MERCY COLLEGE MACKAY

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Year Adopted: 2011

Policy No.: 2011 / 01

POLICY AREA (Teaching and Learning)

PREAMBLE

A Catholic School is not simply a place where lessons are taught; it is a centre that has an operative educational philosophy, attentive to the needs of today’s youth and illuminated by the Gospel message (The Religious Dimension of a Catholic School, 1988, p.22).

INTRODUCTION

Catholic schools are unique centres of teaching and learning which are based firmly in educational philosophy, are considerate of student needs and are illuminated by the Gospel message.

The overarching focus of curriculum in Catholic schools is to empower learners to enrich the quality of life in the community by living out the Gospel of Jesus the Christ.

The six defining features of Catholic schools as stated in the Diocesan Learning Framework (2010) are:

- Give witness to the message of Jesus and the message of the Church
- Have a clear Catholic identity
- Be communities of care
- Offer a relevant and holistic curriculum of quality teaching and learning
- Be open and accessible to all who seek our values
- Be characterised by inclusive partnerships within a community of faith.

Within the context of curriculum it follows that learning and teaching in a Catholic school involves bringing together faith, culture and life to make meaning of the world and form the basis for personal transformation.

All members of the Mercy College community bring with them rich life experiences and diverse religious, social and cultural backgrounds. Catholic schools offer a rich and relevant curriculum recognising that “every learner is in some respect like all others, like some others and like no other” (Kluckhorn & Murray, 1948 cited in Rakoczy, 1992, p. 10).

Students are at the centre of the learning process and effective teachers assist the learner to make sense of their world. This is achieved by providing creative and engaging opportunities for all within a safe, supporting and nurturing educational environment.

We recognize the non-negotiable imperative of the traditional qualities of education including literacy, numeracy and life skills whilst also acknowledging that teaching and learning is now informed by 21st century learning, creativity and divergent thinking.

RATIONALE

We recognise that learning is one of the most natural of all human activities, unlocking the capacity for change, growth and renewal. Learning is fundamental to achievement and self-esteem in life and, in partnership with parents, is the core responsibility of our school staff and leadership.

We recognize that teaching “has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of our most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but the very spirit of human beings. The personal relationships between a teacher and students, therefore, assume enormous importance … Teachers and educators fulfill a specific Christian vocation and share an equally specific participation in the mission of the Church, to the extent that it depends chiefly on them whether Catholic School achieves its purpose” (Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997, p. 23).

We believe all members of the Mercy College community should support the mutual, respectful and dynamic relationship that exists within the teaching and learning context.

Mercy College will also maintain a focus on improvement and continue to strive for quality education.

VALUES

Perseverance, mercy, humility and compassion, fairness and justice, loyalty, respect and honesty, courage and confidence and the pursuit of Truth and knowledge.

Replaces any previous Mercy College Mackay Teaching and Learning Policy (2 pages) To be reviewed: Year 2018
POLICY STATEMENT
Inspired by the Gospels, learning and teaching in Catholic Schools empowers all in the community to serve Christ in humanity and to grow in wisdom. Teaching and learning builds foundations of optimism, faith, knowledge and creativity. It encourages each participant to achieve their greatest potential and to assist in fashioning a better world in keeping with God’s plan.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES
In enacting this policy the school will acknowledge and promote:

- Parents as the first educators of their children who will be consulted in regard to significant changes in teaching and learning practice
- A curriculum which is safe, nurturing and engaging
- Responsive to the needs of students and teachers
- Communication between parents, students and teachers
- Diverse opportunities for participation by parents in the life of the school
- Educators as role models who will set standards for students
- An education process which instils in our students respect for self and others, a developing sense of responsibility and reflection.
- Currency in educational thought and research and remain committed to ‘best practice’
- Data informed decision making
- Student focussed learning and promotion of active participation
- Adequate resourcing for student engagement and teacher effectiveness
- Professional learning opportunities for staff to remain current and adaptable to change
- Exposure of students to an extensive range of subject areas in keeping with Federal and State Government curriculum policy, QCEC directives, Diocesan policy in addition to those determined by the school
- Learning in a variety of contexts and levels of challenge
- Independent learning contexts as well as collaborative contributions
- Critical, divergent and creative thinking
- Strong, committed whole-school focus on core literacy, numeracy and life skills
- Practices that are contemporary, innovative and well informed with a view to making learning as rich, real and relevant as possible
- Greater social, cultural and environmental awareness and engagement in social justice and community service projects
- Broad and local contexts eg: cultural communities; local industry needs
- High and achievable standards which are established through moderation processes and Catholic Education, State and Federal Government guidelines
- All members of the community developing an awareness and commitment to the mission and vision of our Catholic College

REFLECTION MATERIAL
Kevin Treston, Transforming Catholic Schools; Creation Enterprises, 1993. Kevin Treston, Visioning A Future Church, Creation Enterprises, 2000
Diocesan Education Council, Diocese of Rockhampton, Pastoral Care in Schools 2011.

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