

CATHOLIC SCHOOL CULTURE

Purpose

Damascus College is a Catholic Co-educational Secondary College that fosters and celebrates young women and men learning together within the educational mission of the Church. The College motto is 'To Live by the Light of Christ'. Damascus College, which is co-sponsored by the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea and the Association of Canonical Administrators of Greater Ballarat, aims to ensure that the life of the College articulates, expresses and celebrates this particular Catholic identity so that all members of the College community may flourish.

Scope

The policy encompasses all members of the College community, all College activities in which they are engaged and the environment in which those activities take place.

"The membership of Catholic school communities is diverse. Some are conscious and active members for their Catholic community, some belong actively to other Christian traditions or religious faiths. Some are not explicitly Christian, but nevertheless seek enrolment for their children in a Catholic school ... The mission of the school reaches beyond the RE classroom to include all aspects of school life, its culture, programs and relationships... The practices of authentic dialogue invite and challenge students, teachers, parents and friends of the school to an ongoing encounter with each other in their particular faith or worldview, and with the presence of Christ who invites all people into the mystery of God's love." *Awakenings. The Religious Dimension of Catholic Schools 2020. (p.4)*

Policy Statement

Damascus College will:

- provide a Catholic educational culture that encourages the discovery of life's meaning and elicits new hopes for today and the future.
- provide a Catholic religious education curriculum to awaken the students intellectually, ethically and spiritually in accordance with diocesan guidelines;
- provide opportunities for staff, students and parents to develop their understanding of the Catholic faith tradition and the culture of the College;
- Promote and foster the lived example of Jesus through justice, compassion, respect, service, hospitality and courage in our interactions with all members of the community and the whole of creation;
- ensure that policies and programs give expression to the charism of the Sisters of Mercy;
- encourage active participation in the sacramental life, prayer and ritual of the Catholic Church;
- provide opportunities for the Damascus community to grow in understanding of the College's heritage and to embrace it through active participation;
- encourage connection and participation between parish communities and the College.

Consequences

The following consequences will apply:

- The teachings and actions of Jesus Christ will be reflected in all aspects of the life of the College. Opportunities to deepen relationships between Damascus College and parish communities will be promoted;



- each member of the Damascus College community will be invited and challenged to explore relationships with God, with the community, and with the whole of creation;
- inspired by the Catholic tradition, the Damascus community will be in dialogue with those who have different philosophies of life and faith traditions;
- the Religious Education Curriculum will be well resourced and Religious Education staff will be expected to participate in ongoing professional development;
- participation in the Religious Education curriculum is compulsory for all students;
- the College will provide opportunities for onboarding processes and professional development for staff members that will enrich and enhance the Catholic culture of the College;
- the Catholic nature of the College will be evident in engagement with the wider community;
- College community members are expected to uphold and respect the Catholic culture of the College; and
- policies and procedures will affirm the Catholic culture of the College.
- The charism of Mercy is reflected in the iconography, liturgical experiences, the Religious Education Curriculum, naming of College entities, scholarships, history of the college, and the hospitable and respectful inclusion of our local Sisters of Mercy in College events.

Responsibilities

While the Principal and the Leadership Team has overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy, all members of the College community are expected to support and uphold the Catholic culture of Damascus College.

Associated Documents

Catholic Diocese of Ballarat. Awakenings <https://awakenings.ceob.edu.au/>

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. Accreditation Policy

https://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/50d03d28-ed94-46cd-88d2-23ef0acb908d/CECV-accreditation-policy_January-2020.aspx

Congregation for Catholic Education. The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27_041998_school2000_en.html

Congregation for Catholic Education. Educating Today and Tomorrow. (2014)

Bird, Paul CSsR *Bishop of Ballarat Enhancing Catholic School Identity* (Letter) 24 October 2016

Francis, Pope Encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (2020)

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

Francis, Pope Encyclical *Laudato si* (2015)

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Pollefeyt, Didier and Bouwens Jan, *Identity in Dialogue* (2014)

Sharkey, Paul. *Educators Guide to Catholic Identity* (2015)