Learning & Teaching Policy

Rationale:
At St. Patrick's School, we believe that all children can learn, particularly in a positive environment where they are encouraged to take risks and explore challenges. Therefore to maximise a child’s potential to learn, teaching strategies must be planned, remembering that all children are unique and have a need to belong and be accepted. Children’s learning is influenced by many factors including learning styles, self esteem, prior experiences, relevance of subject matter, interest, talents and stage of development. Learning is an active process where children are involved and enjoy exploring and discovering for themselves.

Policy Statement:
At St. Patrick’s School we believe that to cater for the overall development of each child’s learning, teaching approaches will be adopted that ensure a high quality of ‘teaching for learning’ for all students within the school. Teaching will be innovative and developmentally oriented and will reflect the beliefs of our Catholic Faith community. Learning will be integrated with the arts, communication and information technologies, thinking processes, personal learning and interpersonal skills development.

Principles:
Teaching for learning strategies will:

- Value the individual differences of children allowing them to feel valued and accepted.
- Acknowledge children’s learning styles, interests and talents.
- Build upon prior experiences of children, so as to provide relevance and meaning of new material.
- Give children the opportunity to work individually, in small groups and as a whole class.
- Give children the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge.
- Encourage and allow children to be risk takers, so they learn to see mistakes as a valuable part of learning.
- Provide children with opportunities to be involved in their learning and to take responsibility for it.
- Maintain a positive environment where children feel valued and feel a sense of belonging.
- Acknowledge and encourage positive support and involvement between peers, teachers, families and the wider community.
- Develop skills which allow children to access information from a variety of sources.
Teachers must remember that learning:

- Is an interactive process
- Is active not passive
- Is a complex process
- Requires explicit teaching
- Involves:
  - thinking processes
  - organising and re-organising information
  - scaffolding of tasks
  - recalling and
  - storing knowledge.

To ensure that student learning occurs:

- Teachers will plan programs which cater for the individual needs of each student.
- Programs will indicate the type of teaching for learning approaches being utilized.
- Caring relationships will be developed between teachers and children.
- Children will be encouraged to see school as the beginning of lifelong learning.
- Children will be encouraged to express and discuss their ideas, develop skills in co-operative activities and share responsibilities for common tasks.
- Teachers will encourage students to develop new interests and skills while continuing to build on existing strengths and interests.
- Teachers will use approaches which will foster the development of a wide range of thinking skills.
- Teachers will recognise and affirm the importance of home, school, community and parish throughout their planning and teaching.
- Teachers will develop methods of assessment which emphasize the positive aspects of students' work.
- Parents and teachers will be recognised and affirmed as partners in education, exercising different roles and responsibilities in pursuit of a common vision.
- Teachers will be encouraged to enhance and develop their own teaching style through attendance at formal and informal professional development.

Teachers will endeavour to provide learning experiences that:

- Are interesting, purposeful, challenging, relevant to each student and scaffolded appropriately to the ability levels within each class group.
- Are structured to acknowledge prior knowledge and allow progression of learning from the known to the unknown.
- Take into account the range of different learning styles within the class.

Teachers will be given opportunities for professional development in implementing the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Australian Curriculum (AusVELS) to ensure that they are utilising current curriculum and teaching strategies.