



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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| Topic: | Religious Education |
| Policy No: | 2-B5 |
| Policy Area: | Education |
| Standing Committee: | Religious Education Curriculum Committee |
| Originally Released: | 2004 |
| Date for Review: | 2018 |

1. Rationale

'Religious Education is the first learning area in the Catholic school curriculum. This is so because, though a classroom activity, Religious Education is a form of the Ministry of the Word. Unlike the other Learning Areas, it is an activity of Evangelisation in its own right' (Mandate, 62).

The Bishop is responsible for handing on the faith in his diocese and has the right and duty to oversee the Religious Education program and those appointed to teach it. (CCC 803-806). 'The Religious Education program to be taught in the Catholic school is that promulgated by the diocesan Bishop. Like Christian witness and catechesis, Religious Education expresses 'the divine power of the Message' (Mandate, para 62). The Religious Education program aims to help students learn the teachings of the Gospel as proclaimed by the Catholic Church and to develop a sense of the nature of Christianity and of how Christians are trying to live their lives. It seeks to show non-Christians something of the mystery of Christ.

2. Definitions

Religious Education is a learning area which focuses on the knowledge and understanding of the Gospel as it is handed on by the Catholic Church.

Catechesis provides experiences which deepen faith; it is the lifelong apprenticeship in Christian formation. "The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ" (GDC 80).

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia.

4. Principles

- 4.1 Religious Education complements Catechesis offered in family, school and parish.
- 4.2 The Religious Education program to be taught in Catholic schools is that promulgated by the diocesan Bishop.
- 4.3 Religious Education in the school shall always respect parents as the prime educators of their children, particularly in the area of faith education.

- 4.4 The Religious Education curriculum shall be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as all other learning areas.
- 4.5 Religious Education shall serve the evangelisation process by taking the students and their needs as the starting point for teaching and learning.
- 4.6 Religious Education shall relate the knowledge and understandings of the Catholic faith to students' real life situations and experiences.
- 4.7 Religious Education shall always present Catholic beliefs and practices in the context of the Christian Promise of Salvation and the questions and aspirations of the human heart that God alone can satisfy completely.
- 4.8 Teachers of Religious Education shall be committed Catholics and shall give active Christian witness to Catholic beliefs.

5. Procedures

- 5.1 Religious Education complements Catechesis offered in family, school and parish.
- 5.2 Within the normal hours of instruction the time allocation for teaching Religious Education Learning Area shall be:
 - In three year and four year old programs, teachers are required to plan and provide quality programs, environments and pedagogical practices to raise the religious awareness of children.

| Primary schools (Minimum Time) | | Secondary schools (Minimum Time) | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| PP – 1 | 15 Minutes per day | Years 7 - 10 | 160 minutes per week |
| Years 2 – 6 | 30 Minutes per day | Years 11 - 12 | 220 minutes per week |

Liturgies and other activities of catechesis including Christian service are essential for the effective evangelisation of students but are separate from the Religious Education program and are not part of the time allocation. There needs to be at least 60 minutes per week of such experiences averaged over the particular year level's academic year.

- 5.3 The Religious Education program, as promulgated by the diocesan Bishop, shall be implemented with reference to the principles and procedures of the CECWA Policy statement 2-B2 'Curriculum'.
- 5.4 Teachers of Religious Education shall have the necessary accreditation stipulated by the CECWA Policy statements 2-C1 'Accreditation'.
- 5.5 Schools shall keep parents/guardians informed on an ongoing basis as to the content of their child's Religious Education program.
- 5.6 Schools shall work closely with parents/guardians and parishes to support the sacramental programs of the parish.
- 5.7 Appropriate professional development shall be available for teachers of Religious Education.
- 5.8 Appropriate resources shall be made available for the Religious Education Learning Area.

6. References

Bishops of Western Australia 2009, *Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015*

National Catholic Education Commission, *Australian Religious Education: Facing the Challenges*, 1999

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 1977

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1988

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997, 2nd edn Doubleday, New York

Congregation for the Clergy, *The General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997

Pope John Paul II, *On Evangelisation in the Modern World*, 1975

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 1997

Code of Canon Law, 1983

7. Related Documents

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia policy statement 2-B2 Curriculum

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia policy statement 2-C1 Accreditation

8. Review History

| Year of Review: | Reviewed by: | Amendments/Review |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 2004 | RECC | Originally Released |
| 2008 | RECC | Reviewed |
| 2010 | CEOWA | Reformatted |
| 2013 | RECC | Reviewed |

9. Next Review

| Year: | CEOWA Standing Committee Responsible |
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| 2018 | Religious Education and Curriculum Committee |