and constructing a challenging and exciting curriculum throughout all the years of schooling, teachers will adopt practices that enable them to:</p>	<p>Therefore educators at our school:</p>
<p>The school community believes that: <i>Higher order learning is possible for all</i></p> <p>Research consistently confirms that almost all students can engage in higher order learning given the right conditions, and that all students can make progress with sufficient time and support.</p> <p><i>Schools and particularly teachers make a difference</i></p> <p>Research demonstrates the capacity of good schools and good teaching to make a positive difference to student outcomes.</p> <p><i>If students are assisted to work hard and make an effort they improve</i></p> <p>A student's ability is one factor in achievement; however, the amount of effort a student makes has even more to do with their success at school.</p> <p><i>An assessment culture in classrooms and schools is a critical factor in individualising learning and assuring student achievement</i></p> <p>This involves students, teachers and parents in planning how learning will occur and monitoring progress. This is often described as 'assessment for learning' or formative assessment. British research concluded that formative assessment is one of the most important interventions for improvement in student achievement.</p> <p><i>Failure is not an option for students, teachers or schools</i></p> <p>Patterns of inequity must be addressed. All students must succeed at school and all schools can improve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • places the learner at the centre of curriculum planning through having the students' diverse needs, backgrounds, perspectives, interests, achievements and ways of learning inform curriculum design • is a collaborative process where the school's goals, targets, challenges and opportunities from the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan are looked at in their entirety • reflects shared values, beliefs and understandings about the knowledge, skills and behaviours students are to learn and how this can be achieved • provides connectedness between the strands, domains and dimensions of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards across the levels to ensure coherence, balance and continuity • encourages student learning at a deeper, transferable and enduring level through a co-ordinated approach to learning and teaching across different year levels, subjects/programs • reduces the level of disparity in student achievement between classes and within classes • involves selection of the most appropriate programs, organisation, structures and resourcing to best support students to achieve the standards in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards • encourages all staff to build knowledge and expertise together as they share responsibility for improving student learning outcomes. • establishes a procedure for monitoring and evaluating the planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodate the differing learning needs of children through providing a curriculum that is differentiated. • Use the whole school curriculum plan as the basis for planning the learning programs for a student cohort • Comply with the school's planning guidelines for Religious Education, Literacy, and Numeracy • Form and work willingly with collaborate teams • Give students access to the range of curriculum intervention and support programs made available by the school or available from other providers in cooperation with the school • Develop and implement Individual Learning Plans for students whose learning needs are outside of the mainstream • Assist leadership to establish curriculum priorities for school improvement • Act on the school's Annual School Improvement Plan for the curriculum • Take personal responsibility for one's growth in knowledge and expertise with regard to the curriculum • Monitor and evaluate the school's curriculum, in particular those components of the curriculum for which they are responsible • Integrate electronic communications, and information and learning technologies into the learning environment • Utilise both the indoors and outdoors to create suitable learning environments • Consider available assessment data to inform teaching and learning practice.
<p>Bransford, John D., Brown, Ann, L and Cocking, Rodney, R (Eds), <i>How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School</i>, National Academy Press, Washington DC 1999</p>	<p>f) <i>DEECD, 2006, Characteristics of Effective Whole School Curriculum Planning</i></p>	

Inquiry Approach to Curriculum Planning

The inquiry approach to learning is based on the school's belief that **higher order learning is possible for all**.

At our school, inquiries:

- are student centred and directed
- emphasise process and skill development
- require students to ask questions
- are conceptual based rather than factual
- usually involve some negotiation with students
- encourage learner interaction
- build upon prior knowledge
- utilise and consider students interests
- include direct experiences
- integrate reflection and metacognition
- involve the application of ideas
- explore affective aspects of learning
- raise different perspectives and tackle values

The planning framework adopted at our school is driven by the understandings sought and the educators' knowledge of student understandings. Teachers at our school believe that the content must take students beyond what they already know as well as developing worthwhile lifelong skills.

Stage of Unit	Purpose
<p style="text-align: center;">Tuning In</p> <p>Also known as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior Knowledge • Preparing to find out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage students in the topic • To gauge student interest and attitudes • To find out what students believe (understandings and misconceptions) • To provide opportunities for students to share what they already know and believe • To introduce/clarify language • To identify gaps in their knowledge and misconceptions • To assist with teacher planning of the unit
<p style="text-align: center;">Finding Out</p> <p>Also known as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct experiences • Shared Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take students beyond what they already know • To challenge students' ideas, beliefs and values • To enable the student to use skills (e.g. thinking, communication, cooperation, research skills) and knowledge to collect new information
<p style="text-align: center;">Sorting Out</p> <p>Also known as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing the Shared Experience/s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sort out, organise, represent and present information from the finding out stage of the unit. • To provide opportunities for the students to use their preferred ways of learning to demonstrate their learning (knowledge, skills, values)
<p style="text-align: center;">Going Further</p> <p>Also known as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the Unit • Related activities / experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To extend/broaden the unit if appropriate • To allow students to investigate areas of personal interest • To use their preferred learning style • To present another perspective on or dimension to the topic
<p style="text-align: center;">Reflection</p> <p>Also known as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about the Unit • Making connections • Drawing conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide opportunities for the students to think about their learning –how they learnt what they learnt and why • To identify changes in skills, knowledge and values • To draw conclusions and make connections between ideas
<p style="text-align: center;">Action</p> <p>Also known as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify what the students have learnt and the implications for personal actions • To enable students to make choices and apply their ideas • To relate their learning to real life situations

(Ref: Jeni Wilson and Kath Murdoch, 2004, *What is Inquiry Learning?*)