**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CARE POLICY**

Vision Statement

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a Christ-centred community, within the Bunbury Parish, which aspires to educate and develop the whole child in a caring, Catholic environment, recognising and respecting the uniqueness, dignity and the rights of others.

1 Rationale

Each child is a precious and sacred gift from God created as an individual with their own unique talents and abilities. Catholic education seeks to create environments that nurture this individuality while enhancing learning and empowering young people to live the Catholic faith in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Childhood as "a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world" and recognise that quality service provision in the early years provides an opportunity to foster the development of the whole child (Early Childhood Australia, 2009).

Catholic education celebrates parents as children's first and most influential educators and recognises that strong, collaborative partnerships between parents and educators are essential. Educators and educational leaders work collaboratively with parents to foster children's spiritual, physical, cognitive, social and emotional learning and growth. "Catholic schools assist parents who wish to develop their children as Christian men and women. Also they support parishes with their responsibility of supporting parents as the first educators of their child" (Mandate, para 6).

2 Definitions

Early Childhood Education and Care in the Western Australian Catholic education system refers to all education and care services provided to children from birth to 8 years of age as well as outside school hours care.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all Catholic schools and early learning and care centres in Western Australia.

4 Principles

4.1 Leaders and educators in Catholic education recognise parents as children's first and most influential educators. They develop collaborative partnerships with families based on understanding one another's expectations, attitudes and strengths.

4.2 Each child has individual needs and potential that shall be recognised, valued and responded to within a safe, caring and positive Catholic learning environment that fosters a sense of community.

4.3 Early Childhood Education and Care promotes learning as a lifelong process

4.4 The learning environment, curriculum and pedagogy offered shall be inclusive of all children and be developmentally and culturally appropriate.

4.5 Early Childhood Education and Care shall be aligned to current research on Early Childhood Education and Care - 2017 Page 2 of 3 development, learning and teaching as it applies to children from Birth - 8 years old.

4.6 Early Childhood Education and Care in Catholic schools shall recognise the influence of relevant system, state and national documents.

4.7 All children enrolled in Early Childhood Education and Care in Catholic schools shall be the responsibility of the principal, centre manager and other designated staff.

4.8 The early childhood programs in Catholic education involve learning that is a balance of intentional teaching and play based learning, that provide children with opportunities to explore, discover, imagine and engage in purposeful and meaningful experiences.

5 Procedures

5.1 Procedures for enrolment shall be in accord with the CECWA Student Enrolment policy and Government policy.

5.2 Early Childhood Education and Care programs shall be appropriately staffed according to the:
• CECWA Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools policy, and
• Current early learning and care legislation relevant for Western Australia.

5.3 All educators, educating and caring for children from birth to preprimary age, shall hold an early childhood qualification in accordance with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) approved list. It is highly desirable for teachers of Years 1-3 to hold an Early Childhood Education qualification.

5.4 All educators in the early years and principals of primary and composite Catholic schools shall implement evidence based early childhood pedagogy and be engaged in appropriate ongoing professional development.

5.5 Early Childhood Care and Education services, in conjunction with Catholic Education Western Australia, shall develop and periodically review written policies and procedures as outlined in current legislation relevant for Western Australia.

School

5.6 Period of operation:
5.6.1 Catholic schools providing a 3-year-old program shall offer sessions based on local need.
5.6.2 Catholic schools shall provide Kindergarten children with a minimum of fifteen hours per week from commencement of the school year.
5.6.3 Catholic schools shall provide Pre-Primary children with five full day sessions from the commencement of the school year.

Licensed Services
5.7 Period of operation:
5.7.1 Catholic schools and early learning and care services providing Long Day Care shall operate a minimum of eight hours per day for forty-eight weeks per year.
5.7.2 Catholic schools providing before and after school care shall operate that service on each school day. Early Childhood Education and Care - 2017 Page 3 of 3
5.7.3 Catholic schools providing vacation care shall operate that service for at least eight continuous hours on each normal working day for at least seven weeks of school holidays in a year.

6 References

Bishops of Western Australia 2009, Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015 Department of Education:
 • Child Care Services Handbook, 2012-2013
 • National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, 2012
 • Early Years Learning Framework, 2009 Education and Care Services National Law Act
   2012 (Cth) Early Childhood Australia, Early Years Positional Statement, 2009

7 Related Documents

CECWA Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools policy CECWA Student Enrolment policy CECWA Student Enrolment policy