

# TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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## Rationale or Purpose

Villanova College is a Catholic college from Years 5-12 “striving for excellence in boys’ education as an Augustinian community one in mind and heart on the way towards God”.<sup>i</sup>

Villanova College believes that every student has the right to a high quality and inspirational education. Pedagogical excellence is pivotal to high quality learning. It engages students as active participants in learning and as confident creators of new knowledge. Effective pedagogy is underpinned by an integrated knowledge of the learning process and when teachers:

- Are reflective learners constantly engaged in constructing their own understanding about teaching and learning;
- Use evidence informed approaches to promote successful learning and integrate information and communication technologies to create new ways of learning;
- Engage students through the careful use of a variety of pedagogical approaches incorporating traditional techniques while embracing the best of what is new and emerging;
- Promote wellbeing through structures and processes which are cognisant of student needs.

At Villanova College, love of learning is founded on the Augustinian values of interiority, search for truth and community. These are known as the “gateway values” because they present points of entry or portals into a rich field of attributes which are hallmarks of Augustinian education.<sup>ii</sup> These include:<sup>iii</sup> love of God and one’s neighbour, solidarity with the poor and marginalised, valuing humility, promotion of freedom, actively building and nurturing community, devotion to the common good in a spirit of service, active participation in the sacramental life, participation and shared responsibility, friendship and prayer.

Education in the Augustinian tradition is concerned with building a firm foundation of knowledge for personal and spiritual life, as well as a basis for professional life. Real education is characterized by a searching for knowledge and understanding that is integrated with personal experience. St Augustine speaks about the teacher within who can test the truth of what is being taught. This teacher is the presence of God within each person. Processes of interior reflection and evaluation are part of this.<sup>iv</sup>

In the Augustinian model of education, “learning... is to be understood as more than the pursuit of ‘academic excellence’... but more appropriately as the pursuit of wisdom, the capacity to understand one’s self, others, and the world in the light of the ultimate reality of God”.<sup>v</sup> In the Augustinian model, teachers, students and parents form a learning community pursuing goals in a climate of love and friendship, sharing with others what they have or gain, and receiving what God has given or will give to each.<sup>vi</sup>

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework of principles to support teaching and learning at the College that are guided by research informed best practice and the Augustinian model of education and values.



## Policy

The College is committed to an educational philosophy that encourages all students to challenge themselves to personal excellence. It is committed to giving each student a deep learning experience through the provision of a broad, balanced, flexible and engaging curriculum within an optimal well- resourced learning environment. Teaching and learning approaches are to be informed by research informed best practice and aligned with the Augustinian model of education. Augustinian values where possible are to be infused with an understanding and appreciation of an authentic Augustinian pedagogy.

## Implementation

### Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to all College teaching staff, all students and parents.

### Principles

1. The College aspires to provide a teaching and learning culture that promotes the highest standards in boys' education and inspires academic excellence.<sup>vii</sup>
2. The College is an academically non-selective school educating boys of all abilities and backgrounds to enable them to develop and walk their own path. It strives to personalise each student's learning journey and to inspire them to grow and achieve their personal best in their academic studies and co-curricular learning.
3. The College is committed to following the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.<sup>viii</sup> It sets out the national vision for education and the commitment of Australian Governments to improving educational outcomes for young Australians. The Declaration has specific recommendations for ensuring the best learning outcomes for students in Junior School <sup>ix</sup>, Middle School <sup>x</sup>, Senior School <sup>xi</sup> and pathways beyond. <sup>xii</sup>
4. The College strives to use a range of pedagogical approaches and strategies to engage, support, challenge and extend students and to use information communication technologies appropriate for the 21st century.
5. The College strives to achieve for its students proficiency in literacy, numeracy and reading as the foundation to learning. Additionally, it seeks to develop in students:
  - higher-order thinking skills of thinking independently, creatively and critically through disciplined practice and application;
  - digital literacy skills; and
  - the confidence to be self-directed learners.
6. The College endeavours to achieve student outcomes consistently above state and national averages in Naplan, QCAA External Examinations and ATAR results.
7. The College is committed to the effective measuring of and communicating of student progress. It is also committed to the provision of high-quality feedback to students and parents which is essential to successful learning.



8. The College is committed to providing effective transition processes and pathways for all students.

9. The College encourages students to:

- accept responsibility for, and make a commitment to their own learning;
- adopt a growth mindset in their learning which equips them with skills and strategies to persevere so that they develop resilience when faced with challenges, and courage to take risks without fear of failure;
- apply feedback gained from past experiences in the belief that it will lead to success;
- seek relevant learning opportunities, to extend themselves to achieve their aspirations, to be flexible and strive for accuracy and excellence;
- cultivate life-affirming relationships, learn in collaboration, encourage and support each other and celebrate the success of others.

10. The College seeks to celebrate individual and collective improvement.

11. The teaching staff at the College are committed to:

- the holistic education of the students in their care and to helping them discover their passions and strengths;
- creating safe, flexible and engaging learning environments, that are open, accepting, inclusive and multimodal while respecting and supporting the learning needs of each student;
- participating regularly in professional learning which is linked to teaching and learning goals under the strategic plan and the annual action plan of the College as appropriate;
- accessing and resourcing professional learning opportunities to build on and complement that which is provided and supported by the College;
- contributing to the pedagogical knowledge of the Colleges' professional learning community and the wider educational community through the collaborative sharing of best practice.

12. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to support the College and to work in partnership with it to seek the best educational outcome for their child.

13. This policy and the procedures and practices that flow from it, are part of the staff, student and parent induction and formation processes that occur on an ongoing basis and are included in the relevant publications of the college.

## Evaluation and Review

This policy is to be reviewed after three years or earlier to take account of any changes to relevant legislation or regulations or to the College's operations and practices and to ensure it remains appropriate to the changing environment.

**Review Date:** November 2023.

**Endorsement:** Approved and endorsed by the College Board on 26 November 2020.



## References

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- i. Villanova College Vision Statement; *Rule of St Augustine*, 1 (taken from Acts 4:32).
- ii. Villanova Prospectus
- iii. Villanova University, Augustine's Values. Retrieved 4th April, 2009: <http://www.villanova.edu/mission/spirituality/about/values.htm>  
Augustinian Values, An Essay: 2009.
- iv. Villanova University, Augustine's Values. Retrieved 4th April, 2009: <http://www.villanova.edu/mission/spirituality/about/values.htm>  
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- vi. Villanova University, Augustine's Values. Retrieved 4th April, 2009: <http://www.villanova.edu/mission/spirituality/about/values.htm>;  
Villanova College Curriculum Policy Statement including Curriculum Framework: 2015.