

St Joseph's Catholic PS, Mernda 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

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, the curriculum is planned carefully to make sure it caters for the diverse needs of different groups of students. Although some groups of students share particular learning characteristics, St Joseph's recognises that students are individuals- each with their own distinctive 'learning style'. Research shows that no two students learn in exactly the same way because people process information differently. Whereas 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 St Joseph's Primary School employs an Inquiry approach to Learning and Teaching in an integrated curriculum. Our Inquiry Approach embraces the philosophy of 'lifelong learning' and is a process of learning that draws on a range of tools and strategies to develop thinking skills, collaboration, independence and 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. (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.

As we are preparing learners for their future, we are mindful of the skills needed to function in an online 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 between ability and heterogeneous grouping.

Student engagement and ownership are essential to our model. Students are involved in the planning and direction of our inquiries, in building criteria and rubrics for shared ownership of their assessment in skills and content. They are informed of base curriculum outcomes or understandings so that they are involved in their own goal setting and achievement.

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 learning focus at the various levels of the Victorian Curriculum. Year levels address all content-based Domains over the duration of a year with host Domain Inquiry Units.

These units are developed with links to skills and content in other relevant Domains to provide a thorough interdisciplinary learning and teaching investigation. We use a curriculum map to brainstorm these links as a part of our pre planning for an Integrated inquiry.

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 pre-planning stage.

At St Joseph's we believe our curriculum develops lifelong learning and that our students learn through engagement in complex experiences in which they make relevant, purposeful connections. We believe that in order to live and work together effectively we need to be able to listen to one another, to work together to identify and solve complex problems and to acknowledge diverse points of view.

St Joseph's has high expectations for all its students, as we believe they are all autonomous, curious and powerful learners with a desire to make meaning of all the experiences they encounter through our diverse and engaging curriculum.

Vision

St Joseph's Primary School values a Catholic environment of educational excellence that ignites the imagination, develops good citizenship and creates a lifelong search for knowledge. Inquire, Ignite, Inspire in God's Presence.

Mission

St. Joseph's is a place that is committed to building the necessary knowledge and competencies for students to thrive and succeed in learning and life.

We have a supportive and active community who fully involve themselves in our school life. Our staff are open and committed to do whatever it takes to ensure that each learner is stretched and experiences success in their learning.

Purpose

St Joseph's Catholic PS, Mernda is dedicated to providing excellence in education. This is enacted through the provision of differentiated learning opportunities to engage learners at their zone of proximal development, that align to the achievement standards informed by the Victorian Curriculum. Our teachers are highly effective in their roles, committed to lifelong learning, implementing and evaluating their practise against Evidence Based pedagogy and collaborating with their colleagues. We provide an inclusive learning environment that promotes the development of our learning dispositions, critical thinking skills and the use of digital technology. There are various opportunities for the Parish community and families to engage with our school in learning and community events.

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 Joseph's Catholic PS, Mernda 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 Joseph's Catholic PS, Mernda:

- Honour the sacred dignity of each person – believing that everyone can experience success and be supported to see their lives as being shaped by the God who is work in all of creation
- Search for truth – continuously critiquing, questioning, inquiring, imagining and re-imagining themselves and their world in an ongoing engagement with Catholic beliefs and practises
- Embrace difference and diversity – as the context for dialogue, engagement and a deeper understanding of self, others and God
- Build a culture of learning together through collaboration – partnerships and life-giving relationships which enable all to flourish
- Engage with the deep questions of life – constantly opening up spaces of meaning which engage Catholic faith with what matters most in the minds and hearts of the students
- Honour equitable access and opportunity for all – with a particular commitment to those most in need
- Commit to achieving the highest standards possible based on reflective practise, using data, research and evidence to ensure progress and growth in learning
- Make a difference in the world – inspired by the Gospel and led by the Holy Spirit to grow in virtue and act for justice and the common good

Scope

Our school curriculum defines what it is that all students have the opportunity to learn as a result of their schooling at St Joseph's Catholic PS, Mernda.

At St Joseph's Catholic PS, Mernda, 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 Joseph's Catholic PS, Mernda will implement the curriculum through the following:

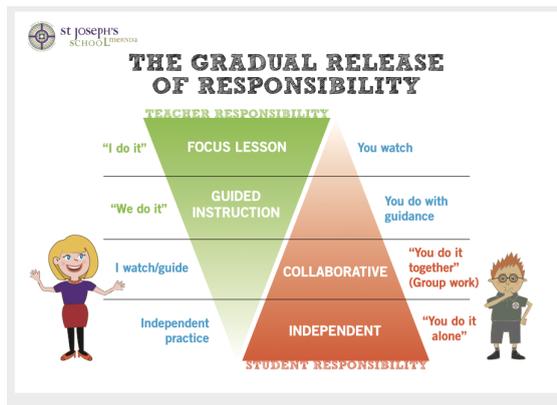
All planning documents are created and accessible to all staff on Google Drive. The Year Overviews, Term Planners, Weekly Planners and individual Lesson Plans take into account the Victorian Curriculum, student learning needs and interests and evidence from student learning data.

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.

Teachers are guided through critical questions through a Learning and Teaching cycle, continually noting the impact on student learning:

- Develop and Plan - How do we plan for learning progression? - What will have the greatest impact on student learning? - How will we structure the learning? - What learning experiences will be designed?
- Instruct and Engage - Have the teaching strategies been effective? - What strategies need to change/continue?
- Assess - What evidence of learning progress have students demonstrated? - What does student feedback tell us?
- Use of Student Data - Where are students on the continuum of learning? - What data is available? - What does the evidence tell us?
- Identify Learning Goals - What are the expectations and learning aspirations for each student? - What are the learning goals for each student and how will we measure impact?

At St Joseph’s we implement The Gradual Release of Responsibility model which is enacted throughout our Learning and Teaching. This model is a teaching strategy characterized by a sequence of learning activities that shift the responsibility from the teacher to the student. The goal of this approach is autonomy and efficacy on the part of the student, therefore allowing opportunities to increase the abilities to transfer understanding on their own.



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 Joseph’s Catholic PS, Mernda will develop strong processes for monitoring student progress and the application of appropriate explicit teaching and intervention strategies.

St Joseph’s Catholic PS, Mernda 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 Joseph’s Catholic PS, Mernda 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	2.5 hours weekly
Arts	1 hour weekly
Humanities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics & Citizenship • Economics • Geography • History Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science as a Human Endeavour • Earth Science • Biological Science • Chemical Science 	2 hours and 15 minutes weekly The learning areas of Humanities, Science, Health & Physical Education, 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 under the St Joseph’s Catholic PS, Mernda Conceptual Framework.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical Science Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design & Technology ● Digital Technologies 	
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 Joseph’s Catholic PS, Mernda policies for each of the learning areas
- St Joseph’s Catholic PS, Mernda 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