



# St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

## Early Childhood Education Policy

Initiated 2007

Revised 2013

Revised 2014

Due for review 2016

### Rationale

Each child is a precious and sacred gift from God created as an individual with their own unique talents and abilities. Catholic education seeks to create environments that nurture this individuality while enhancing learning and empowering young people to live the Catholic faith in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Childhood as “a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world” and recognise that quality service provision in the early years provides an opportunity to foster the development of the whole child (Early Childhood Australia, 2009).

Catholic education celebrates parents as children’s first and most influential educators and recognises that strong, collaborative partnerships between parents and educators are essential. Educators and educational leaders work collaboratively with parents to foster children’s spiritual, physical, cognitive, social and emotional learning and growth. Catholic schools assist parents who wish to develop their children as Christian men and women. Also they support parishes with their responsibility of supporting parents as the first educators of their child” (Mandate, para 6).

### Definition

Early Childhood Education and Care in the Western Australian Catholic education system refers to all education and care services provided to children from birth to 8 years of age as well as outside school hours care.

### Principles

- Leaders and educators in Catholic education recognise parents as children’s first and most influential educators. They develop collaborative partnerships with families based on understanding one another’s expectations, attitudes and strengths.
- Each child has individual needs and potential that shall be recognised, valued and responded to within a safe, caring and positive Catholic learning environment that fosters a sense of community.
- Early Childhood Education and Care promotes learning as a lifelong process.
- The learning environment, curriculum and pedagogy offered shall be inclusive of all children and be developmentally and culturally appropriate.

- Early Childhood Education and Care shall be aligned to current research on development, learning and teaching as it applies to children from Birth - 8 years old.
- Early Childhood Education and Care in Catholic schools shall recognise the influence of relevant system, state and national documents.
- All children enrolled in Early Childhood Education and Care in Catholic schools shall be the responsibility of the principal, centre manager and other designated staff.
- The early childhood programs in Catholic education involve learning that is a balance of intentional teaching and play based learning, that provide children with opportunities to explore, discover, imagine and engage in purposeful and meaningful experiences.

### **Procedures**

- Procedures for enrolment shall be in accord with the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) and Government policy statements.
- Early Childhood Education and Care programs shall be appropriately staffed according to the:
  - Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-C6 'Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools'
  - Current early learning and care legislation relevant for Western Australia
- All educators, educating and caring for children from birth to preprimary age, shall hold an early childhood qualification in accordance with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) approved list. It is highly desirable for teachers of Years 1-3 to hold an Early Childhood Education qualification.
- All educators in the early years and principals of primary and composite Catholic schools shall implement evidence based early childhood pedagogy and be engaged in appropriate ongoing professional development.
- Early Childhood Care and Education services, in conjunction with Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, shall develop and periodically review written policies and procedures as outlined in current legislation relevant for Western Australia.

### **School**

Period of operation:

- Catholic schools providing a three year old program shall offer sessions based on local need.
- Catholic schools shall provide Kindergarten children with a minimum of fifteen hours per week from commencement of the school year.
- Catholic schools shall provide Pre-Primary children with five full day sessions from the commencement of the school year.