St Mary's School
Curriculum Plan

St Mary's School is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS), where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and where the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

Curriculum and learning policy

Vision

We are an empowered and sustainable learning community, centred in faith and united in our respect and responsibility for all of creation; we strive for excellence; actively living, learning, caring and growing together.

Mission

- We gather in a faithful, supportive and inclusive community to build partnerships and a sense of belonging.
- We listen to God, others and ourselves to develop positive relationships.
- We share responsibility for our learning and guiding the learning of others.
- We act with faith, kindness and resilience working collaboratively and as empowered people to make a positive difference in our world.

Purpose

What is the purpose of a school? Is it to provide a rigorous academic education that prepares the most capable adolescents for college? To train youth for a slot in the labour market? To create citizens capable of responsible participation in a democratic society? To enable those most disadvantaged by hierarchal structures of race, class or language to transcend those barriers? These are some of the questions which have been debated across time and cultures. Is there a single answer or maybe it is a combination of all? One realisation is apparent, our world is more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) than it was when the current education model was initiated. If the current and future generations wellbeing is a priority, then we must redesign the educational experience for the complexities of today and possibilities of tomorrow. We need to expect different and not less. The continuation of standardisation and quick fix trends in education must be replaced with research based practice. This in turn must be translated by highly skilled educators into our mainstream schools ensuring an equality of education for all. Any less will exacerbate and reproduce existing inequalities in education.

Pope Francis makes a similar comparison in regards to environmental change when he writes in Laudato Si:

"Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world."

The vast majority of the population prior to the emergence of the 20th century accepted as fact that intelligence was almost exclusively inherited and fixed at birth. Whatever rank you came into the world, was where you would spend the rest of your life. Therefore, during the Industrial Age, either manual skills or surface knowledge (basic rules, facts and ideas) were the determinants of continued schooling or joining the work force. The relentless repetition of skills or facts was at the forefront of the educational paradigm. From this perspective the goal of education was, and little has changed, to expediently slot each child into his or her rightful place by use of reifying, quantifying and ranking: the process of standardisation.

The standardised structures that select and sort students into categories are still highly visible in classrooms today. Features of this model include, grouping and sorting children by age or ability, streaming and determining success through 'surface' achievement means only. What drives this filtering model is not learning, but rather time and the imperative to cover whatever 'surface' knowledge has been allotted to each block. As an assembly line, children still systematically move from topic to topic, year level to year level and those who meet a narrow set of criteria are funnelled out the other end. Those who are not achieving at the standardised rate are either withdrawn or intervened.

As confusing as it appears, it is also commonly recognised that children enter school with vastly different background knowledge, skills, experiences, characteristics and dispositions. Yet, success is still measured by student achievement of the same outcomes, over the same time period, even if the starting line is so far apart. Alarmingly, it must be assumed that the 150-year-old myth 'intelligence as fixed' is still alive and well in our educational institution.

At St Mary's we recognise diversity of background and believe all students are capable of significant growth over time. Diversity is celebrated and recognised by our educators as the starting point of a transformational lifelong learning journey. The learning process entails more than simply adding information into an empty vessel (your mind). Transformation is a qualitative shift in meaning making, including transcending our diverse and previous patterns of making sense of the world. Through a sense of belonging, relationships, effort and attention to models of excellence, we encounter opportunities to develop new capabilities. Our core values are deeply engrained in our culture. They guide our beliefs, mission and methodology for learning over time and are embedded through the learning dispositions:

As learners we:

- Wonder

- Perservere

- Believe

- Create   Acting with:

- Respect

- Responsibility

- Resilience

As we make sense of the world around us, our worth transforms from being the best in the world to being the best for the world. As a Catholic Parish School, with Christ as our Light, our mission is to,

transform lives through learning. Inclusion and belonging are essential to this mission. We foster students to become contributing citizens where we enable authentic student voice. We maintain a culture of possibility, relationships, rather than one of deficiencies, fear of failure, blame or despair. This culture is minded and nurtured by our staff team in tandem with our parent body. Those representatives in the school community whom volunteer to lead significant events and provide a feedback loop between need, action and response.

Learning is complex, wondrous and possibility filled. As such we use the emerging fields of Educational Neuroscience and The Science of Learning to inform our methodology and enable designed research-practise translation. Our methodology aligns the principles of 'deep' learning and content with the trajectory of learning; surface knowledge to deep analysis to conceptual understanding.

Digital technologies are used to both support and facilitate deep learning. Hardware includes Chrome-books and iPads which enable access to books, coding, videography and a broad range of software inputs. We take advantage of the ecological connection available in our natural outdoor spaces filled with bird life, mini-beasts, chickens, and expansive gardens including kitchen garden spaces. The accessibility to this environmental connection is a primary context and necessity in a culture with an emerging reduction of green space. The experience and promotion of sustainable practices is a critical aspect of our educational philosophy at St Mary's.

All learning content, skills and capabilities are drawn from the Victorian Curriculum Foundation-10. This includes vital knowledge and skills needed to be both literate and numerate combined with the depth of content, curiosity and wonderings from languages, humanities, physical education, arts and science. Our educators design project based learning experiences which align both aspects of the curriculum resulting in engaged, collaborative, purposeful learning. Importantly, both the arts, performing and visual as well as physical education enhance the learning experience. These subject areas are both part of the regular curriculum and children can access further enrichment by specialists who are onsite weekly. Further additional opportunities include inter-school sports, tournaments, excursions, incursions and camps.

The Victorian Curriculum is the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum for Victorian government and Catholic schools for implementation from 2017. The Victorian Curriculum reflects Victorian priorities and standards for F–10 and incorporates the Australian Curriculum. It defines what it is that all students have the opportunity to learn as a result of their schooling, set out as a series of learning progressions. See https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-10/Pages/default.aspx.

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 recognises that increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop, in addition to discrete discipline knowledge and understanding, a set of skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities, that apply across discipline content and equip them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world.

The St Mary's School Curriculum Plan has been developed in light of the directions for Catholic education and principles of curriculum from the *Horizons of Hope* education framework: Catholic schools provide an excellent holistic education centred on the students and engaging them in authentic, purposeful learning; and incorporating the philosophy of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 and the Religious Education Curriculum Framework.

The curriculum is a statement of the purpose of schooling and defines what it is that all students have the opportunity to learn as a result of their schooling.

Principles

At St Mary's School our beliefs about learning and teaching are:

The learning environment is agile, supportive and productive.

- the learning environment is structured in alignment with our school wide beliefs about learning and teaching: flexibility for purpose, stimulating provocations. Spatial purpose includes areas for independence, collaboration and dialogue.
- building positive relationships with students, teacher and parents is critical.
- by taking appropriate responsibility for personal learning, students are prepared to pursue and innovate on new ideas with scaffolding to move from surface, to deep, to transfer of learning.
- students' individual differences are acknowledged and valued.
- appropriate support is given to *all* students to improve their learning.

The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and inspiration.

- when students are encouraged to take responsibility they are involved in decision making in relation to what and how they learn.
- the development of personal and interpersonal skills enhances students' abilities to work and learn collaboratively.
- a stimulating, supportive environment is conducive to students maximising opportunities to pursue and develop their own interests and abilities.
- building diversity in teaching strategies offers wider opportunities for individual differences.
- students are given opportunities to learn and apply this learning to a variety of contemporary technologies.

Students' needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program.

- the learning environment is inclusive and provides teaching strategies to accommodate the range of abilities and interests in a group and support different ways of thinking and learning.

Students are challenged and supported to develop levels of thinking and application.

- students are challenged to explore, discuss, question and engage with significant ideas and practices so that they go beyond surface knowledge to develop depth, and transfer (e.g. problem solving, creativity and imagination).
- curriculum design is specific and visible to students with the endeavour for all students to be able to competently articulate, with evidence, focus learning goals.

Assessment practices are an integral part of learning and teaching.

- monitoring of student learning is continuous and encompasses a variety of aspects of understanding and practice underpinned by the individual's learning trajectory.
- assessment criteria are explicit and relevant to the individual; feedback is authentically designed to support students' future learning.
- students are encouraged to reflect on achievement collaboratively with peers, teachers and parents to review, discuss and reflect upon future learning goals at a specific instructional level to the individual.

Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom.

- students make connections to their local and broader community and apply their learning to their contemporary and future lives.
- through engagement in current technologies, students apply their new learning in ways which reflect their understanding of the contemporary world.

Scope

Our school curriculum defines what it is that all students have the opportunity to learn as a result of their schooling at St Mary's School.
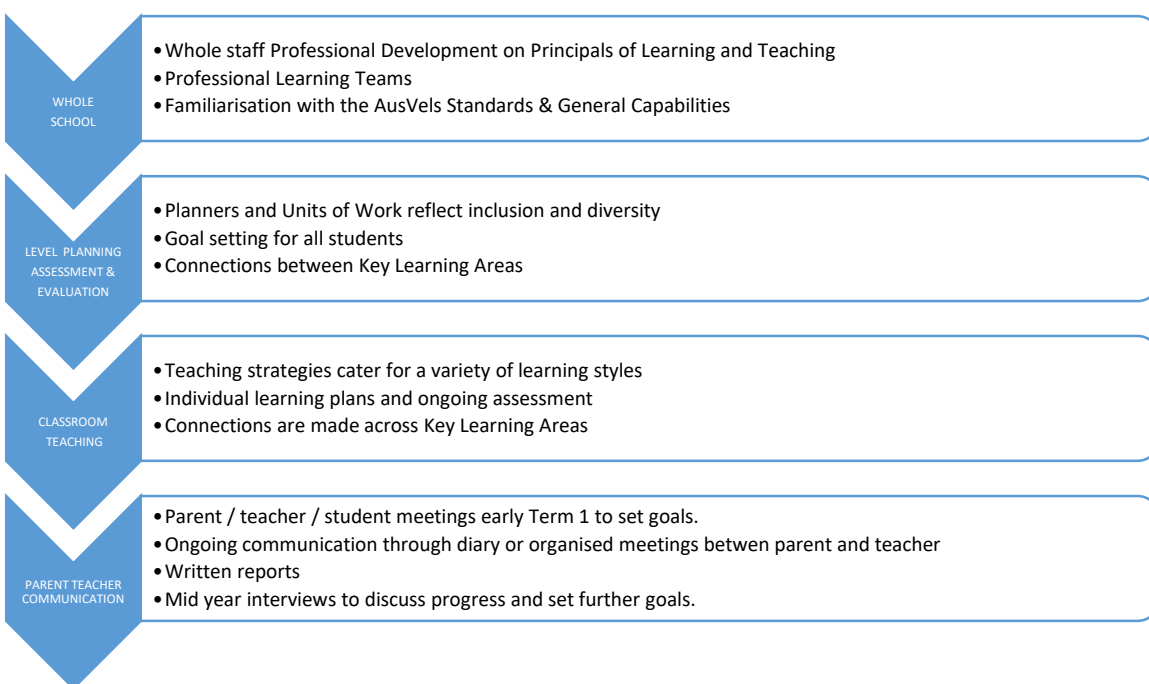
At St Mary's School, curriculum is enriched by the values, beliefs, perspectives and experiences of each member of the learning community when they engage actively with Catholic understandings of the human person. This orientation towards the person means that the process of curriculum design is shared with students, creating within them a sense of ownership and self-efficacy as learners. Our learning community fosters the conditions for students to have a voice in the design process, allowing them to make decisions about what they need to know and when.

Implementation

St Mary's School will implement the curriculum by explicitly focusing on the visual, cultural and communicative environments though:

VISUAL ENVIRONMENT	CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT	COMMUNICATIVE ENVIRONMENT
- Open and fluid learning environment - Students working independently, in pairs, groups, whole class - Colourful displays reflecting aspects of learning - Student work, written, oral, manipulative, creative - Clean and Hygienic - Tidy and Organised - Guest speakers - Resources – books, posters, dictionaries - Computers being used - Prayer tables - Parents - Criteria - Class expectations - Positive body language and interactions - Teachers - Parents - Furniture arranged for practical usage and flexibility - Variety of Graphic organisers - Learning stations	- Communities of learners - Respect for one another - Listening/ Talking - Reflection of learning - Relaxed and comfortable - Safe and secure - Happy - Encouraging - Motivating/Engaging - Confidence to make contributions - Courteous behaviours - Calm - Enthusiastic - Cooperation and collaboration - Role taking - Shared Responsibility - Shared leadership - Excitement - Trust - Relationships - Ownership and pride - Team work - Encouragement of risk taking - Flexibility	- Questions from teachers and students - Open ended questions from teachers and students and visitors - Suggestions and ideas shared - Answers from teachers and students - Discussions whole class, pairs, groups - Positive language - Problem solving challenges shared - Constructive feedback to and from peers and teachers. - Peer and cross age working structures - Presenting and communication of learning formally and informally - Debating - Different viewpoints and justifications - Varied interactions - Varied partnerships for communication and learning together

• Evidence of learning journey • Discoveries and wonderings • Understandings • Inquiry process • Multimedia resources actively engaged • Samples/models • Movement • Creativity evident • Learning Portfolios	• Mistakes embraced with positivity for growth • Self-assessment • Creativity • Teacher as guide • All members are learners and teachers • Choice making • Initiative encouraged • Awareness of current affairs • Challenging	• Personal and interpersonal reflections • Problems shared • Brainstorming • Real life issues discussed • Digital communication – email, phone calls, • Listening • Productive and deliberate quiet and noise

WHOLE SCHOOL
- Whole staff Professional Development on Principals of Learning and Teaching
- Professional Learning Teams
- Familiarisation with the AusVels Standards & General Capabilities

LEVEL PLANNING ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION
- Planners and Units of Work reflect inclusion and diversity
- Goal setting for all students
- Connections between Key Learning Areas

CLASSROOM TEACHING
- Teaching strategies cater for a variety of learning styles
- Individual learning plans and ongoing assessment
- Connections are made across Key Learning Areas

PARENT TEACHER COMMUNICATION
- Parent / teacher / student meetings early Term 1 to set goals.
- Ongoing communication through diary or organised meetings betwen parent and teacher
- Written reports
- Mid year interviews to discuss progress and set further goals.

The curriculum is designed and delivered from whole-school to level planning to individual teacher plans. These are created in a collaborative and supported environment. This ensures that a guaranteed and viable curriculum is driving student learning and lifting student outcomes.

Curriculum content

The school implements the Victorian Curriculum in order to provide students with a comprehensive and cumulative curriculum from Foundation to Year 10.

The school's teaching and learning program is the school-based plan for delivering this common set of knowledge and skills in ways that best utilise local resources, expertise and contexts. Information technology is an integral part of our curriculum as a basic tool for learning. Supported by our governing body, St Mary's School will develop strong processes for monitoring student progress and the application of appropriate explicit teaching and intervention strategies.

St Mary's School will also take inspiration from the *Horizons of Hope* education framework. This framework supports Catholic school communities to engage in dialogue about the distinctive nature of learning and teaching, leading learning and enhancing Catholic identity in our schools. The framework is a living document that has been added to over the years with examples of practice from schools, as

well as additional strategy statements in the areas of Leadership, Wellbeing, Diversity and Religious Education.

Religious Education has a central place in the curriculum at St Mary's School, as it reflects our unique character of Catholic identity and focus as a Catholic school. The primary source for developing our Religious Education program is the Religious Education Curriculum Framework, developed by our governing body MACS.

Whole-school curriculum plan and time allocation

The following provides an outline of the learning areas and recommended weekly time allocation across F–6. Multiple learning areas are often part of a unit and not always taught as separate subject areas. This is ensured through time allocations which are in line with recommendations of the educational authorities.

Learning Areas	Recommended Time Allocated
English • Reading & Viewing • Speaking & Listening • Grammar & Spelling • Writing	2 hours daily (total time should not be less than 10 hours weekly on average over the course of a school year and may vary across year levels) 75 minutes per week (15 minutes daily)
Mathematics • Number & Algebra • Measurement • Geometry • Statistics & Probability	1 hour daily (total time should not be less than 5 hours weekly on average over the course of a school year)
Religious Education	2.5 hours weekly
Health & Physical Education	1.5 hours weekly
Arts	2 hour weekly
Humanities • Civics & Citizenship • Economics • Geography • History **Science** • Science as a Human Endeavour • Earth Science • Biological Science • Chemical Science • Physical Science **Technology** • Design & Technology • Digital Technologies	4 hours weekly (including 1 dedicated sustainability hour). The learning areas of Science, Humanities, Health and Technology will be taught ensuring an average of 3 hours weekly over the course of a school year. This is through the focus of the Integrated unit of work using an inquiry approach developed using the St Mary's School Inquiry Framework. A semester Conceptual Framework is embedded across curriculum areas to support whole school dialogue.

Learning Areas	Recommended Time Allocated
TOTAL	**25 hours weekly**

Capabilities

The Victorian Curriculum includes both knowledge and skills. It is expected that the skills and knowledge defined in the capabilities will be developed, practised, deployed and demonstrated by students in and through their learning across the curriculum:

- Critical & Creative Thinking
- Ethical
- Intercultural
- Personal & Social.

The skills and knowledge defined in the capabilities will be developed in student learning across the curriculum areas where it is relevant and authentic to do so.

Curriculum organisation and implementation

The school's planning for curriculum draws on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) curriculum planning site for age-appropriate content, sequential learning patterns, and interrelated aspects of the content and skills and of the desired learning capabilities. Refer to the Pedagogical Framework.

All content is developed using the following documents:

- St Mary's School policies for each of the learning areas
- St Mary's School Religious Education Scope and Sequence: Religious Education Curriculum Framework
- Victorian Curriculum F–10
- Statement of Philosophy.

A variety of other resources, including online resources, will be available to support planning.

Evaluation

This Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the staff, in accordance with the School Improvement Plan or as required.

School policies/references

St Mary's School Curriculum Plan

St Mary's School Homework Policy