ACCREDITATION POLICY FOR STAFF IN THE DIOCESAN SCHOOL SYSTEM IN RESPECT TO THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

August 2013
PURPOSE
Catholic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay exist to educate and form students in Catholic discipleship. The leaders and staff of Catholic schools, and their ongoing formation, hold the central place in the fulfilment of this purpose. As the Second Vatican Council states:

Let teachers recognise that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world.

Declaration on Christian Education, 8

This Policy extends the previous Diocesan Schools Board Policy, ‘The Professional Requirements for Teachers of Religious Education’ (2001), having regard for the ‘Purpose of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay’ (2002), the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of NSW/ACT, Catholic Schools at a Crossroads (2007), and the Conference of NSW Diocesan Directors’ ‘An Accreditation Framework for Catholic Schools in NSW’ (2011).

This Policy recognises that Catholic school staff minister within the communion of disciples of Jesus on mission. It appreciates that members of staff appointed to the Diocesan School System need to possess personal qualities, dispositions and pastoral gifts that support the purpose of Broken Bay Catholic schools. The Diocesan School System will benefit from the formation of staff who, in order to form students, develop Catholic Character, making choices to continue to grow as disciples of Jesus.

The Policy will assist in the selection of staff, particularly for teaching and leadership positions in Catholic schools. It expects that all staff members will participate in formation appropriate to their respective roles.

POLICY FRAMEWORK
This Policy:
- recognises differential levels of religious formation according to the respective positions held by staff of the Diocesan Schools System.
- requires that all employees assuming their roles after the date of implementation either will have appropriate religious formation or participate in it within a specified period.
- requires that all employees continue to experience appropriate opportunities for formation.
- affirms the mutual responsibilities of individuals, schools and the CSO in the area of formation.

This policy specifies five levels of religious formation:
- for non-teaching support staff who work in a Catholic school or the CSO.
- for teachers in a Catholic school.
- for coordinators in a Catholic school and designated positions in the CSO.
- for teachers of Religious Education.
- for those in school and system leadership.

This Policy will be implemented progressively according to the dates specified.

Induction programs and required qualifications in this Policy apply only to newly appointed permanent staff from the dates of implementation.

Teachers with a temporary appointment are encouraged to fulfil these requirements.
POLICY CONTENT

1. When appointing staff in the first four categories, Principals should do so with a view to realising the purpose of this Policy.

2. When appointing senior leaders, the Director of Schools will do so with a view to realising the purpose of this Policy.

Support Staff

3. In addition to the qualifications and competencies pertinent to their role newly appointed school support staff members, appointed from January 2012 onwards will participate in the equivalent of a one day religious formation and induction program within their first year of employment. This program may be held over several sessions. They are expected to maintain currency through the equivalent of 15 hours over the next five years, generally through participation in staff mission and spiritual formation days.

Teachers

4. In addition to the qualifications and competencies pertinent to their professional role newly appointed permanent teachers, appointed for 2012 onwards, will participate in the equivalent of a two day formation and induction program within the first year of appointment. This program may be held over several sessions. Teachers are expected to maintain currency through the equivalent of 30 hours of appropriate formation and professional learning over each ensuing five years, generally through participation in staff mission and spiritual formation days.

Coordinators

5. In addition to the qualifications and competencies pertinent to their professional role newly appointed coordinators (eg. subject coordinators, year coordinators, primary school coordinators), appointed for 2013 onwards, will participate in the equivalent of a four day program of Catholic leadership formation provided by the Catholic Schools Office and the school over a four year period. In addition to maintaining the currency of requirements expected of permanent teachers (30 hours), coordinators are required to maintain coordinator currency through an equivalent of a further 15 hours of approved formation sessions over each five-year period.

Teachers of Religious Education

6.1 In addition to being persons appropriately formed as witnesses to the Gospel, newly appointed teachers of Religious Education ordinarily should be practising Catholics who:
   - have completed six undergraduate units in Religious Education/Theology in an undergraduate teaching degree at a Catholic institution (if undergraduate study commenced from the beginning of 2013 or afterwards); or
   - have undertaken four postgraduate units in Theology and/or Religious Education in an approved Catholic program at a tertiary institution.
   - have complied with the 2001 Policy for the Professional Requirements for Teachers of Religious Education,
     - through accreditation or registration as teachers of Religious Education in the Diocese of Broken Bay or another Australian Diocese prior to 31 December 2011; or those who are deemed to hold equivalent qualifications; or
     - through attainment of the equivalent of four undergraduate units in Religious Education/Theology or the Certificate of Religious Education (NSW) in an approved Catholic program at a tertiary institution, provided these units were commenced no later than 2012; or
6.2 An appointed teacher’s letter of appointment may provisionally accredit formation for a period of four years on the condition of attainment of these requirements.

6.3 In addition to the normal currency of religious formation for permanent teachers, Religious Education teachers should undertake an equivalent of three days of formation or professional learning over five years specifically related to the teaching of Religious Education.

School and System Leadership

7.1 Leadership at this level refers to:
- Principals, Assistant Principals and Religious Education Coordinators
- Certain designated Catholic Schools Office senior staff and Education Officers

In addition to the qualifications and competencies pertinent to their professional role, persons appointed to these roles for 2012 onwards, must:
- be practising Catholics accredited to teach Religious Education and appropriately formed to be witnesses to the Gospel.
- have completed a minimum of four units of study at a postgraduate level in Religious Education, or Theology, or specific Catholic Leadership in an approved Catholic program in a tertiary institution.

(Youth Ministry Coordinators also are required to have these qualities and qualifications.)

Since they require credible academic strength in Religious Education or Theology in order to perform their role, Religious Education Coordinators appointed for 2012 onwards, must:
- have completed in an approved Catholic program in a tertiary institution a minimum of six units at postgraduate level, four of which must be specifically in Religious Education or Theology.

7.2 An individual’s Contract may specify provisional accredit for a period of three years conditional upon attainment of these requirements.

7.3 In addition to maintaining the currency of requirements expected of permanent teachers, these leaders should undertake the equivalent of a further five days of formation, professional learning or formal study over five years specifically related to leadership in mission.

CONTACT PERSON

The Diocesan School System staff member who has been given responsibility by the Diocesan Schools Board for the implementation of this policy and policy objectives is the Assistant Director (Mission).

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

The Catholic Schools Office will develop specific procedures and oversee appropriate school-based and system formation, induction and religious leadership opportunities, and monitor school staff mission and formation activities in order to implement this Policy.
POLICY REVIEW
This Policy is to be reviewed periodically and not less frequently than once every five years from the date of implementation of the Policy.

POLICY DATES
Policy date of completion of formulation and adoption September 2011
Date of current version August 2013
Date of next review September 2016

Authorised by
Bishop David L Walker
Bishop of Broken Bay