

## St John's Lutheran School, Kingaroy

### Christian Studies Policy

#### 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 their mission and ministry, St John's Lutheran School 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". (*COVERPAGE: A vision for learners and learning*).

In LEA's document, *A Vision for Learners and Learning* (2006), our ethos is clearly articulated. Learning and knowledge is acknowledged as "God's gift", we work to provide a holistic education that recognizes the importance of spiritual knowledge as well as intellectual, social emotional and physical knowledge. Therefore central to Lutheran schooling is the key learning area, Christian Studies that provides a comprehensive, learner-centred F – 12 curriculum that is developed through an inquiry approach.

#### Purpose

St John's Lutheran School is implementing this policy to align with the BLEA policy that states timetabled opportunities (up to 90 minutes per week) for Christian Studies lessons F – 12 (or, in Years 11 & 12 for Queensland Studies Authority Board registered subjects such as Studies of Religion/ Religion and Ethics).

#### Scope

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

#### Background

##### Context

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

"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 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 active Christian life, to students who have had little or no prior experience of religion, to students who are active in non-Christian religions to those who are anti-Christian. 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 (BLEA Policy)".

#### 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 and ethical issues 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. Given the earlier comments in 'Context' about 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 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.

*Adopted as BLEA policy  
June 2004*

## **St John's Lutheran School Policy**

When implementing Christian Studies Key Learning Area, St John's Lutheran School:

- Allocates 90 minutes per week for Christian Studies on the timetable (excluding worship & Pastoral Care time) (p. 10 CSCF)
- Uses the LEA publications Christian Studies Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Statements) & the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework (Theological Notes) [or equivalent] as the basis for all planning, assessing and reporting of Christian Studies (p. 10 – 13 CSCF)
- Provides training and up-skilling for all teachers of Christian Studies that builds teachers theological and pedagogical understanding (p. 56 CSCF)
- Collaboratively develops and reviews school-based Christian Studies work programs and/or CS scopes and sequences as part of an auditing cycle of school curriculum documents (p. 56 CSCF)
- Provides resources to support the implementation of Christian Studies (p. 56 CSCF)
- Identifies and supports Christian Studies Key Teachers/Leaders as part of the school's leadership structure (p. 55, 56 CSCF)

# Procedures to support the implementation of St John’s Lutheran School Christian Studies policy include:

Identification and allocation of Christian Studies Teachers (for a high school setting) including instructions for CS teachers & exemplar timetables:

## Whole of School Overview of CSCF Outcomes allocations

		Christian Beliefs			Christian Church			Christian Living			Christianity in the World		
		K1	K2	K3	K1	K2	K3	K1	K2	K3	K1	K2	K3
Beg.	Prep	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	1			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A	2		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
	3	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	
B	4	✓			✓			✓				✓	
	5			✓			✓		✓		✓		
C	6		✓	✓	✓					✓		✓	
	7	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
D	8		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	
	9	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓		✓

## Whole of School Overview of Unit Topics, Outlines, CSCF Outcomes, Deep Understandings, Essential Questions, Key Assessment: (by year level)

All Subject Overviews, exemplar units of work, and teacher’s unit plans have been stored on the school curriculum documents website on SharePoint for easy access.

Primary School Plans -

<https://stjohnskroy.sharepoint.com/Curriculum%20Documents/SitePages/Primary%20School%20Curriculum%20Plans.aspx>

Middle School Plans -

<https://stjohnskroy.sharepoint.com/Curriculum%20Documents/SitePages/Middle%20School%20Curriculum%20Plans.aspx>

## CS Teachers’ Training Plans (e.g. EQUIP attendee lists/graduates; in-school training)

All Christian studies training plans are integrated in the curriculum training plans overviews. All staff participate in regular bible study sessions each week and school devotional life which foster the spiritual growth of our staff. New staff who teach Christian Studies are organised to attend EQUIP session in Brisbane and the data is recorded in lexicon (LEA staff data base)

## CS Key Teachers Role Description & Responsibilities

The Christian Studies Coordinator is the key contact person for Christian studies. The Christian Studies Coordinator is responsible to and reports to the principal on all matters relating to Christian Studies. The Christian Studies Coordinator is responsible for:

- Work with principal to develop a vision and plan for the ongoing development and support of Christian Studies across the school community for Christian Studies.

- Develop common understandings of the nature and purpose of Christian Studies.
- Develop and facilitate the school's overall Christian Studies program and school plan.
- Identify the needs of Christian Studies teachers in the school and plan and co-ordinate a professional development program.
- Share information with staff related to all professional development courses or events related to Christian Studies.
- Provide induction and mentoring for new Christian Studies teachers.
- Skill teacher with strategies to write units of work and to teach Christian Studies.
- Consult with regional education officer to support needs of teachers and deliver in-service training to teachers of Christian Studies.
- Canvass staff in order to determine resource needs of the school.
- Co-ordinate the selection, purchase and distribution of materials to support the Christian Studies curriculum.
- Manage the budget.
- Liaise with Christian Studies Co-ordinators in other schools and with regional and national support personal.