



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Definition

Professional Development is a reflective learning process undertaken by the College community to assist with the maintenance and development of the skills required for knowledge and understanding of effective Catholic schooling.

Professional Development includes the formal and informal processes of learning, enrichment and support, which enable the College community to bring the Mission Statement to life.

Vision

The College strives to provide valid and reliable professional development for all staff to enable each staff member to achieve their potential.

Scriptural Context

For learning what wisdom and discipline are,
For understanding words of deep meaning,
For acquiring an enlightened attitude of mind
- virtue, justice and fair-dealing;
For teaching sound judgement to the ignorant,
And knowledge and sense to the young;
For perceiving the meaning of proverbs and obscure sayings,
The sayings of sages and their riddles.
Let the wise man listen and he will learn yet more,
And the man of discernment will acquire the art of guidance.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
Fools spurn wisdom and discipline.
Proverbs 1:1-7

Policy

St Patrick's College will provide relevant professional development opportunities for all staff. These opportunities will allow both personal and professional growth and will be linked to the strategic directions of the College.

Rationale

As a Catholic educational institution, St Patrick's College seeks to develop a culture of life-long learning. Professional Development at St Patrick's is based upon beliefs that the 'primary responsibility for creating a Christian school climate rests with the staff as individuals and as a community', and that 'the Catholic school is not simply a place where lessons are taught; it is a centre that has an operative educational philosophy attentive to the needs of today's youth and illumined by the Gospel message'. (*The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School*, pp 25-26, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988).

Professional Development enables staff to 'encourage these young men to strive to fulfil their full potential, to share their talents and become informed and compassionate men of faith who will contribute freely and creatively in the affairs of society'.

(St. Patrick's College Vision Statement 2000)

The tradition of high educational endeavour challenges the College to ensure that teachers build on their strengths through an effective Professional Development strategy that members of general staff are provided with similar opportunities. In the interest of enhancing the learning culture the policy challenges the whole staff to develop as a learning community.

Principles

Professional Development is viewed as an ongoing educational process which:

- focuses primarily upon issues that promote student learning and development, particularly boys education;
- fosters the personal and professional growth of College staff;
- supports the ongoing religious formation of College staff;
- recognises, respects, and builds; upon the expertise and experience of staff;
- acknowledges and is responsive to the expressed and perceived needs of the individual, the College through its Strategic plan, and the Catholic sector;
- acknowledges and is responsive to the current systemic, state, national and global agendas for education;
- provides clear direction and is based on consultative processes and professional dialogue;
- provides opportunities for individuals to develop an integrated professional development plan which is linked to career pathways;
- promotes the concept of life-long learning.

Policy Objectives

The Professional Development Program aims to:

- promote a working environment where members of the school community are eager to exchange ideas and information;

- ensure that all members of staff receive the support and opportunities they need to develop their professional knowledge and skills, and to be enthusiastic about their work;
- focus, for general staff, upon the enhancement of capabilities and the extension of expertise, leading to a highly motivated and well informed staff with high level of expertise;
- ensure that the school community can initiate, respond to, and critically appraise change;
- provide staff with opportunities for constructive performance feed-back.

Guidelines

- The Professional Development priorities, programs and strategies set for each year will be consistent with the principles set out in this policy, and will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan for that year;
- Annual plans for each staff member will outline both formal and informal programs and strategies, their intended outcomes, strategies for reviewing outcomes, and budget allocations;
- The plans for each faculty will include a range of school-based professional development practices such as peer support and mentoring;
- Annual professional development plans as part of the professional learning cycle will include a component for non-teaching staff;
- For the purposes of review (which could occur annually), accurate records should be maintained by each staff member, of all professional development practices undertaken within and outside the school;
- The full costs of professional development should be identifiable and transparent in the budget;
- A process for reporting and disseminating learning outcomes from programs should be developed, especially for those programs undertaken outside the College.
- Accurate records of all professional development activities including award-bearing studies undertaken by individuals, such as Post-Graduate university studies, should be kept;
- Staff are to be encouraged to submit their individual professional development needs to the Director of Administration for inclusion in the annual professional development plan. These will be included where they are consistent with College priorities.
- Periodic reporting to the Board, usually through the review of the Strategic Plan should occur;
- The procedures for the implementation of this policy will be developed by a group of staff members and reviewed annually.

Status of Policy: Ratified by the College Board, December 2009

Review: 2014