

# TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

*'All education is an education of the heart'* – St John Bosco

## **Dominic College Teaching and Learning Philosophy**

Teaching and Learning at Dominic College is based on St John Bosco's Preventive System that, re-interpreted today, calls for an environment that encourages expression by students, and requires a pedagogy that facilitates and enables a rich diversity of forms of student expression.

Learning at Dominic College centres on 'expressive' methods that support student engagement through:

- ❖ Collaborative teamwork
- ❖ Problem-solving
- ❖ Communicating
- ❖ Making connections
- ❖ Creating and
- ❖ Expressing themselves in a variety of ways.

The College's Teaching and Learning philosophy is founded in the Catholic Church's vision of human formation and the transmission of Christian values for living, as a Catholic school's central activity. The College's Teaching and Learning philosophy is also continually shaped by contemporary research on best practice in effective pedagogy and national and state educational platforms that serve to achieve improved outcomes for all students.

St John Bosco's Preventive System involves the ability of teachers to understand young people, to enter into relationship with them, to dialogue and communicate with them. This mutual understanding and acceptance promotes an atmosphere of confidence and communication, which teachers cultivate by being actively present among the students in and beyond the classroom.

Presence by teachers at Dominic College involves teachers loving what students love so that our students can learn to love what their teachers love. Teachers at Dominic College engage and interact with their students, encouraging, challenging and guiding them. Teachers acknowledge and affirm the efforts of all students. It is through teachers' everyday encounters with young people, and in sharing their lives and their selves that teachers communicate the presence of God's life - giving love to the young people.

By entering into the world of their students, understanding their values and appreciating them, our teachers lead students to a greater and more mature appreciation of human and Christian values. Developing strong and positive relationships between students, staff, families, communities and the environment is therefore the basis of our teaching and learning. It is a shared responsibility across the community.

As a school in the tradition of St John Bosco, and within the Australian Charter of Salesian Schools, teaching and learning at Dominic College aims to prepare students for life by:

- ❖ Encouraging a passion for life-long learning and a quest for excellence

- ❖ Developing a sense of meaning and purpose, which expresses itself in a spirit of service and self-giving
- ❖ Proclaiming the challenge of community building, commitment to others and responsible decision-making
- ❖ Cultivating resilience, resourcefulness and adaptability as important skills for life.

## Pedagogy at Dominic College

Learning at Dominic College challenges students to reflect on their world, and in particular, their participation in and contribution to their world in the light of Christ's message. Christian values and the Salesian ethos are imparted through learning, to empower students to be moral, ethical and socially responsible citizens.

The construction of teaching and learning therefore aims to be transformative, educating the hearts and minds of students, and preparing them to be responsible and active citizens in the rapidly changing world in which they live.

A supporting pedagogical framework at Dominic College is built on the relational nature of learning, is designed to hold relevance to students and recognises them as young citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital age.

At Dominic College we believe that student learning is optimised when their physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs are met. Furthermore we believe that students learn best when:

- ❖ They are consistently **in attendance**.
- ❖ They are 'known' by their teachers and experience **positive relationships** in and out of the classroom.
- ❖ **High expectations** are embedded in teaching and learning.
- ❖ They have a **clear understanding of purpose**, process and are provided with explicit criteria about the quality of the work expected.
- ❖ They **believe in their own capacities** to learn successfully and understand the relationship between effort and success.
- ❖ Their learning **inspires** imagination, passion, creativity and innovation.
- ❖ Quality **assessment and a variety of data** are used to inform, direct and target effective planning for and teaching of students.
- ❖ Activities are planned and structured with flexibility for **differentiation** to meet the needs of all students.
- ❖ They receive **explicit instructions and demonstrations** from teachers and their understandings are questioned, regularly repeated and checked.
- ❖ They are engaged and challenged within a **safe and supportive learning environment** where they are encouraged to make meaningful contributions to the College and wider community.
- ❖ **Positive behaviours** that support optimal learning are explicitly taught, clearly expected and affirmed in all learning contexts.
- ❖ Their learning is **authentic**, has purpose and meaning which is relevant and transferable to everyday life.
- ❖ They receive quality **feedback**, and have opportunities for reflection on how to use their feedback for improvement.
- ❖ They identify and build upon **their strengths** and set challenging **goals** for themselves.
- ❖ A wide range of information and communication **technologies** are integrated into the teaching and learning.

## **Curriculum at Dominic College**

The Curriculum at Dominic College serves the purpose and objectives of Catholic education which aims to stimulate the understanding of children and young people to make meaning of their life experiences and their truths within a synthesis between culture and faith.

The program of learning experiences and study for students at Dominic College is shaped by the goals set out in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008) that all young people in Australia should be supported to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

Dominic College's curriculum is based on the Australian Curriculum. The three cross-curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and Sustainability are embedded in all learning areas. The Curriculum is designed to equip students with the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values to take advantage of opportunity and face present and future challenges.

Dominic College maintains a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that is documented and standardised across Kindergarten – Year 10 which makes clear what and when teachers should teach and what and when students should learn.

The College Curriculum emphasises meeting the diverse needs of students in ways that enhance their sense of personal worth and challenges all students to realise their full potential. Learning experiences are constructed so that there is equity and accessibility for all students, including those with particular needs.

### **Dominic College General Capabilities**

Dominic College's General Capabilities of students are based on the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. They encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that we strive for students to have attained by the completion of their schooling at the College. These eight capabilities are the focus of educational endeavor at Dominic College to enable students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century and to make a difference with their lives and the community in which they live.

#### **❖ Catholic Literacy and Spiritual Awareness**

A graduate of Dominic College has developed an understanding of Christian discipleship, spiritual awareness and a knowledge of the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. They are honest citizens and good Christians in the tradition of St John Bosco and they understand and respect the dignity of each and every human person.

#### **❖ Literacy**

A graduate of Dominic College can listen, read, view, speak, write and create multi-modal texts, for different purposes in a range of contexts. They can use language confidently in life.

#### **❖ Numeracy**

A graduate of Dominic College has the knowledge and skills to use numeracy in a wide range of situations. They can recognise the interconnected nature and role of numeracy in the modern world.

❖ **Information Communication Technology**

A graduate of Dominic College can use Information Communication Technology to access, create, analyse and communicate information. They can also adapt to the needs of a rapidly-changing digital world

❖ **Critical and creative thinking**

A graduate of Dominic College can apply the critical and creative elements of inquiry, reflection, imagination and analysis to a broad range of personal and public contexts.

❖ **Personal and social capability**

A graduate of Dominic College is confident in their sense of self and capable of engaging in positive relationships. They are passionate, have a clear sense of purpose and strive for accomplishment.

❖ **Ethical understanding**

A graduate of Dominic College can act ethically by utilising reasoning in decision making, and understanding and respecting rights and responsibilities in conjunction with Catholic values and teachings.

❖ **Intercultural understanding**

A graduate of Dominic College can engage with diverse cultures creating connections with others and cultivating mutual respect. They are responsible local and global citizens, in the intercultural world.

## **Our Challenges at Dominic College**

As we continue to develop as an integrated Kindergarten – Year 10 learning community, Dominic College will be striving to:

- ❖ Frame student learning around students aspiring to be the best they can be and raising student aspirations to achieve.
- ❖ Connect new knowledge and skills that our students encounter to their past learning and assist students to see the continuity in their learning over time.
- ❖ Promote deep learning by our students by emphasising underlying principles, concepts and big ideas that are developed over time.
- ❖ Evaluate the effectiveness of our teaching and use these evaluations to make adjustments to our teaching practices.

## **References**

*Australian Catholic Schools- Why We Have Them? What They Aim To Achieve?* National Catholic Education Commission

*General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum*, Australian Curriculum and Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2013

*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*: Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs, 2008

*Reason, Religion and Kindness: The Educational Method of Saint John Bosco*, Paul Avallone, 1979

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*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998

*The Australian Charter of Salesian Schools*, formulated at the Salesian Leaders Conference, Melbourne, Australia, 2003

*The National School Improvement Tool*, State of Queensland (Department of Education, Training and Employment) and the Australian Council for Educational Research, 2012