



CHRISTIAN STUDIES

POLICY

Approval to
Publish

This policy is approved for publication by the Concordia Lutheran College Council having considered relevant legislation dates and/or implementation requirement of users.

EFFECTIVE
26 July 2016

Next Scheduled
Review Date

All procedures have an automatic review date as specified. Review dates cannot be greater than 2 years following implementation date

REVIEW
2 Years

Access and
Availability

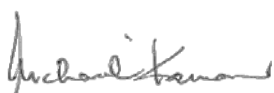
All sections of procedure will be visible on the Concordia Lutheran College intranet and published in staff handbook.

Availability for public access?

Yes

Yes

RECOMMENDATION



Head of College

26 / 07 / 2016

APPROVAL



Chairman of College Council

26 / 07 / 2016

Lutheran Education Ethos

Lutheran schools aim to encourage and support students, informed and sustained by the Word of God, to develop their God-given talents so that they may shape and enrich their world. As central to its mission and ministry, Concordia Lutheran College seeks to nurture individuals who are aware of their humanity, open to the influence of the Holy Spirit and growing in and living according to a cohesive world view.

In LEA's document, *A Vision for Learners and Learning – A framework for Lutheran schools* (2013), our ethos is clearly articulated. Learning and knowledge are acknowledged as "God's gifts" (p. 2). We work to provide a holistic education that recognises that "Learning goes beyond the academic: it includes the spiritual, physical, emotional and social and has a transforming role" (p. 2). Therefore central to Lutheran schooling is the key learning area, Christian Studies that provides a comprehensive, learner-centred P – 12 curriculum that is developed through an inquiry approach.

Purpose

Concordia Lutheran College is implementing this document to align with the BLEA policy that requires timetabled opportunities of at least 90 minutes per week for Christian Studies lessons P – 12. In Years 11 and 12, Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority registered subjects such as Studies of Religion/ Religion and Ethics may be undertaken.

Scope

This policy applies to staff teaching Christian Studies and all students.

Background

Context

"Christian Studies is an essential and distinctive part of the overarching Christian education program, which is the total life of the school and expressed through the culture of the school, all teaching and learning activities, the worship program, pastoral care for students and staff, behaviour management policies and practices, voluntary Christian groups and activities that address the personal spirituality of staff and students" (p. 108 CSCF).

Christian Studies operates within the same parameters as other KLAs with appropriate timetabling, budget, staffing and resourcing. As for other KLAs it must be taught by teachers

Christian Studies Policy

who are trained in this broad field and who have a personal commitment to it as a learning area. Likewise, it is assessed and reported on in ways that give it a similar status to other curriculum areas. The students who participate in Christian Studies have different faith and spiritual backgrounds ranging from an active Christian life, to students who have had little or no prior experience of Christianity or religion, to students who are active in non-Christian religions to those who are atheists or agnostics. This diversity has implications for the construction of programs and what can and cannot be taken for granted in levels of biblical literacy, motivation or interest. Faith responses or commitment to Christ cannot be a general expectation in the formal curriculum, though there will be areas of the broader framework of Christian education where these can be actively nurtured and expressed (p. 108 CSCF - BLEA *Christian studies in the Lutheran school*).

Rationale

Christian Studies provides a safe and supportive context in which students can reflect on their experiences of the world and on their own beliefs and spirituality as they attempt to make sense of their rapidly changing and complex global environment, and as they develop their identity as individuals. They do this on the basis of their study of Christianity and their increasing awareness of how the Christian faith relates to all aspects of existence.

Christian Studies initiates students into biblical literacy and the teachings, culture and history of the church in general and the Lutheran Church in particular. It also relates the Christian response to insights, teachings, practices, and challenges of other major world religions. Students are also encouraged to appreciate the Christian response to social justice, ethical issues, stewardship of the world, and the servant role of the Christian church within society. For those students who have responded to the working of the Holy Spirit, Christian Studies also provides the opportunity for them to grow in their Christian faith and in the expression of that faith in their lives.

The Christian Studies Classroom

As for learning environments in other areas of the curriculum, Christian Studies is based on current learning theories and their associated strategies for delivering quality learning programs. Taking into account the diversity of learners in a typical class, Christian Studies teachers use flexible teaching methods. In broad terms, they foster a supportive, inclusive and safe learning climate in the classroom. The strategies used reflect a respect for the diversity of students' knowledge and faith backgrounds, and are inclusive of different learning styles and mindsets.

In the Christian Studies classroom learners are engaged in intellectually challenging experiences that actively involve them in constructing their own meanings. Students pose their own questions, gather, analyse and reflect on information and use it in meaningful ways. Teachers are aware of the balance to be struck between core understandings in the Christian faith and how learners construct their own meanings related to those central concepts.

The Christian Studies Teacher

The Christian Studies teacher:

- has a personal commitment to Christ and a mature faith
- creates and fosters an atmosphere of respect, care and openness where students have freedom to explore Christianity, their own questions, faith and personal response
- accepts that students and teachers in Christian Studies are critical inquirers
- has a sound understanding of the subject and the required theological qualifications as specified by the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA)
- witnesses to the Christian faith in appropriate ways that do not pressure or manipulate students' own beliefs or faith
- builds on students' prior knowledge and understanding
- actively engages students in sharing, discussing, researching, collating, analysing, critically reflecting and using their learning in meaningful ways
- provides opportunities for students to think and reflect on important contemporary spiritual, moral and ethical issues
- makes explicit the relevance and purpose of what students are learning
- uses a range of stimulating print and multi-media resources
- provides learning experiences that cater for a range of learning styles and for students to work both collaboratively and individually
- prays for the spiritual growth and development of each student

At Concordia Lutheran College

When implementing the Christian Studies Key Learning Area, Concordia Lutheran College:

- allocates at least 90 minutes per week for Christian Studies on the timetable (excluding worship and Pastoral Care time) (p. 101 CSCF)
- uses the LEA publication *Christian Studies Curriculum Framework* as the basis for all planning, assessing and reporting of Christian Studies (p. 11 – 14 CSCF)
- provides, training and up-skilling for all teachers of Christian Studies that builds teachers theological and pedagogical understanding (p. 109 CSCF)
- collaboratively develops and reviews school-based Christian Studies work programs as part of an auditing cycle of school curriculum documents (p. 109 CSCF)
- provides resources to support the implementation of Christian Studies (p. 109 CSCF)
- identifies and supports Christian Studies Key Teachers/Leaders as part of the College's leadership structure (p. 109 CSCF)