



ACPPA Position Paper – Curriculum

About ACPPA - The Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association is the peak body representing Catholic Primary Principals in Australia. Formed in 1984, ACPPA represents Catholic Primary Principals and leaders from over 1220 primary schools and 150 combined primary/secondary schools, which educate more than 400,000 primary students, representing 20% of primary-aged children in Australia. ACPPA gives voice to contemporary issues facing education in Australia.

Executive Summary

Catholic primary schools are called to provide an education that forms the whole child — spiritually, intellectually, socially and emotionally. ACPPA affirms that curriculum in Catholic schools must be grounded in the Gospel, committed to academic excellence, and responsive to the diverse needs of every learner.

Catholic education recognises that every child is created in the image and likeness of God and has the capacity to flourish when supported through high-quality teaching, strong relationships, and a faith-filled community.

ACPPA advocates for curriculum that is coherent, evidence-informed, inclusive and focused on student growth. This requires strong curriculum leadership, effective teaching practices, meaningful student advocacy, and environments where every child experiences dignity, belonging and opportunity.

Background

Catholic primary schools operate within the Australian Curriculum while maintaining a distinctive mission centred on faith formation, human dignity and the common good. Curriculum is more than content delivery; it is a means through which students develop knowledge, character, faith, purpose and a commitment to serving others.

Primary education is a critical period of cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual development. Schools must therefore ensure curriculum design, teaching practice and wellbeing approaches work together to support student learning and flourishing.

Contemporary evidence highlights the importance of explicit teaching, strong knowledge foundations, purposeful assessment, differentiation and early intervention. Catholic schools must continue to build teacher and leader capability to ensure all students, including those experiencing disadvantage or additional needs, are supported to achieve their potential.

Key Issues

Curriculum Excellence and Coherence

Students require a curriculum that is structured, knowledge-rich and sequenced to build understanding over time. Effective curriculum implementation requires alignment between curriculum planning, assessment, intervention and classroom practice.

School leaders play a critical role in ensuring consistency, quality and continuous improvement across all learning areas.

Evidence-Informed Teaching and Learning

High-quality teaching is central to student success. ACPPA supports approaches that are informed by research, including explicit instruction, effective literacy and numeracy practices, formative assessment, and teaching strategies that support engagement and deep learning.

Teachers require ongoing professional learning and support to translate evidence into effective classroom practice.

Equity, Inclusion and Student Advocacy

Every child deserves access to excellent teaching, meaningful participation and appropriate support. Catholic schools have a responsibility to advocate for students, particularly those experiencing disadvantage, disability, vulnerability or barriers to learning.

Student advocacy includes ensuring equitable access to resources, listening to student voice, supporting wellbeing, and creating inclusive environments where every learner is known, valued and supported.

Faith Formation and Catholic Identity

Religious Education remains central to the mission of Catholic schools. It must be taught with academic rigour, theological integrity and a focus on developing spiritual literacy, moral discernment and commitment to justice.

Faith formation is strengthened when leaders, staff, families and parishes work together to create communities of faith, service and compassion.

ACPPA Position

ACPPA affirms that Catholic primary education must provide curriculum that forms the whole person and enables every child to flourish.

ACPPA advocates for:

- Curriculum approaches that balance academic excellence, faith formation, wellbeing and student growth.
- Strong curriculum leadership that ensures coherence, quality implementation and continuous improvement.
- Evidence-informed teaching practices supported through professional learning and collaborative practice.
- Inclusive approaches that identify and respond early to learning needs and remove barriers to participation.
- Student advocacy as an essential responsibility of Catholic schools, ensuring every child experiences dignity, voice and opportunity.
- Strong partnerships with families, dioceses, governments and community agencies to support student learning and wellbeing.
- Leadership development that equips principals as curriculum leaders, faith leaders and advocates for children.

ACPPA believes principals play a central role in creating the conditions for high-quality learning, professional excellence and strong Catholic identity. Through effective leadership, schools can ensure that every child is supported to grow academically, spiritually and personally.

ACPPA remains committed to advocating for curriculum, policies and resources that uphold excellence, equity and the flourishing of every student in Catholic primary education.