

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

POLICY

Villanova provides religious education for all students. This involves a serious, systematic, curriculum program grounded in the Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines, the formation and development of gospel values and attitudes in accordance with our Augustinian tradition and opportunities for the expression of faith within the Catholic tradition.

RATIONALE

Religious faith is one of the most fundamental ways people give meaning and purpose to their lives. Consequently religious education, which nurtures faith and promotes gospel values, is seen as necessary for a balanced educational program.

In adopting a religious education policy Villanova has a vision of religious education which challenges all members of the College community. Our goal is to seek the truth in the person and message of Jesus Christ through

- (i) a systematic Religious curriculum program based on the Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines,
- (ii) the development of gospel attitudes and values and
- (iii) opportunities for the expression of faith within the catholic tradition.

AIMS

Religious Education at Villanova aims to address and respond to the personal development needs of the students through

- (i) A systematic curriculum program which enables students to:
 - a) understand that religious belief and practice is a real, immediate and meaningful way of knowing and interpreting life.
 - b) come to a greater knowledge and understanding of Catholicism and the influence this tradition and its practices have in the shaping of their lives and the interpreting of their experiences.
 - c) function in a society which comprises a multiplicity of religious views by helping them to become familiar with the world of religious knowledge, to be capable of asking apt religious questions, to take part in religious dialogue and to identify and evaluate religious issues.
 - d) grow in their capacity for moral understanding and reasoning within the framework of the Catholic tradition.
- (ii) The formation and development of gospel attitudes and values which enable students to:
 - e) develop attitudes of justice and compassion, in both a personal and communal context.
 - f) access an education based on the principles of an Augustinian culture and heritage.
- (iii) Opportunities for the expression of faith within the Catholic tradition which enable students to:
 - g) be open to personal religious experience through participation in prayer, liturgy and retreat.
 - h) express this faith via personal and/or communal actions of witness, justice, peace and compassion.

IMPLEMENTATION

At Villanova

- (i) The classroom teaching of the subject of religious education has an educational emphasis assisting students to develop religious literacy.
- (ii) In the religious education classroom the intimate and personal nature of God's working within the individual is revered. In the classroom students are free either to share or withhold their personal thoughts and feelings about faith.

- (iii) Settings beyond the religious education classroom contribute in a variety of complimentary ways to the faith growth of students.
- (iv) It is recognised that the ethos of the College and all curriculum areas contribute in significant ways to the overall development of students.
- (v) All members of staff are expected to support the faith development of students.
- (vi) The importance of collaboration with family and parish in promoting the faith development of students is recognised.
- (vii) While the freedom of students of other denominations is respected, it is expected that they will participate in the College religious education program.

EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of a Religious Education program in terms of nurturing faith and its various expressions is difficult to ascertain directly, since we are dealing with outcomes within the interior life of the person. At the same time we believe that there are indicators as to whether these outcomes are being achieved. There are other indicators that if absent would signal that these outcomes are not being properly pursued.

The Principal in collaboration with the Vice Principal - Ministry, Mission and Evangelism and Director of Religious Education will monitor and from time to time report to Council on various indicators that point towards the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy .

Such indicators will include though not be limited to:

- (i) The results of the Audit of the Religious Education performed by the Archdiocesan Religious Education Review team including its evaluation of the adequacy of the academic programs and the qualifications of staff in this area.
- (ii) An annual analysis of the Certified Results in Senior Study of Religion in terms of level of the engagement in studying religion as well as the level of knowledge achieved.
- (iii) Periodic reports on programs of liturgical and other religious events in the various schools within the College, and which provide opportunities for the formation and expression of faith through prayer
- (iv) The extent of the Youth Ministry Programs and its activities which provide opportunities for expression of faith through apostolic activities.

Research projects that seek to monitor particular outcomes may be initiatives from time to time.

EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY

This document will be evaluated in accordance with the College Councils policy on the review of policy documents. In any such evaluation, this document will be judged in response to

- (i) relevant and applicable Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines,
- (ii) the changing nature of society and
- (iii) reflection on our current College practices.

Policy approved by Council: 27 October, 2010

Policy to be reviewed: 2015