CURRICULUM POLICY
INCLUDING
TEACHING and LEARNING
ASSESSMENT and REPORTING

St Francis Xavier College
Berwick, Beaconsfield & Officer
Ratified by Board of Management
July 2001
Ratified by College Board September 2005
Amended June, 2008
Ratified by College Board July, 2008
Amended June 2011
Ratified by College Board October 2011
CURRICULUM VISION STATEMENT

St. Francis Xavier College is a Catholic community that is educative and supportive. We have a clear purpose: the development of a person of competence, conscience and compassion formed in the Christian tradition; one who is guided by a sense of hope and self-belief and who will be of service in the world. We recognise God’s presence in our lives by celebrating and pursuing personal excellence and by living courageously with optimism and respect for all.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum refers to everything a school does to support student learning. It includes policies and practices about content and programs offered, and ways in which content and programs can be learned and taught. It takes into account student diversity, organisational arrangements, assessment processes and reporting practices. (Blueprint for Government Schools, Curriculum Guidelines November 2004, Dept. of Education and Training)

Improving educational outcomes for all young Australians is central to the nation’s social and economic prosperity and will position young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. Young Australians are therefore placed at the centre of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals.

These goals are:

1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence
2: All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens

The curriculum of the College is set within the context of our educational mission:

- transmitting the Catholic tradition and heritage; and
- making the values of the Gospel the mainspring of everyday teaching and learning

St Francis Xavier College aims to be a learning community in which:

- everyone is committed to learning
- there is a clear belief that everyone is capable of learning
- there are open and honest relationships and dialogue between individuals and between groups
- there is a real sense of partnership between family and school
- individuals have a sense of belonging
- there is a broad view of the purpose of schooling
- resources and programs are committed to meeting the needs of the individual and developing pride in achievement

We strive to be a community of:

**Hopeful Learners.** We have hope in ourselves, hope in each other, hope in the future and hope in a loving and compassionate God. We are aware of our call to serve and believe that, with God’s help, we can make a difference.

**Spiritual Learners.** We are capable of making moral and ethical decisions and are developing a greater awareness of our spiritual needs and our relationship with God and the universe. We are aware of, and cherish, our Catholic beliefs and traditions.
Responsible Learners. We have a clear sense of responsibility to our community, our environment and ourselves. We accept responsibility for our own learning and contribute to the learning of others.

Independent Learners. We are capable of goal setting, collecting and analysing information, communicating ideas, problem solving, reflection and critical thinking.

Inter-dependent Learners. We are capable of working in a collaborative manner. We value teamwork and have developed conflict resolution techniques. We are capable of planning and organising activities.

Creative and Confident Learners. We are capable of creative expression and are aware of the need for imagination and creativity in our lives, and to have the confidence to share our creativity.

Historical Learners. We are capable of making links between the past and present, and of learning from experience to build a better future.

Global Learners. We have a global perspective. We are aware that we are not only Australians but also members of the wider world community.

Cultural Learners. We value the importance of understanding, accepting and respecting our cultural differences.

Physical Learners. We are aware of the need to become ‘whole’ by caring for our physical well being by participating in health promoting activities.

Happy Learners. We enjoy and value learning. We accept the need for life-long learning and, therefore, practice a style of learning that is success oriented.

Successful Learners. We learn for personal and professional enhancement and enrichment.
CURRICULUM POLICY

St Francis Xavier College provides a comprehensive post-primary education.

It aims to:
- challenge students to achieve their best
- provide a wide range of experiences for each student
- provide a balanced curriculum
- maximise opportunities for all students to succeed
- provide an inclusive curriculum
- make connections between studies
- provide for the personal growth of each student

By providing these features, the curriculum has the qualities of breadth, balance, coherence, continuity and inclusiveness. It provides all students with opportunities to follow appropriate pathways to become people of ‘competence, conscience and compassion’. (Vision Statement)

The curriculum is developed and continues to develop in line with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), the Australian Curriculum, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), Catholic Education Office (CEO) Diocese of Sale Guidelines, in particular the Religious Education Guidelines ‘Journeying Together in Hope’, CEO Archdiocese of Melbourne Guidelines (where appropriate) and Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) policy.

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

Junior Campuses

Students bring with them a range of educational experiences. St Francis Xavier College believes in the importance of providing a caring and supportive environment in which students are gradually inducted into the demands of secondary school life. A team of teachers works co-operatively in course planning, sharing resources and in evaluating learning and teaching practices.

Year 7 and 8 students are organised into Core Groups and remain together as a group, studying core subjects including Religious Education, English, Mathematics, LOTE Japanese, Science, Humanities – History and Geography – (one per semester) and Physical Education and Health (HPE) for the whole year. They also study 4 rotation units (one per term) in The Arts which include Visual Art, Visual Communication & Design, Drama and Music and 4 similar rotations in Technology covering Food Technology, Textiles, Wood Technology and Information Technology (ICT). In Year 9 students are in core groups for Religious Education, English and Science. Year 9 students are offered electives in The Arts, Technology, LOTE, HPE and Humanities; while selected students are also offered Accelerated Mathematics.

This allows the students to develop skills and gain confidence within a small group of Year 7 classmates. They are able to continue relationships and extend their skills and knowledge in a relatively stable, secure environment for a long period of time. It would also give the teachers who teach in ‘cores’ more time to see a total development both as individuals and as a group over a whole year.

We recognise that choice is of great importance to students and while we also feel that as educators there are a number of areas which need to be taught as a continuum, there are other areas where choice is available in the ARTs and Technology. Directives are in place to ensure that students engage in a broad and balanced curriculum as well as having a degree of freedom to select further units from areas of strength or interest.

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Year 9 students may also be accelerated in the area of Mathematics, although this is dependent on a number of factors including consistency, results and attitude and is usually only offered to students after a rigorous testing program and interview.

**Senior Campus**

In **Year 10** students are introduced to several new subjects and are given the opportunity to select certain subjects in addition to their general core studies of Religious Education, English and Mathematics. Students have the opportunity to give some emphasis to individual courses according to their abilities, interests and needs. Year 10 students may also undertake VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) or VET (Vocational Education and Training) studies.

At the Senior Secondary Level students have the choice of two certificates, the VCE and the VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning).

The VCE is a two-year certificate, generally taken over **Years 11 and 12**. Students study a programme of 24 units – 13 units in Year 11 and 11 units in Year 12. English (or its equivalent) and Religious Education are compulsory studies. Each unit is one semester in length, and students may choose from a range of 43 subjects.

The VCAL aims to provide students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make informed choices about pathways to work and further education. The VCAL is accredited at three levels: **Foundation, Intermediate and Senior**. Each certificate is nominally 1,000 hours and has four curriculum areas: Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Industry Specific Skills, Work Related Skills, and Personal Development Skills. To be awarded the certificate at any level, a student must gain 10 credits. Each credit is equivalent to a unit of study in VCAL, VCE or VET.

Students may enrol in VET or TAFE courses which provide a variety of vocational options. St Francis Xavier College offers a number of VET courses on-campus; while a range of TAFE courses are also available off-campus through the Holmesglen and Chisholm TAFE Institutes and other external providers. Students may undertake VCE studies and VET courses at the same time. Separate certificates are awarded for each.

Students are also able to access School Based Part-Time Apprenticeships.
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

At St Francis Xavier College, curriculum is the responsibility of all staff.

The College Executive, the senior leadership team oversees all curriculum matters. The Deputy Principal: Mission liaises with the Directors of Learning, Learning Area Leaders, staff and students on all matters pertaining to learning, assessment, reporting, and curriculum.

The Curriculum-Mission Development Team meets fortnightly
- Deputy Principal: Mission
- Directors of Learning: Berwick, Beaconsfield & Officer
- Directors of RE: Berwick, Beaconsfield & Officer
- Director of VCE
- Director of Liturgy and Faith
- Careers/VET Co-ordinator
- Director of Education Support
- College Pastoral Associate
- VCAL Coordinator
- REMAR Coordinator
- Literacy Coordinator
- Numeracy Coordinator

The function of this team is to
- Address curriculum development in the school
- Discuss submissions made to the committee
- Review learning/assessment and reporting procedures
- Make recommendations to the College Executive
- Make recommendations regarding Professional Development

Sub-committees may be established to investigate specific concerns, initiatives and issues as they become evident. Membership of these sub-committees is open to all interested staff.

The Learning Area Leaders (LALs) meet fortnightly with the Deputy Principal: Mission and the Directors of Learning. The LALs guide and assist teachers in their respective Learning Areas to develop and document appropriate and challenging courses of study for each Year Level. Through monitoring, regular review and co-operative planning, courses will continue to be developed and modified to meet the needs of all students. This regular and ongoing review process is inclusive of the St Francis Xavier College Vision, CEO guidelines, VCAA, VELS, Australian Curriculum and CECV Education Policy and guidelines.

As curriculum is the responsibility of all staff, any member of staff may make suggestions and submissions regarding curriculum. These suggestions and submissions can be made directly to the College Executive or through one of several teams in the College

CURRICULUM DOCUMENTATION

Curriculum material pertinent to the VCE is published by the VCAA and is available in specific Study Designs and via the VCAA website. Updates are published through the VCAA Bulletin, which is made available through Learning Area Leaders and through the Staff Professional Reading Rack.

Curriculum documentation for material developed for Years 7 – 10 is the responsibility of all teachers. It is developed and published and is available on the College intranet, through the curriculum network. It is reviewed and updated from time to time.
TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Effective teaching and learning will occur when each person’s dignity and individuality is affirmed and when the curriculum provides opportunities for students to grow in knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world around them. (CECV Education Policy, Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting for Catholic Schools P-12)

Teaching and learning is the focus of any school’s activity. Classroom teachers are responsible for the delivery of the school’s teaching and learning program. It is the teacher’s responsibility to develop fulfilling and challenging programs within which justice is a primary concern, so that effective learning will occur. (CECV Education Policy, Guidelines for Curriculum in the Catholic School P-12)

The fundamental partnership within a school is between students and teachers. It is the quality of this relationship that is crucial for the effectiveness of the learning process.

Key Principles of Teaching and Learning

- Teachers foster within students an appreciation of the principles and values of the Gospel, and the principles and values of St Francis Xavier.
- The learning environment is supportive and productive.
- The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation.
- All students have a teaching and learning program, which provides them with opportunities to achieve success in all areas of their studies.
- Students’ needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program.
- Students are given the opportunity to learn through a range of learning styles: visual, aural and kinaesthetic (hands on, practical) in each subject.
- Assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning.
- Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application.
- Teachers aim to make learning as interesting and stimulating as possible.
- Skills, knowledge and attitudes developed should be relevant to the students’ lives, present and future (as far as possible).
- Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom.
- To develop their ability to make decisions and enhance their level of interest, students are given opportunities to make choices about their studies.
- Teachers engage regularly in Professional Learning activities.

Work Requirements/Work Outcomes

The course of study for each subject is organised into several work requirements/outcomes. In Years 7-10 the range is from three to six work requirements/work outcomes per Semester. Each work requirement/outcome usually involves a variety of learning styles, knowledge and skills.

Students from the same year level who study a common subject complete the same set of work requirements/outcomes. However, it may be necessary for the specific details of the work requirements/outcomes to be varied in order to meet the needs of individual students. In some cases the requirement/outcome may need to be made more achievable; in others more challenging. The purpose of the work requirement/outcome will be preserved, even when the details are varied.
External Influences

The Catholic Diocese of Sale Guidelines for Religious Education ‘Journeying Together in Hope’ provide the basis of the R.E. program in the College. The school curriculum is planned with reference to the VELS and Australian Curriculum for Years 7-10 and the VCAA for Years 11-12. Where applicable, the policies of the CEO and CECV influence curriculum design.

Learning Styles

To facilitate effective teaching and learning, teachers need to make student activities appropriate to the learning style(s) of the student.

Learning styles can be considered as rather distinguishable cognitive, affective, and physiological characteristics which indicate how students view, react to and interact with the learning environment. It is widely accepted that while each learner responds differently, depending on the learning matter and the learning context, that on the whole, the learner exhibits strength in a few rather than the whole range of styles identified.


Gardner (1993) theorises that each person’s intellectual competence tends towards a range of skills which are used to confront and resolve problems. These are:

- **Visual/Spatial Intelligence** - enjoyment of coordinating colours and form
- **Musical Intelligence** - awareness of rhythm and sound
- **Logical/mathematical Intelligence** - understanding the relationship between objects or propositions
- **Bodily/kinaesthetic Intelligence** - well developed fine and gross motor skills and enjoyment of hands on activities
- **Linguistic Intelligence** – ability to communicate with others via a variety of means
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence** - ability to reflect on work and enjoy working alone
- **Interpersonal Intelligence** – very social and enjoy activities involving group interaction.

It is generally agreed that the most successful learners are those who can vary their learning styles according to differing situations. The teacher’s role, then, is to provide varied learning situations that incorporate a number of resources in order to facilitate different learning styles. (Teresa De Fazio, Online learning and the learning styles of ESL/EFL students, Centre for Educational Development and Support, Victoria University of Technology 2000)
INTRODUCTION
Assessment is integral to curriculum. The school's approach to assessment reflects its attitude to education, and indicates the degree of importance the school attaches to the values of the Gospel, such as justice, human dignity, compassion, hope and love.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy sets a context for assessment in the Catholic school. It defines assessment as the process, whether formal or informal, by which students, teachers and parents
- review the learning that has taken place
- make judgments about how effective it has been
- communicate this information effectively to the audiences for whom it is appropriate
- plan ways to enhance the future learning of the students involved

Assessment is the ongoing process of gathering, analysing and reflecting on evidence to make informed and consistent judgements to improve future student learning. (Blueprint for Government Schools, Assessment Advice November 2004, Dept. of Education and Training)

Above all assessment needs to be relevant and responsive to the learning needs of all students including those with specific learning and educational needs.

- **Assessment for learning** occurs when teachers use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching. (Formative)
- **Assessment of learning** occurs when teachers use evidence of student learning to make judgements on student achievement against goals and standards. (Summative)
- **Assessment as learning** occurs when students reflect on and monitor their progress to inform their future learning goals.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT
Assessment at St Francis Xavier College is designed to be consistent with the following general principles:

1. Assessment practices should be consistent with College goals.
2. Assessment practices should be authentic and matched to stated teaching and learning goals.
3. Criteria for assessment should be available to students before a unit of work.
4. Students should be made aware of assessment dates well in advance.
5. Assessment should include both formative and summative forms of assessment to inform students as to their progress in achieving curriculum outcomes. The assessment processes should be valid, reliable, fair and equitable and cater for the range of student learning styles.
6. Assessment should inform curriculum planning and evaluation.
7. Students should always have the opportunity to discuss assessed work, and be provided with constructive feedback that supports further learning.
8. Procedures adopted by particular Learning Areas should be in accord with these general principles.
SPECIFIC APPLICATION

The following six points of specific policy apply at all levels:

1. Assessment should be:
   a) Work based, that is, students should be assessed on work produced or presented, using appropriate techniques as described in point 7 of the General Principles,

   AND / OR

   b) Where it is not appropriate to use work based assessment, other assessment procedures should be used.

2. Descriptive assessment consists of constructive diagnostic comments provided on written work and verbal advice given to each student on a regular basis throughout the duration of the course related to the outcomes of the course. This aspect of assessment is an essential ingredient for effective teaching and pastoral care. It is far more supportive of and formative for the students’ learning than final judgements on work requirements/outcomes and assessment tasks. In practice, the process of monitoring work requirements/outcomes, as they are prepared is accompanied by a fair degree of informal descriptive assessment; in fact, all modes of assessment, although identified separately, are frequently interwoven in practice. Raw marks or letter grades will be accompanied by a descriptive comment.

3. Students should be aware in advance of the outcomes a teacher has for a course or the outcomes negotiated between teacher and class, as well as the work required to achieve these goals. A shared understanding of purpose, criteria and standards should more effectively engage students in their learning.

4. Where possible the outcomes described in 3) must be varied so they are achievable for each individual student. In Years 7-10 student achievement will be indicated by percentages and S or N for each Outcome/Assessment Task. Student achievement will also be indicated by a grade (A – E) against the VELS using Achievement Descriptors.

5. IN YEARS 7 - 10
   • There will be NO overall S/N
   • S/N will be used for individual outcomes/assessment tasks
   • S = 50% or more  N < 50%  SR = Satisfactory Redeemed  UG < 30%
   • If a student achieves less than 50% s/he will be given the opportunity to ‘redeem’. If the student makes an effort and shows some progress, the percentage remains and the outcome/assessment task result is SR. This process will be used by every teacher to ensure consistency, accountability and fairness.
   • If a student achieves less than 30% the percentage will be replaced by UG. The above process still applies.

5. Students undertaking VCE Unit 3/4 Studies will have the raw score for the school-assessed component of the study recorded. It will be clearly indicated that the score awarded by the College, may change due to statistical moderation by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

6. In YEAR 11 and YEAR 12 VCE STUDIES overall satisfactory unit completion, will be based upon the following:
ST FRANCIS XAVIER COLLEGE

- ‘S will be awarded for a unit, when the school certifies that all outcomes are achieved satisfactorily.’ *(VCE Administrative Handbook Section 7.4.1)*
- ‘N will be awarded for the unit when one or more of the outcomes are not achieved because
  - the work is not of the required standard
  - the student has failed to meet a school deadline for the assessment task, including where an extension of time has been granted for any reason, including Special Provision.
  - the work cannot be authenticated
  - there has been a substantial breach of rules including school attendance rules *(VCE Administrative Handbook Section 7.4.2)*

7. **YEAR 10 – 12**
   Further to Point 6, the following will apply

- The penalty for late work for Years 10 - 12 will be the same as for VCE work. In accordance with VCAA guidelines: late work = no grade/score (S or N only)
- If homework is not submitted on the day, students are automatically booked into the same day lunchtime **Learning Reconnection Session** to complete the homework. Work completed in this session will be eligible for a grade if submitted to the teacher on the due day.
- If work is not ready to be submitted in Period 4 – the onus will be on the students to attend the lunchtime **Learning Reconnection Session** on that day.

**Flowchart for Late Submission of Work Years 7 – 9**

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Work is not handed in by due date

Sticker is placed in Student Record Book with due date as the next school day

Work handed in next school day (*)
Work assessed as normal minus 10%

Work not submitted next school day
Non-Submission of Work letter sent home with final due date(#)

Work submitted by final due date(*)
Assessment grade = L

Work not submitted by final due date
Assessment grade = N as stated in Non-Submission of Work letter
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ACADEMIC REPORTING

Reporting student progress contributes to the growth and development of the whole person. The reports are written in plain English, giving parents a clearer picture of their child’s progress against expected state-wide standards. *(DEECD June 2007)*

Reporting is the process by which assessment information is communicated in ways that assist students, parents, teachers and the system in making decisions by providing information about what students know and can do, along with recommendations for their future learning. *(Blueprint for Government Schools, Reporting Advice November 2004, Dept. of Education and Training)*

PURPOSE OF REPORTING

‘Reporting is the communication of clear and comprehensive information regarding student progress and achievement.’ *(CECV Reporting Student Achievement P-10 Guidelines p.1)* The reporting process is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, therefore, reports are based on a range of assessment processes and evidence such as teacher observations, annotated student work samples, tests, portfolios, exhibitions and presentations.

The written report is not intended to be the only form of communication between teacher, student and parents in relation to student learning and achievement. The written report will be supported by parent-teacher interviews, and other communication both written and verbal.

If there are concerns about a student’s progress during the term, parents are contacted by telephone or by a note in the student’s record book. The student’s Care Group teacher is also consulted and informed. It should not come as a surprise to parents at the end of a Term or Semester that their child is having difficulties in a particular learning area.

VERBAL REPORTING TO PARENTS

Formal opportunities are available for parents and teachers to meet and discuss student progress. These Parent/Teacher/Student interviews are held at the end of Term 1 and Term 3 and may also be held at other times as needed for a particular year level or levels. These occasions provide teachers with the opportunity to engage in dialogue with parents, and students, about student progress and the learning process. They allow students to be acknowledged for their talents and consistent efforts, as well as being an opportunity for students to reassess their efforts and work habits if they have not yet settled into appropriate learning behaviours.

Teachers are also encouraged to make contact with parents via telephone or interview when necessary during the Term or Semester, in consultation with the appropriate Care Group teacher and/or House Co-ordinator. Similarly, parents are encouraged to contact the student’s Care Group Teacher or Subject Teacher when clarification of academic progress is sought.

WRITTEN REPORTS: GUIDELINES

Academic Reporting Guidelines are provided to support the Reporting Policy and provide specific information to assist staff in the preparation and completion of their reports. The reports are also accompanied by a page of explanatory notes or rubrics to assist parents and students.
INTERIM REPORTS

Interim reports are completed during the latter part of Terms One and Three. They are designed to give formal feedback to parents on the progress of their child at the mid point of each semester. This feedback is in the form of a brief summary page, which covers all Learning Areas undertaken by the student. Interim reports contain indicators of achievement as well as work habits/learning behaviours.

SEMESTER REPORTS

Semester reports are completed during the latter part of Terms Two and Four. Semester Reports contain the following:
- Achievement Descriptor for each domain reported
- Student achievement
- Work habits and/or learning behaviours
- Areas for improvement/future learning