



POLICY

Faith Formation for staff in Catholic Education in Sandhurst

Inflamed by Love

March 2018

1.0 Vision

We believe:

- that the values of the Gospel are central to who we are, what we do, and how we act
- that we have a vital role in the mission of the Catholic Church to imagine and seek new horizons while respecting our Tradition
- that a strong sense of community is dependent on the quality of our collegial relationships
- that each person's potential is fostered through the dedicated ministry of Catholic Education
- that leadership encompassing vision, innovation and empowerment

2.0 Context

The Sandhurst diocese is a country diocese comprised of fifty-nine schools. Central to these educational communities is the Catholic faith from which they draw their energy, vision and inspiration. These communities are open to all, with a particular emphasis on providing a Catholic education in constant dialogue with current culture. The core aim of Catholic education is to immerse all communities in the Good News that emanates from the life of Christ.

Faith formation lies at the heart of this spiritual endeavour. Faith formation recognises the ongoing, intentional and reflective nature of spiritual experience. In our Catholic context, faith formation aims to provide individuals with various opportunities to deepen their awareness and love for Christ. It is from this core spiritual relationship that true and authentic discipleship will arise. Through faith formation, Catholic education is called to live out the mission and service of the Church to our world.

In recent times, the demographic of Catholic schools in Australia has changed dramatically. Religion is on the decline and spirituality is on the rise in an age where secularism and pluralism are the dominant narratives through which individuals seek meaning and purpose in life. As a result of this, belief systems have been fragmented and individuals entering Catholic

educational communities today have less knowledge, understanding and confidence around the Catholic faith. Therefore, it is vital to provide faith formation experiences at various levels to the key stakeholders in Catholic education today.

3.0 Outcomes

Faith Formation in the Sandhurst diocese aims to:

- introduce individuals and communities to the immense beauty and spiritual wealth of the Christian Tradition
- build educational communities whose every direction, decision and vision proceeds from a desire for a personal knowledge and love for Christ
- deepen individual's and community's relationship with Christ through prayer, contemplation and reflection
- provide strategic programs that lead to the actualisation of mission and discipleship which lies at the heart of Catholic Spirituality
- integrate Aboriginal Spirituality and sustainability into Christian Spirituality through its practices and programs

4.0 Practice

In the Sandhurst diocese:

Liturgy and Prayer

- educational communities are encouraged to participate in Eucharistic celebrations on a regular basis
- Eucharistic celebrations need to be prayerful, engaging, meaningful and relevant to each school context
- throughout the school year liturgies that are engaging, meaningful and relevant, in addition to Eucharistic Celebrations, will be experienced
- school communities will develop a vibrant, meaningful and creative prayer life that incorporates prayer in many forms
- a *Prayer Guide* will be available for all staff to assist with the provision of meaningful prayer experiences that are rich in Scripture and contemplation
- a guide to prayer is also available in the Resource book of Source of Life (see appendix A)
- students should pray as a class at least once a day, teachers are encouraged to also lead their class in grace before meals and may include a blessing at the end of the day.

- students should be given opportunities to lead prayer for their class, level or whole school
- creating and preserving sacred spaces are an important part of prayer and liturgical experiences which contribute to faith formation
- sacred objects such as The Bible and the crucifix should always be treated with dignity and respect

Retreat and Other Experiences

- once a year all schools are encouraged to organise and experience a spirituality day/retreat with a particular emphasis on the Catholic faith
- the CEO will facilitate and support schools to provide differentiated faith formation opportunities that schools can take up including retreats, reflective experiences, spirituality days and professional development
- every second year a diocesan retreat will be offered to all members of the CEO and school staff

Accreditation

- within 5 years of commencing employment in a Catholic school teachers are expected to have made significant progress towards completing an appropriate level of accreditation as required in their contract of employment and CECV policies 1.6 and 1.7 (see appendices B and C)
- we encourage first year graduates to focus on their VIT registration and begin accreditation on completion of their VIT.
- graduate teachers are supported in their work in a Catholic school through induction days, such as Source of Life, Graduate professional learning and one to one support from the Catholic Identity Team.
- professional development opportunities for accreditation will be differentiated, e.g.: teachers new to Catholic Education, teachers in Catholic education longer than (5 years) and leadership
- accreditation pathways are provided to meet the requirements of CECV policy 1.6 (e.g. Ministry of Catholic Schooling) and 1.7 (eg. CES Units)

Faith Formation Opportunities

- the CEO will convene a spirituality and faith formation reference team comprised of CEO and school staff to envision the direction of this core work for the diocese
- leadership teams are responsible to plan and provide an in depth faith formation program for their educational communities every year
- school staff new to Catholic education should receive induction and opportunities in faith formation about the Catholic faith

- school staff new to Catholic education will be mentored in the meaning, importance and practice of Catholic prayer with the aim of being able to lead prayer with confidence, understanding and reverence
- new CEO staff will be offered an induction into Catholic Identity and faith formation in the Sandhurst diocese
- faith formation experiences will have an explicit link to Aboriginal Spirituality as appropriate (e.g. Yingidi)
- faith formation experiences will reflect the diocesan commitment to ecological spirituality



(Students at St Liborius' Primary School Eaglehawk praying through Godly Play)

*You have made us for yourself and our heart
is restless until it rests in you.*

St Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.