



CATHOLIC IDENTITY POLICY

St Francis Catholic School, in the Franciscan tradition, educates the whole child for today and tomorrow.

We believe in:

PEACE & JOY

*Embracing our Catholic Identity through the fostering of Christian values.
Nurturing a welcoming, compassionate and caring environment that draws together children, parents, teachers and community.*

INTEGRITY

Developing a sense of responsibility and self-esteem in each individual.

JUSTICE

Building and nurturing a stimulating learning community where all are supported in reaching their full potential.

CREATION

Respecting and taking action to sustain our natural environment.

Our Catholic Identity is at the heart of everything we do at St Francis School.

Our vision statements promoting the cornerstones of the Franciscan charism, Peace and Joy, Justice, Integrity and a deep respect for Creation inform and exemplify our school community. We believe that our children's development of a Catholic Identity is a life long process.

Commitment to Child Safety

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have a right to feel safe and be safe all of the time. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse. At St Francis we strive to maintain a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. We are committed to continually reviewing our Child Safe policies and practices to ensure that every effort is made for ongoing improvement of our Child Safe environment.

We at St Francis recognise that some groups of children are particularly vulnerable are we are committed to promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal/linguistically diverse children and also promoting the safety of children with a disability.

Aims

We hope to contribute to this by:

- Fostering within students a growing understanding of and relationship with God.
- Helping students to understand the Catholic Faith tradition.
- Helping students appreciate different faith traditions.
- Supporting students to develop an active appreciation and involvement in social justice initiatives in our local community and beyond
- Enabling students to participate in the life of the Catholic community through prayer and liturgical celebrations.
- Providing a rich Religious Education program developed using The Sandhurst

- Source of Life Curriculum Framework.
- Through reflection of ECSIP data.

BELIEFS

We believe that Catholic Identity is integral to every concept of the Catholic School and not an added component.

We believe that in order to fully commit to our Catholic Identity we should be committed to:

- being grounded in the local Christian community that is centered on the Person of Jesus and guided by the Gospel.
- fostering the holistic development of each student
- participating in the evangelizing mission of the Church
- being informed in the knowledge of the teaching of the Catholic Church
- assisting students to integrate their faith, their culture and their experiences of life
- practicing a fundamental option for the poor and weak
- offering a service to individuals, society and the wider culture
- transforming society in light of the kingdom which Jesus announced
- pursuing opportunities to promote justice, reconciliation and environmental responsibility locally and globally
- integrating policies, practices, curriculum content and delivery, and relationships
- expressing its identity in welcome, word, welfare and worship.

(Source Of Life Core Document. 'The Culture of the Catholic School.)

ORGANISATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ST FRANCIS SCHOOL:

LITURGY intentions:

- To provide opportunities for children, parents and teachers to experience and participate in meaningful prayer and a variety of liturgical celebrations.
- To develop an understanding that the celebration of the Eucharist is the basis of our lives as Christians.
- To lead children to an understanding of the liturgical year.
- To assist the children in their faith development and to help them become aware of their role in a faith community by providing opportunities for them to be involved in parish celebrations and the work of parish groups.

SCRIPTURE intentions:

- To develop in children an understanding of the culture, context and history in which scriptures were written.
- To teach scripture to the children appropriate to the stage of experience and development.
- To lead children to show reverence for the bible.
- To enable children, parents and teachers to understand more fully God's message in their own life experiences

PRAYER intentions:

- Develop a relationship with a loving, caring and forgiving God who is with us throughout life by developing faith, daily prayer and meditation.
- To encourage children, parents and teachers to recognise and experience different ways of praying.
- To teach prayers belonging to our Catholic tradition.
- To provide opportunities for children, parents and staff to take leadership roles in prayer.

SACRAMENTS intentions:

- To bring children to an understanding of God's love and presence manifested and celebrated in the sacraments of the church
- To provide sound P-6 sacramental Catechesis
- To liaise with St Mary's parish to prepare students for the receiving of Sacraments.

SOCIAL JUSTICE intentions:

- To develop in children, teachers and parents a respect for the sacredness of all creation, recognising their responsibility of care.
- To encourage an awareness of social justice issues and their implications for us as Christians.
- Develop knowledge and an understanding of our Catholic faith and traditions as is relevant to each individual's maturity by incorporating activities that are relevant to real life experiences.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT intentions:

- Staff will be encouraged to come together for meaningful prayer regularly.
- The school leadership team lead the staff in the area of Professional Development, Resources, Curriculum and Parish networking and in the areas of faith.
- All staff teaching Religious Education lessons will be qualified and accredited teachers or working towards accreditation .
- Ongoing professional development in Religious Education will be provided to all staff.
- It is expected that Catholic Identity information will be included in staff meetings on a regular basis.

PLANNING intentions:

- Planning is undertaken at whole school level, unit level, and at the individual class level.
- Planning is sequential and cyclical, implemented with a 2 Year Cycle using the Source of Life as our major planning program.
- The liturgical calendar is the basis for RE planning.
- Classroom RE planning will be recorded within the Weekly program.
- Whole school planning is recorded on a termly overview proforma.

Core Planning Resources:

- Source of Life Curriculum Document
- CoSSI (Charter of Sandhurst School Improvement)
- Steps in Faith

Budget

The Catholic Identity Coordinator, in conjunction with the Principal, sets a program budget for Religious Education for the year. This budget is managed by the Leader of Catholic Identity in consultation with the Principal.

Record Keeping Classroom teachers are responsible for maintaining records of students' skills and knowledge in RE. Source of Life is used to keep documentation of all planning and assessment undertaken. It is expected that recording will be in a variety of forms. Samples of children's work are kept as a valid form of record keeping. Teachers are required to file and maintain unit overviews in RE.

Social Justice and Outreach Agreed Practice:**WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE AND OUTREACH?**

Social Justice is an integral part of Catholic Identity, which aims to develop awareness of our social responsibility to help others in our local and wider community and to respond to the call of Jesus in this area.

BELIEFS & IMPLEMENTATION

At St. Francis School we will:

- Integrate equity and social justice principles into explicit and incidental teaching practices.
- Develop teaching and learning strategies that will enhance student's understanding of social justice.
- Promote a better understanding of Social Justice issues throughout Nathalia, Australia and internationally.
- Involve families in liturgies, awareness raising and fundraising for social justice issues.
- Effectively communicate with students and families.
- Make students aware of the relevance of social justice in the world.
- Promote and develop teachers' personal and professional learning.

Fundraising Commitments:

Term 1 - Project Compassion (Caritas)

Term 2 – St. Vincent De Paul

Term 3 - Opening The Doors Foundation

Term 4 - Catholic Missions / St. Vinnie's