

St Dominic's School

Early Years Philosophy

Secure, respectful & reciprocal relationships

At St Dominic's School, we value the importance of nurturing secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships. *When children develop secure relationships with trustworthy adults, they feel more confident and able to learn* (Principle 1, Early Years Learning Framework, DEEWR, 2009).

We believe that...

- in order for children to learn effectively, they need to feel safe, valued and respected
- children should be provided with an environment and experiences that provide challenges to build their resilience and confidence
- children should feel safe and supported to become risk-takers and 'have a go'

Partnerships between early childhood educators and families

At St Dominic's School, we value the importance of partnering with families. *When families and educators work together, they can enhance children's wellbeing and learning achievement* (Principle 2, Early Years Learning Framework, DEEWR, 2009).

We...

- value the role of parents as the primary educators and work to build positive relationships with them
- believe that learning is enhanced when there is mutual support and respect between parents and educators
- value the importance of two-way communication between parents and educators in order to establish common understandings and to ensure clarity and transparency
- believe in providing opportunities for families to take part in our learning experiences.

Literacy & numeracy: essential skills for all children to develop

At St Dominic's School, we believe that literacy and numeracy skills are essential skills for all children to develop. *Positive attitudes and competencies in literacy and numeracy are essential for children's successful learning. The foundations for these competencies are built in early childhood* (DEEWR, 2009, p. 38).

We believe...

- that children learn literacy and numeracy most effectively through planned and intentional play-based experiences that are engaging and stimulating. We believe in providing a balanced approach to teaching and learning that also includes explicit teaching
- in providing strong foundations for literacy and numeracy so that all students become successful learners
- in supporting the development of early oral language skills to lay the foundations for future social and academic success.

Our faith community...

St Dominic's School is founded on the Dominican tradition of truth, knowledge and love. Our school



strives to create in all community members a firm foundation of the Catholic ethos so that all may develop a loving and meaningful relationship with God.

As a faith community we...

- believe in nurturing the development of the whole child: mind, body and spirit
- believe in guiding our students towards a loving and meaningful relationship with God
- nurture students to be examples of the Spirit of Jesus by showing love, care, mercy and respect

Children are successful, competent and capable learners who are active participants in their own learning

At St Dominic's School, we believe in the competence and capability of children. Knowing children's capabilities and using these as a starting point for new learning helps us to recognise children as competent learners.

We believe that when children are viewed as active participants, they are given opportunities *to exceed any pre-conceived expectations about what children can do and learn* (DEEWR, 2009, p. 9). *When children have opportunities to make choices, to attempt tasks for themselves, and to take on increasing responsibilities, their sense of themselves as competent members of society grows* (ECA, 2013, p. 1).

We believe...

- that learning is developmental and a life-long process.
- in the importance of targeting learning towards each student's developmental needs in order to provide opportunities for success
- in the importance of supporting students to become active participants and develop a sense of agency by providing opportunities for choice
- in promoting active learning through the implementation of hands-on, play-based and inquiry experiences

Inclusion & belonging

At St Dominic's School, we aim to build a strong sense of identity, belonging and connectedness. During curriculum decision-making processes, we take into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity. This ensures that all children's experiences are recognised and valued.

We believe...

- that all children have the right to learn
- that students at St Dominic's School should experience a sense of inclusion and belonging.
- in providing opportunities and an environment that promote a sense of inclusion and belonging.
- in providing a differentiated learning program that is inclusive and caters for the diversity of the St Dominic's School community

References:

Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra, ACT: DEEWR.

Early Childhood Australia (2013). Promoting Independence and Agency. *National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program e-Newsletter* No. 642013