Curriculum Policy

Rationale:
Curriculum in Catholic schools promotes students’ personal and spiritual development. This takes place within the overall religious dimension of the school, which is based on the principles and values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as experienced, lived, understood and taught within the Catholic community. Implementation of the VELS (Victorian Essential Learning Standards) across the school will provide all students with a sequential curriculum framework that guides their learning, as well providing measures of learning achievement that allow students, teachers and parents the opportunity to assess student performance against standardised learning outcomes.

Aims:
To improve student learning through the implementation of the VELS across all key learning areas and across all year levels in a manner consistent with State & CEO requirements and locally identified needs.

Implementation:
Effective learning
Within the context of the Catholic ethos and tradition, a comprehensive curriculum is centred on students’ key developmental needs at each phase of schooling, and is systematically linked to higher levels of knowledge and competence. It is therefore imperative that all staff work toward a curriculum that will:

- provide a broad, balanced and integrated approach to learning;
- be dynamic and relevant, providing imaginative scope and intellectual rigour;
- acknowledge and cater for the diversity of ways in which people learn;
- be explicitly related to clearly articulated learning goals;
- value girls and boys equally and respond to their needs equitably;
- foster a deep knowledge and understanding of contemporary Australian society and an appreciation of its cultural diversity, which is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- recognise Australia’s unique relationship with the cultures, values, languages and traditions of countries in the Asian region;
- encourage independent thinking and critical skills and the continuing search for truth;
- make use of available technology to enable students to be skilled and creative technicians, with an ability to reflect on and explore the social and cultural implications of technology;
- consider the needs of students disadvantaged by social and/or economic circumstances, by physical and/or intellectual impairment, by unfamiliarity with the English language and Australian culture;
- be assessed by a wide range of valid and reliable indicators of student performance in relation to the desired outcomes.

Effective teaching
In collaboration with the school community, teachers will:

- foster an appreciation of the principles and values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
- engage in and promote quality interpersonal relationships;
- promote a sense of community and belonging among students;
- be sensitive to differences, in particular where students are disadvantaged for reasons of gender, race, language, culture or socio-economic circumstance;
• respond to individual learning styles and pace of learning;
• use a wide repertoire of teaching strategies;
• ensure continuous and stimulating learning experiences for all students;
• support and encourage students to develop skills of cooperation and teamwork;
• seek to complement the formal curriculum with opportunities for creative learning in the wider community;
• monitor teaching programs and make appropriate changes based on critical reflection on the purpose and value of what is taught and how it is taught;
• use fair and cooperative forms of reporting to students, parents and other appropriate audiences;
• develop their teaching performance as part of an ongoing systematic reflection on their teaching practice;
• keep up to date with developments in educational theory and practice generally and in specific learning areas.

Effective organisation
St Joachim’s, through the leadership team and support of all staff will:
• provide a practical framework of support for all students;
• foster the development of extensive networking and linking arrangements;
• provide the flexibility to accommodate changes as the need arises;
• provide and welcome opportunities to develop the personal competencies of all persons of the school community;
• promote an awareness of employment-related pathways for students.
• meet the range of developmental needs of all students within each phase of schooling;
• be respectful and inclusive in dealing with issues connected with disability, gender, class, race and ethnicity;
• be sensitive to the views and experiences of those outside any socially dominant viewpoint.

Record-keeping
• It is each teacher’s responsibility to write the programs for the learning areas and the levels in which she/he is involved. These programs should give a detailed description of learning objectives, teaching content and strategies, and appropriate assessment methods. The programs will normally be organised into a clear time frame.
• The programs will be reviewed and updated regularly by the Curriculum Leader and Principal, since they are the plans for the year’s work. Such records ensure continuity when new teachers and replacement teachers enter the school.
• Records of past programs are to be kept by the Curriculum Leader as they are important in the process of monitoring curriculum development and maintaining a coherent and comprehensive curriculum.

Partnerships
Each should work to build relationships which are positive, friendly and based on mutual respect. The quality of the relationships between students and teachers is crucial for the effectiveness of the learning process. Teachers should be accessible, approachable and fair, and committed to their professional task of educating the students.
Students have a responsibility to be committed to the learning process. As agents in their own learning, students collaborate with teachers, who provide many of the opportunities for that learning.
The staff work in partnership with their colleagues to fulfil their joint responsibility for the education and welfare of the students.
Each staff member has a responsibility to promote a vital and supportive community, based on mutual respect and acceptance.
In a climate of equality where individual strengths are recognised and contributions encouraged, staff share ideas, information and expertise, and collaborate in the planning of programs and activities.
Together, the staff foster positive relations in an atmosphere of respect and openness, assisted by regular communication and democratic processes.

**Professional development**
Teacher commitment and involvement are essential if curriculum is to be effective. Appropriate professional development enables teachers to have a strong sense of competence and helps develop commitment to effective schooling among the whole staff.

- It is each teacher’s professional responsibility to seek professional development, but the Catholic school will be concerned to encourage and foster efforts of staff in this direction.

Professional development may provide:
- stimulation for more creative approaches to classroom practice;
- an interchange of teaching and learning practices within the school;
- insight into educational theory and new approaches within education;
- skill development.

Opportunities for feedback to the whole school staff following attendance at external professional development should be regularly included in staff meetings. Within the school’s professional development program, a balance between the needs of individuals and the whole group must be maintained.

**Evaluation:**
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.