Learning and Teaching Policy and Practice

Context:
‘We live in a world of fast and constant change, marked by rapid developments in science and technology, and where human activity and intervention are affecting our environment. Our society is characterised by global interdependency and population diversity and mobility, and we increasingly are confronted by complex social and environmental issues we cannot avoid. As communities become increasingly multicultural and multi-religious a greater understanding of, and respect for diverse ways of living is required. The rate of technological and social change requires new ways of learning that equip students to be lifelong learners and persons better adapted to the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Increasingly, value is placed on the ability to innovate and create new knowledge.’

(Learning Centred Schools a Sacred Landscape
A Learning and Teaching framework for the Archdiocese of Melbourne.
Contemporary Learning for the 21st century)

Mother of God is a learning centred school- we are focused on learning and learners. In our school community we promote the development of learning habits and dispositions that enable all to participate fully in life in the 21st century. One of our core values, inspired by our Brigidine tradition, is to foster a love of learning, hope and sense of purpose. Our school community has developed a set of aspirations to work towards a quality learning partnership for the young people at our school.

Mother of God School is a culturally and linguistically diverse community. Being mindful of the children and their families and what they bring as ‘funds of knowledge’ to school is highly valued and an essential starting point in planning for Teaching and Learning. Learning in the 21st century needs educators to focus on the students’ future, not their past.

Values and Beliefs

At Mother of God School we believe:

- Learning is for life not just for school.
- Becoming an effective life-long learner is learnable.
- All children can learn with adequate support.
- Students bring to school family, cultural and linguistic assets or a ‘virtual school bag’ that we use to build educational success.
- In personalising learning to enable all students to experience success.
- Strong partnerships between school and home enable student learning to be enhanced. We work constantly to strengthen this important part of our work.
- Strong warm and caring relationships between people enable effective learning.
Principles and Practices:

**Partnerships with families are essential for effective learning.**
We will:

- Include parent knowledge of how children learn best as the basis of our home school partnership.
- Include families and children as consultants in the learning process.
- Ensure we know students and their families well.
- Encourage families to be involved in their children’s learning and the life of the school.
- Promote democracy, dignity, diversity and dialogue.

**The learning environment is supportive, encouraging and promotes risk – taking.**
We will:

- Build a sense of belonging and connectedness between all in the learning community.
- Develop relationships built on cooperation, mutual respect and trust.
- Develop an understanding of our students learning profile including their learning style or preferences – eg visual, kinaesthetic, auditory; multiple intelligences.
- Provide prompts, visuals and manipulatives to support learning.
- Ensure every child experiences success everyday.
- Ensure children understand that we all learn at different rates.

**The learning environment promotes independence and self – motivation.**
We will:

- Assist students to develop strategies and become more self – directed and self – managing.
- Give students opportunities to practise new skills with support.
- Gradually release responsibility for learning to students.
- Support the development of learning habits and dispositions for lifelong learning.
- Assist all children to understand how they learn best, acknowledging the academic, creative and reflective nature in us all.
- Assist students to manage themselves, their time and their resources,
- Ensure students interests and prior knowledge are tapped into as contexts for learning.
- Integrate the use contemporary tools including ICT.
- Ensure children are given voice and choice in their learning.
- Differentiate learning to cater for student needs, interests and learning styles and preferences.
- Pitch learning within their zone of proximal development with a balance between appropriate challenge and support.
- Make learning fun, interesting, game and play based.
- Scaffold learning of new and more complex things.
- Provide opportunities to revisit and practice.
Learning is real, relevant and purposeful.

We will:
- Have high expectations and provide support for students to achieve goals.
- Ensure children know the learning focus and have a clear purpose for learning.
- Include real and relevant reasons for communicating.
- Connect learning to life beyond school.

Learning is active and inquiry based.

We will:
- Encourage students to be active, curious and creative.
- Support the development of reflection and metacognition.
- Support and encourage the use of tools and organisers to make thinking visible.
- Provide opportunities for demonstration of deep understanding.
- Enable transfer by applying knowledge and skills in new contexts.

Assessment is integral to and informs Learning and Teaching.

We will:
- Ensure Identification of needs is based on observations and formal assessment data.
- Provide specific needs based instruction.
- Provide regular and timely feedback to students with a focus on continuous improvement.
- Celebrate and acknowledge learning milestones.

Learning is made visible.

We will:
- Make Learning intentions and success criteria explicit to the children
- Co-create Success criteria with the children.
- Support students to self-assess against success criteria.
- Assist students to set proximal goals.
- Ensure students receive timely feedback which is growth and improvement focused.