EARLY YEARS POLICY

ST ANTHONY’S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY STATEMENT

St Anthony’s Catholic School Alexandra Hills, as part of the Brisbane Archdiocese Catholic primary schools, is committed to continuity of learning for every child across the Early Years. This will be achieved through the provision of a holistic, outcome based curriculum which is responsive to each child’s diverse and unique spiritual, social, emotional, learning and developmental needs and circumstances. Continuity of learning will be enhanced through the establishment and maintenance of effective, collaborative partnerships within the learning community together with the incorporation of relevant and meaningful active learning experiences.

INTRODUCTION

At St Anthony’s, we believe that the holistic development of the child in the Early Years provides a strong foundation for success throughout life. This Policy Statement is embedded in the Vision Statement for Brisbane Catholic Education which proclaims the gospel message and promotes learning that is lifelong and life-giving. In particular, the teachings of Jesus Christ provide the motivation for the challenges contained in this document:

“Let the children come to me…” (Lk 18:16)
“That they may have life, life to the full…”
(Jn 10:10).

In order for us to provide this strong foundation for success throughout life, the staff at St Anthony’s utilise the roles for lifelong learning from the BCE Learning Framework as an integral component for planning and assessment across the Early Years.
RATIONALE
This Early Years Policy Statement is a response to contemporary directions within the field of Early Childhood. At St Anthony's we acknowledge that the Early Years of schooling is a crucial time for children to celebrate their uniqueness, to develop social, emotional and behavioural well-being, and to experience success in learning. A young child’s sense of self and sense of God will be based on love, kindness, patience, dependability and trust, all of which are ideally modeled by parents/carers, teachers and members of the faith community.

At St Anthony’s parents are recognised as the primary educators of their children. Research in the area of early childhood emphasises the establishment and development of effective partnerships to support children and families during this critical period of schooling, especially in the smooth transition from home or an early childhood setting. Within the Early Years the diverse needs of each child will be provided for and the impact of socio-cultural influences on a child’s learning and disposition acknowledged. In this context, it is important to build foundations for lifelong learning, to prioritise successful literacy and numeracy teaching and to use purposeful play and active participation as a valuable medium for learning.

It is important to provide consistent practices from P-3 which acknowledges current research and philosophy, structures, practices, curriculum and pedagogy in the Early Years. St Anthony’s provides a flexible, supportive and encouraging learning environment, and designs an inclusive curriculum which demonstrates continuity and connectedness as children move through their Early Years of schooling.

OUTCOMES
At St Anthony’s we acknowledge:

♦ The integrated nature of physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development in young children is recognised through the provision of a curriculum and environment that supports active learning

♦ The influence of the family home as being highly significant in the education of the Early Year’s child and is demonstrated through the establishment of effective partnerships
Each child continues to develop a sense of self and a sense of God as they participate in classroom learning experiences and the religious life of the school.

Transition from home to school through positive learning experiences and programs that involves the importance of individual child and the family.

IMPLEMENTATION

At St Anthony's children in the Early Years will:

- Learn in an Early Years environment to promote cohesiveness in learning, resources and structures on school grounds that nurture and promote a shared vision and philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices which apply to all Early Years classrooms.

- Benefit from their teachers developing and sustaining appropriate collaborative partnerships with other Early Years Staff to ensure continuity of learning.

- Have their parents welcomed and encouraged to be involved in the Early Years program in order to build effective partnerships between home and school.

- See their teachers model gospel values, through love, kindness, patience, dependability and trust and integrate faith and values development into the curriculum.

- Be offered an exciting, fun, inquiry and play-based curriculum which meets the diverse and unique needs of each child, emotionally, socially, spiritually and intellectually.

- Benefit from evaluation that takes place daily with teacher observations of daily plans and children's behaviours and needs.

- Work with qualified, dedicated teachers and committed support staff utilising specialised facilities and equipment that provide a safe environment and caring community.

- Be integrated with the wider school community to ensure smooth transitions are made throughout the Early Years.

- They will be involved in Prayer and Merit Awards Assemblies, Sports Day and any additional school activities.
♦ Be involved in the specialist areas of Music, Drama and Physical Education as well as participating in activities with the Teacher Librarian.

COMMITMENT

St Anthony’s Catholic School, Alexandra Hills, in partnership with Brisbane Catholic Education, is committed to:

Community
~ Establishing effective partnerships with children, parents/carers and other professionals to enhance learning.
~ Exploring flexibility of learning groups.
~ Promoting continuity of learning for each child throughout the Early Years.

Staff
~ Familiarising all staff with the Early Years Policy and negotiating relevant professional development.
~ Providing appropriate staffing ratios to enable all children in the Early Years to experience success.
~ Working collaboratively with parents and community to support the child’s ongoing faith development.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM

~ Overview

The draft K(P)-12 Australian curriculum materials for English, Mathematics, Science and History have been released for public consultation and are available on ACARA’s Australian Curriculum Consultation Portal website. More information regarding the consultation process is available at http://www.acara.edu.au/consultation.html.

P-10 Curriculum

During July and August ACARA has held national forums of teachers and Learning Area specialists to provide feedback on the first round of revisions made after the K-10 consultation period. BCE has had two representatives at the English and Maths forums. Their feedback is now the subject of further revisions currently being made by ACARA. The outcomes of this work will be the focus on the final round of forums to be held in Sydney before the end of August. This will then provide ACARA with final feedback prior to the release of the Phase 1 curriculum later in the year.