

St. Dominic's School Learning and Teaching Policy



Rationale:

St Dominic's is a welcoming, inclusive, challenging and supportive learning community which focuses on the development of each member as a life-long learner. We believe that all students have the right to a broad, balanced and rigorous education and that students learn best when the learning environment is safe and engaging and students are encouraged to develop deep levels of thinking.

At St Dominic's School it is acknowledged that a high percentage of students are from EAL backgrounds. Meaningful contexts for learning are used to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable all students to actively contribute to the world in which they live.

Belief Statements:

At St Dominic's we believe that the best learning occurs when:

- The learning environment is positive, safe, challenging, supportive and productive.
- Teachers build strong relationships with students, their families and the wider community.
- Teachers have high expectations of all students.
- Students are active, engaged and inspired learners.
- Students are given time and adequate support to learn new concepts and skills
- The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation.
- Students' individual needs, backgrounds, learning styles and interests are reflected in all learning programs.
- Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application.
- Students set learning goals, reflect on their learning and are given relevant and timely feedback about their learning.
- Students experience success.
- Teachers design effective learning programs, based on the Victorian Curriculum and current educational research.
- Consistent terminology is used throughout the school.
- Learning is differentiated through programs based upon the identified needs of the students from data collected through scheduled formal testing, as well as ongoing assessment of, for and as learning,
- A wide variety of resources and hands-on experiences are used to support effective learning.
- Assessment practices are an integral and authentic part of planning, teaching and learning.

- Data acquired from assessment is used to productively inform reporting to students, other teachers and parents, and to drive further teaching and learning experiences.
- Learning builds upon prior knowledge.
- Learning is recognised as being connected across the curriculum and not limited to specific formal curriculum lessons.

Because we believe this we:

- Plan developmental units of work based upon the outcomes contained within the Victorian Curriculum and on relevant student data.
- Plan and teach inquiry units as outlined in our conceptual framework, based on the Victorian Curriculum learning areas of Science, Humanities and Health and Physical Education.
- Plan Discovery Learning experiences that link with and support Prep Inquiry Units.
- Ensure that each Inquiry Unit is planned with consideration to students' prior knowledge and reflects students' interests
- Ensure that Inquiry Units in years 1 to 6 include authentic student lead actions.
- Use a variety of teaching methods and groupings, e.g. whole class, small group, open-ended tasks, foci groups, mixed ability, same needs - to maximise teaching and learning opportunities.
- Provide students with positive, reflective and timely feedback.
- Use various forms of technology as tools to engage learners, collaborate within the school and make links to the wider community.
- Provide time for students to regularly set learning goals and reflect on their learning.
- Provide opportunities for extension or support, based on individual student's needs.
- Provide adequate resources, including visual and concrete learning materials, so that each student can develop their understandings to their own potential.
- Provide students with opportunities to talk about their learning.
- Plan learning experiences that develop specific terminology and literacies.
- Develop teaching and learning experiences that link to other areas of the curriculum.
- Design learning that stimulates creatively, curiosity and questioning, and encourages students to take risks and solve problems.
- Assess students formally as per the current school assessment schedule.
- Use student data to develop appropriate and personalised learning and teaching experiences.
- Explicitly teach the general capabilities so that students and teachers use these as tools to promote learning.
- Provide students needing support with strategies to encourage growth and progress.
- Devise personal learning plans for every student we deem to be at risk.
- Work with teacher aides, intervention teachers, the Wellbeing Leader and other relevant members of staff to determine and deliver appropriate support for students.
- Use a variety of assessments to gather data and analyse the results at Professional Learning Meetings.
- Keep accurate records of progress.
- Report progress to parents and students throughout the year in both formal and informal formats.
- Promote links between home and school through the weekly school newsletter, family friendly homework tasks and by providing opportunities for families to participate in learning activities through events such as, family maths and science nights.
- Provide teachers with professional development opportunities to develop their own understanding of the curriculum within the framework of the current SIP and AAP.

- Provide teachers with opportunities for collegial support through weekly facilitated planning meetings and professional learning team meetings, regular peer to peer feedback sessions, visits to mentor schools and opportunities for professional reading, discussion and reflection.
- Provide teachers with a forum for professional reading and discussion through St Dominic's Learning and Teaching Google+ page.
- Provide students in year 3 – 6 with the following specialist classes, Physical Education, Visual Arts and Languages (Italian) twice every three weeks.
- Provide students in years Prep, 1 and 2 with the following specialist classes, Physical Education, Visual Arts, Social Games and Languages (Italian) once every fortnight.