Curriculum Framework

At St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School, in order to develop successful and rigorous integrated units an inquiry approach to learning and teaching, rich in assessment, is utilised. Our Inquiry Approach embraces the philosophy of 'life long learning' and is a process of learning that draws on a range of tools and strategies to develop thinking skills, collaboration, independence and ownership of learning.

The St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School Curriculum Framework has been developed in light of the Directions for Catholic Education 2011-2015: Catholic schools provide an excellent holistic education centred on the students and engaging them in authentic, purposeful learning; and incorporating the philosophy of the Australian Curriculum Victorian Essential Learning Standards (AusVELS).

AusVELS is the Foundation to Year 10 Curriculum for Victorian government and Catholic schools for implementation from 2013. AusVELS outlines what is essential for all Victorian students to learn for F-10 and includes the Australian Curriculum F-10 for English, Mathematics, History and Science. It provides a single, coherent and comprehensive set of common achievement standards which schools use to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to parents. 

The Australian Curriculum:

- Describes a learning entitlement for each Australian student that provides a foundation for successful, lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community.
- Acknowledges that the needs and interests of students will vary, and that schools and teachers will plan from the curriculum in ways that respond to those needs and interests.
- Acknowledges the changing ways in which young people will learn and the challenges that will continue to shape their learning in the future.
- Sets out what all young people should be taught through the specification of curriculum content and the learning expected at points in their schooling through the specification of achievement standards.

The Australian Curriculum Victorian Essential Learning Standards (AusVELS) recognises that Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities that apply across discipline content and equip them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world.

The Australian Curriculum includes a focus on seven general capabilities (literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology competence, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, personal and social competence and intercultural understanding) and three cross-curriculum priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia and Sustainability).
At St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School:

- We strategically plan learning experiences to ensure they are child centred, motivating, engaging, multisensory and interdisciplinary. The content and skills incorporated provide a balance between curriculum outcomes, real life contexts, current affairs - global and local, and student interest. (Authentic Learning)

- Students will be supported and enabled as independent learners through a personalised approach. Learning opportunities that are explicit and scaffolded; and encourage deep thinking and student voice will be evident.

- Our model works on the premise that we need to ascertain what students already know and build an investigative process of learning skills and content from the known to the unknown and the application of new learnings to other situations. (Constructivism).

- As we are preparing learners for their future we are mindful of the skills needed to function in an online world and integrate technological skills throughout our process for research, communication, design, creative production and presentation.

- Teaching strategies incorporate a variety of directed and guided instruction, group and independent tasks requiring cooperation and collaboration. Grouping structures are established to suit the needs and interests of the students, and therefore incorporate a balance between ability and diverse grouping.

- Student engagement and ownership are essential to our model. Students are involved in the planning and direction of our inquiries, in building criteria and rubrics for shared ownership of their assessment in skills and content. They are informed of base curriculum outcomes or understandings so that they are involved in their own goal setting and achievement.

- Open ended design briefs allow for students to think creatively to solve problems, apply new knowledge and skills, and take control of the research, communication, presentation and application of their learning.

- Our selection of Inquiry Units are derived from the learning focus at the various levels of the Australian Curriculum Victorian Essential Learning Standards (AusVELS) document. Year levels address all content based Domains over the duration of a year with host Domain Inquiry Units.

- These units are developed with links to skills and content in other relevant Domains to provide a thorough interdisciplinary learning and teaching investigation.

- Detailed planning is documented in line with the stages in our Inquiry process and incorporates guided questions, tools and strategies and assessment pertaining to the understandings and outcomes established in the preplanning stage.

Education at St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School will endeavour to prepare students for a world in which work, society, community and personal relationships are of equal importance, recognizing that we exist in a world that is in a constant state of change and in which is increasingly influenced by global events.
The programs of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School and the teaching of those programs support and promote:

- The principles and practice of Australian democracy;
- The elected government;
- The rule of law;
- Equal rights for all before the law;
- Freedom of religion;
- Freedom of speech and association; and,
- Values of openness and tolerance.

This is communicated using a variety of media, through the policies, programs, documentation and practices of the school. This occurs formally at the enrolment interview on application for enrolment to St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School; through newsletter items, at regular school assemblies and weekly flag raising ceremonies.

In bringing this philosophy to life, the floor plan of the school is intentionally designed for flexible use of learning areas, allowing for shared use of spaces, movement of students within these areas, enabling whole group, small group and individual learning experiences. Outdoor learning will form an integral part of the curriculum and therefore the external learning spaces will be utilized as a flexible working space for students.

The use of Information and Communication Technology as learning and teaching tools is an important part of the skill development of the learner; this will include, but not be limited to, resources such as computers, digital and video cameras, televisions, electronic whiteboards, data projectors and a range of software.

Children will be provided with time for outdoor play as part of their learning day, and will be provided with a curriculum which teaches them skills in all areas of the Australian Curriculum Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

There is a focus on the partnership with parents in the education of their children. Parent communication and education is a priority in ensuring that this partnership is effective and for the benefit of students.

The staff of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School is a Professional Learning Community who engages in Professional Learning as a whole staff as well as having an individual development plan for themselves in order to ensure they are providing student focused learning and teaching opportunities to address individual student needs.
Curriculum Framework Overview

OVERARCHING GOALS - All students need to develop the capacity to:
• Manage themselves as individuals and in relation to others
• Understand the world in which they live
• Act effectively in that world

CONCEPTS

Diversity  Systems  Change  Identity  Energy  Responsibility

The above concepts will be explored through integrated curriculum units using the following curriculum organisers

- HEALTH & WELLBEING
- CULTURAL DIVERSITY
- CHANGE OVER TIME
- RESPONSIBILITY & SOCIETY
- HUMAN ENTERPRISE
- RESPONSIBILITY & RELATIONSHIPS
- ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
- ENERGY AND TRANSFORMATION
The inquiry model used at St Mary of the Cross Catholic Parish Primary School is based on three stages:

1. **Building**
   - **Immerse** students in the topic
   - **Gather** and **process** new information

2. **Investigating**
   - Support students in **investigating** an aspect which interests them

3. **Personalising**
   - Students **reflect** on what they have learned—about the topic and about themselves
   - Students **take action** to apply new learning to real-life contexts.

This approach leads students through an inquiry process where they build both their understandings and their skills in becoming independent investigators. Prior knowledge is valued and established, and students have an input into the direction of the unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Teacher Role</th>
<th>Student Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building</strong></td>
<td>• To build a strong foundation of knowledge about the topic</td>
<td>• Determine the content based on knowledge of the students.</td>
<td>• Locate, collect and organise information.</td>
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<td>• To establish prior knowledge and experiences</td>
<td>• Plan activities so students can collect new information from a range of sources.</td>
<td>• Process, analyse and synthesise information.</td>
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<td>• To model skills and strategies students will apply more independently later in the unit</td>
<td>• Consider a range of learning styles and activities.</td>
<td>• Develop questions for inquiry.</td>
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<td>• Assist students to make connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge.</td>
<td>• Reflect on their learning, connecting what they know now to what they knew previously.</td>
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<td>• Model and explicitly teach skills and strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Investigating</strong></td>
<td>• To engage in a deeper investigation determined by student needs and interest</td>
<td>• Co-construct the investigation with students, taking into account their questions, interests and needs.</td>
<td>• Contribute to the direction of the unit by asking rich questions and suggesting ways in which they can find answers.</td>
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<td>• To develop deeper understandings about big concepts</td>
<td>• Act as facilitator as students conduct investigations.</td>
<td>• Apply skills and strategies for investigating that they have been taught.</td>
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<td>• To engage students in a more independent inquiry</td>
<td>• Provide scaffolding for students when they need support.</td>
<td>• Gather, organise and synthesise further information.</td>
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<td>• Explicitly teach skills and strategies as the need arises.</td>
<td>• Work collaboratively.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Continue to assist students to make connections to prior knowledge.</td>
<td>• Reflect on their learning, connecting what they know now to</td>
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understandings.

what they knew previously.

**Personalising**

- To apply what has been learned to real-life contexts
- To give the students the opportunity to act on their learning in an authentic way, in order to embed understandings
- To develop students’ ability to manage their own learning by reflecting on the learning process

- Ask questions that require students to reflect on their own learning.
- Provide constructive feedback for students on their goals and achievements.
- Negotiate actions that the students can take to apply their learning.

- Reflect on the process and effectiveness of their learning.
- Negotiate actions they can take to apply their learning.
- Transfer and apply knowledge and skills to real-life contexts.
- Reflect on their learning, connecting what they know now to what they knew previously.