



## **OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Learning and Teaching Policy (Inquiry approach)**

#### **Rationale:**

Our Lady Help of Christians promotes consistent best practice in teaching and learning. We have a dedicated staff that demonstrates similar educational philosophies, ensuring that their knowledge, teaching skills and commitment are of the highest standard.

The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure it caters for the diverse needs of different groups of students. Research shows that no two students learn in exactly the same way because people process information differently. Some students learn mainly through experience or hands-on tasks, other students find lessons more meaningful when they are presented in a visual format.

It is with these considerations that Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School employs an Inquiry approach to Learning and Teaching in an integrated curriculum. Our Inquiry Approach is a process of learning that draws on a range of tools and strategies to develop thinking skills, collaboration, independence, engages learners and encourages ownership of learning.

We strategically plan learning experiences to ensure they are child centred, motivating, engaging, multisensory and interdisciplinary. The content and skills incorporated provide a balance between curriculum outcomes, real life contexts, current affairs - global and local, and student interest. Students are encouraged to ask questions and direct their learning - (Authentic Learning)

Our model works on the premise that we need to ascertain what students already know and build an investigative process of learning skills and content from the known to the unknown and the application of new learnings to other situations.

#### **Aims:**

- To provide a safe and happy environment for the students.
- To encourage students to take risks with their learning.
- To provide a range of activities / experiences that are sequentially and developmentally sound.
- To foster independence and a love of lifelong learning.
- To adopt current practice / trends relevant to school as the need arises.
- To recognise that each student has a right to learn.
- To provide inclusive policies and programs.

#### **Implementation:**

As we are preparing learners for their future we are mindful of the skills needed to function in a digital world and integrate technological skills throughout our process for research, communication, design, creative production and presentation.

Teaching strategies incorporate a variety of directed and guided instruction, whole class, group and independent tasks requiring cooperation and collaboration. Grouping structures are established to suit the needs and interests of the students, and therefore incorporate a balance of abilities and interests.

Open ended design briefs allow for students to think creatively to solve problems, apply new knowledge and skills, and take control of the research, communication, presentation and application of their learning. Our selection of Inquiry Units are derived from the concept mapping of learning foci at the various levels of the Victorian Curriculum document.



Detailed planning is documented in line with the stages in our Inquiry process and incorporates guided questions, tools and strategies and assessment pertaining to the understandings and outcomes established in the preplanning stage.

*Effective Teaching best takes place when it...*

- Includes clear goals, where guidelines are met.
- Provides on-going Professional Development.
- Encourages teacher reflection on teaching and performance.
- Builds a positive relationship between student and teacher.
- Gives students a clear understanding of expectations.
- Encourages effective communication with parents / students.
- Models and facilitates learning experiences.
- Promotes working as a team member – collaboratively.
- Shares expertise (staff and parents) and support of each other in the working environment.
- Adapts a variety of teaching methods, strategies and styles e.g. Growth Mindset
- Provides opportunities to work independently, collaboratively and in flexible groups.
- Accesses well-organised and up to date resources.
- Provides opportunities for the students to demonstrate and display acquired knowledge and skills to a range of audiences.

*Effective Learning best takes place when it...*

- Encourages openness and willingness to learn.
- Builds on students' strengths and promotes risk taking.
- Promotes a safe, happy environment.
- Reviews and assesses work and learning (by student and teacher).
- Offers positive feedback and constructive criticism.
- Caters to individual needs, providing a range of experiences and resources.
- Provides opportunity to reflect on what students have learnt e.g. peer tutoring, reciprocal teaching.
- Encourages student success.
- Develops a positive relationship between teacher and student and each other.
- Motivates students to take initiative for their learning. For example, asking for help when required.
- Promotes positive, assertive and responsible decision-making.
- Adapts to change.

This policy is based on the following six design principals agreed upon by our whole staff:

1. We are committed to planning a curriculum which has entitlement for all and promotes high expectations for every student.
2. We ensure that planning evolves in response to students' needs and interests.
3. We are committed to ensuring learning for our students is a continuum and promotes lifelong learning.
4. We are committed to our faith community, fostering an environment where all teachers and students reach their potential and beyond
5. We are passionate about creating authentic links to the local and global community, including our Indigenous Community and Asian neighbours.
6. We are passionate about working collegially and collaboratively to provide the best experiences for our students.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be revisited every even year (e.g. 2018, 2020), reviewed as part of the school's review cycle or as changes are made to the Victorian curriculum.

This policy was last reviewed and ratified by School Staff Term 1, 2019