



Evangelisation and Religious Education Policy

Implemented: March 2013

Review: March 2015



RATIONALE

St Anthony's School seeks to be a creative learning community that embraces the teachings of Christ. In striving towards this vision, we support both the parents of our students in their role as primary educators of the faith, and the Catholic Church in its evangelising mission.

To evangelise is to proclaim the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ. Its goal is to bring people to faith through a personal encounter with Christ. This evangelisation must be complemented by a sound Religious Education program and engagement in the Catholic tradition.

Evangelisation is crucial, but not enough. Faith, like a seed newly planted in the soil of the human heart, needs water and light. That is why our schools must deepen and instruct the faith once received. We call this catechesis or religious instruction. Faith must also be supported by the religious culture of the school so that it will be practised in worship, vocation and action in the world.

Bishops of NSW and the ACT, Pastoral Letter *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads*

In engaging in the work of evangelisation and religious education, we continue the Mercy tradition of our founders, building a school community characterised by the hallmarks of:

- Value-centred education in the Catholic tradition
- Preference for the education of the poor and of women
- A hallmark for excellence
- Compassionate presence

AIMS

At St Anthony's, we commit ourselves to the invitation of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT, seeking to ensure that our school:

- is truly Catholic in its identity and life
- is a centre of "the new evangelisation"
- enables our students to achieve high levels of "Catholic religious literacy" and practice
- is led and staffed by people who will contribute to these goals.

IMPLEMENTATION

Catholic Identity

- The Catholic identity of the school is explicitly stated in its Vision and Mission Statements, its Beliefs and Values, and its Learner Profile
- A school goal is determined for formation each year
 - This goal is developed by the Religious Education Coordinator (REC) and leadership team in consultation with staff
 - An implementation plan is developed to outline how the learning of students, teachers, school leaders and families will be structured to improve an aspect of the religious life of the school
 - Action plans are developed each term to name the specific strategies to be implemented, monitored and evaluated
- The parish clergy and seminarians on parish placements visit the school whenever possible
- A Catholic visual culture is present throughout the school, through the presence of seasonally-related prayer spaces, crucifixes, images of the saints, and the like
- Prayer is part of the daily life of the school, with a variety of traditional and contemporary prayer forms employed
 - Classes pray each morning, at noon, and prior to recess and lunch as a minimum
 - The school community prays together at assemblies
 - Staff pray at gatherings such as meetings and professional learning days, including staff prayer held every Friday morning

- A prayer scope and sequence is prepared to guide teachers in introducing prayers of the Catholic tradition to their students
- Parents are invited to participate in prayer and liturgical services held at school and within the parish context
- The school marks significant liturgical seasons and feast days throughout the year, as well as significant school events through liturgical celebrations
 - The REC and parish priest prepare a calendar each term, which outlines prayer and liturgical celebrations, formation and social justice initiatives
 - Forms of celebration include Mass, Celebrations of the Word and prayer services, and are held both in the school and the parish church
- The Sacrament of Penance is celebrated at least once annually with students in Years 4 to 6
 - Class teachers prepare the students for celebrating what is usually the first form of the rite, typically celebrated in a space other than the classroom
 - Students in Years 4 to 6 who cannot receive sacramental absolution join their class in prayerful preparation and participation in the celebration to the extent possible
 - All grades celebrate a Penitential Service during the season of Lent.
- The school seeks to maintain the founding tradition of the Sisters of Mercy, through staff formation, symbols and public recognition of Mercy traditions and values, eg Mercy Awards
- The school's Wellbeing Policy reflects Catholic values in its encouragement of pastoral care initiatives, and in the principles of dignity, care and respect which underpin student management procedures and student, staff and parent relationships.

Evangelisation

- The school works in partnership to support the parish-based, family-centred process for sacramental preparation and ongoing catechesis
 - The REC meets with the parish Sacramental Coordinator and Parish Priest as required
 - The REC and class teachers promote the sacramental process within the school
 - Units of work in Religious Education are taught to align with preparation for the sacraments when possible
- The school and parish work in partnership to promote the school as a missionary work that is part of the wider parish community
 - The parish priest and principal together interview all new families seeking enrolment into Kindergarten
 - The parish clergy and pastoral associate participate in the orientation of Kindergarten families
 - School Family Masses are held three times a year, with each stage preparing and leading aspects of a parish Sunday Mass in which families are especially encouraged to attend and participate
 - The REC supports the parish Special Religious Education Coordinator and catechists in providing access to school Religious Education resources
 - The REC and pastoral associate work in partnership to coordinate the *Seasons for Growth* program in the school and parish
 - School staff are commissioned with members of other parish formation and catechetical ministries at Sunday Mass at the beginning of each year.

Passing On Catholic Faith, Life and Culture

- The school supports the spirit, content and philosophy of the Parramatta Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum, *Sharing Our Story*
 - The REC prepares a scope and sequence of units to be taught each year

- Learning and teaching experiences are provided so as to connect students' life experiences with scripture and Church doctrine through the use of the Shared Christian Praxis approach
- Sound, contemporary resources and methodologies are employed in Religious Education, such as the Exploring Scripture story telling technique
- Connections with other Key Learning Areas are made whenever possible
- Learning programs are evaluated and monitored by classroom teachers and stage learning teams
- Timetabling of Religious Education lessons meets the following requirements:
 - A minimum of 2.5 hours a week allocated to Religious Education
 - At least four lessons per week
 - Majority of lessons in the week taught before lunch
- School-based assessment in Religious Education is ongoing and in accordance with the school's Assessment and Reporting Policy
 - Samples of student work are kept throughout the year, both as evidence of learning, and as assessment and reporting material
- Diocesan assessment of Catholic religious literacy is undertaken annually through the Religious Literacy Assessment for Year 4 and 6 students
- Ongoing formation opportunities are provided for students, staff and families, including:
 - Strategies such as Gospel Action of the Week, which seeks to connect the gospel reading of each Sunday to the life experience of students and families
 - Scriptural and theological reflections, provided regularly in the school newsletter and at staff prayer
 - Provision of resources for formation
 - Promotion of formation courses and further study in theology and religious education for staff
 - A professional learning day each year allocated to staff formation
- The school promotes a commitment to social justice by teaching mission units of work in Religious Education, and by supporting charitable works within the Church and in the wider community, such as:
 - *Project Compassion* (Caritas Australia)
 - Cystic Fibrosis NSW
 - St Vincent de Paul Society
 - Charitable works of the Sisters of Mercy.

Catholic Leadership

- All staff are committed to the mission of the school and the teachings of the Church in accordance with Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) conditions for employment
- CEDP Policy is observed in providing enrolment priority to parishioners, then to other Catholic children, to other Christian children, then children of other religious backgrounds
- Students are not denied enrolment on the basis of a family's inability to pay school fees
- The principal seeks to provide assistance to families in financial need, including facilitating access to Diocesan provisions such as the Bishop Manning Scholarship Fund and the Byallawa school fee co-contribution scheme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- A pastoral care fund, maintained by a fundraising walkathon held biennially, is managed by the principal to provide support to families who need assistance, and to subsidise special provisions so as to reduce the financial burden on families.
- Members of the leadership team are present at important parish occasions during the year, such as sacramental celebrations, School Family Masses, ...
- Members of the leadership team publicly lead prayer, acknowledge students who celebrate the sacraments of Initiation and First Reconciliation, and promote initiatives of the Church

- Members of the leadership team model the preparation and leadership of staff prayer, which is led in turn by all staff on a rostered basis
- Role descriptions outline the responsibilities of the REC at St Anthony's School, as well as the religious leadership roles of other members of the leadership team
- All teachers of Religious Education are required to be accredited to teach in accordance with CEDP guidelines
- The REC works with class teachers to support and guide their professional learning, through professional learning meetings and work in classrooms
- The REC works with staff to support and guide their formation, guided by the school goal, and the implementation and action plans that are developed annually
- Staff make a charitable donation each term to support social justice initiatives such as the Bishop Manning Scholarship Fund and the charitable works of the Sisters of Mercy

BUDGET

Funding is provided for the formation of the school community and professional learning of staff, and the acquisition of resources. The REC is responsible for the management of funding and resources.

A pastoral care fund is provided for the purposes outlined above. This fund is the responsibility of the principal.

EVALUATION

The REC, in collaboration with staff, will review this policy every two years.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

School Documentation

- [Mission and Vision Statement](#)
- [Learner Profile](#)
- [Wellbeing Policy](#)
- *Role Description: Religious Education Coordinator*

System Documentation

- [Catholic School Community Policy](#)
- *Sharing Our Story: Religious Education Curriculum K-12*
- [The Angelus – Guidelines](#)
- [Fundraising – Guidelines](#)
- [Pastors and Principals in Partnership Policy](#)
- [Curriculum in Catholic Schools Policy](#)
- *Celebrating Liturgy in Schools* (CEDP and Liturgical Commission, Diocese of Parramatta)
- [Love One Another as I Have Loved You: Social Outreach and Fundraising Guidelines for Schools](#)

Diocesan Documentation

- [Policy on Sacraments of Initiation and the Sacrament of Penance for Children of Catechetical Age Who Have Been Baptised](#) (2010)

Church Documentation

- [Catholic Schools at a Crossroads](#): Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT (2007)
- [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#) (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997)
- [The Catholic School](#) (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977)