



SACRED HEART PRIMARY SCHOOL, Tatura CATHOLIC IDENTITY POLICY

Revised April 2016

At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School we believe:

- In celebrating our Catholic faith in a life-giving community of witnesses who serve God and society.
- In building relationships based upon mutual respect, trust and care in an environment of justice, equality, compassion and hope.

Rationale

Catholic Identity is at the heart of all we do in Sacred Heart. It captures our purpose, our values, our aspirations and our commitment. Our school is intentionally, not incidentally Catholic; seeking truth, balancing ideals and realities. Together we explore a contemporary understanding of faith, which energises and inspires a deep understanding of ourselves, of life and of our relationship with God. Sacred Heart School is committed to community and to spirituality; to liturgy, ritual and symbolism. We take Jesus and the Gospel seriously. There is no part of our school life that is not illuminated by our Catholic faith.

The extent to which staff, parents and students are able to develop and integrate these understandings is significantly dependent upon the capacity of the school to provide the best possible learning environment.

Adapted from CoSSI 2012 Chapter 1: Aspiration and Inspiration pg 11.

Commitment to Child Safety

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have the right to feel safe and be safe in all school environments and outside of school hours. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create 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.

Relevant Vision and Mission Statements

At Sacred Heart Primary School we believe:

- In celebrating our Catholic faith in a life-giving community of witnesses who serve God and society.
- in actively ensuring that all children have the right to feel safe and be safe in all school environments and outside of school hours. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create 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. Our commitment to Child Safety is supported by policies, procedure sand practices.

- In building relationships based upon mutual respect, trust and care in an environment of justice, equality, compassion and hope.

At Sacred Heart Primary School we seek to educate students to:

- Be inspired by Christ
- Be safe and live active & healthy lives
- Have a social conscience and respect for life, self, others and the environment.

Because we believe this we will:

- Teach explicitly, foster and model the Gospel values of Jesus Christ including reconciliation, honesty, trustworthiness, service, compassion and peace.
- Ensure Scripture is central to our daily prayer, rituals and Religious Education units.
- Provide opportunities to lead and participate in mission and service activities.
- Use *Source of Life* to provide an enriching and vital R.E curriculum.

Guiding Principles for Catholic Identity

The development of Sacred Heart Primary School’s Catholic Identity Policy has been guided by

- *CoSSI Catholic Identity*
- *Sandhurst Values*

Aims

We actively seek to inspire students, families and staff through the Catholic story so that they live justly and make a difference in the world to bring about the Reign of God. We aim for our school to be: sacramental, life-giving, faithful, just and inclusive. We have a Catholic Identity section in the Strategic School Plan each year. In line with the *Charter of Sandhurst Schools Improvement* document, it is our aim to ensure that Sacred Heart School offers opportunities for students, staff and parents to develop their faith. We will do this in the following ways:

Prayer and Liturgy

- Children explore a range of prayer experiences, appropriate to age and faith development within the context of daily prayer, planned R E activities, liturgical celebrations and other rituals
- Christian Meditation is ‘taught’ and practised daily
- All classrooms and other spaces have a prominent and appropriate Prayer Focus
- All major school meetings and gatherings begin with prayer
- Opportunities for prayer and spirituality are offered to parents
- Staff prayer and discussion take place on a regular basis
- Study of Prayer through *Source of Life* curriculum units
- Class liturgies as part of some R.E Units
- Our school community gathers on a regular basis to celebrate significant liturgical and school events:
 - Whole school Mass at least once a term
 - Celebration of Sacrament of Penance once a term for children who have received the sacrament of Penance.

- Masses / Liturgies / Rituals to mark significant Feast days, liturgical seasons & other celebrations – All Saints, Easter, Pentecost, Advent, Catholic Education Week, National Reconciliation Week, Mercy Day, St Mary of the Cross etc

Social Justice & Outreach

- Issues of Catholic Social Teaching are embraced within curriculum units and classrooms.
- Our Student Leadership provides opportunities to extend student involvement in local and world justice issues, including raising funds for Project Compassion, Caritas, Missions, St Vincent De Paul Society, Help Us Grow etc
- Involvement in Caritas “Just Leaders” Program

Staff Accreditation

- In response to Diocesan requirements; teachers of Religious Education are accredited to teach R E or are working to achieve accreditation.

Christian Education for Personal Development

- These units are covered on a bi-annual basis

Cross Curricular Links

- The Christian message is paramount to all teaching in our school, as such, teaching across all curriculum areas incorporates the Gospel message and provides opportunities to emphasise the Catholic perspective at all times.
- Within the Religious Education and Integrated Curriculum Scope and Sequence classes periodically undertake integrated units which are driven by Religious Education units

Staff Professional Development

- Regular sessions during staff meetings to review Catholic Identity through exploring *Catholic Identity* section of *CoSSI* document.
- Staff meeting prayer time and Catholic Identity agenda items allow for the exploration of faith issues.
- Involve appropriate CEO staff in working with staff for R E planning.
- Staff members are encouraged to take part in available professional development, especially the appropriate level R. E development days.

Leadership & Community Partnerships

- The school appoints a Religious Education Coordinator [REC]. The REC supports the Principal in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Catholic Identity.
- The School Board and Staff work with the Principal and REC to implement the R E Policy and to maintain the profile of our school’s Catholicity.

Parents

- Parents are acknowledged as the first and foremost teachers in Faith.
- The school provides opportunities and endeavours to involve and support families in their Faith Development.
- Invitations to Liturgies and assemblies
- Sacramental Program
- Newsletter items with Catholic Identity focus
- Information regarding Catholic Identity included at Information Gatherings

Parish

- The Religious Education Coordinator [REC] liaises with the Parish Priest, Parish teams and support staff so as to promote links between school and Parish, and will support staff in developing links with the Parish.
- Involve school children in some Sunday Masses
- Members of Parish Teams invited to speak to classes as part of units of work

Sacramental Program

- The REC, and the Middle Unit teachers, are responsible for organising the Sacramental Preparation process and helping families to have the confidence to take their rightful position as first and foremost leaders of their children in faith.
- Support parents to lead their children through the *Steps In Faith* Sacramental Preparation process.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle.

Principal

School Board Chairperson

Signature

Signature

Date:

Date:

This document was ratified by the Sacred Heart School Board on April 26th 2016