



## **Questions and Answers on the Draft Religious Education Curriculum for Catholic Education in the Diocese of Parramatta**

We know some of you may have questions about the Draft New Religious Education Curriculum. Below are responses to some of the questions that have been asked. At the end of this document we explain how you can also find out more information.

### **What is happening?**

Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta is updating the Religious Education Curriculum taught in schools in the Diocese of Parramatta. This process began with a review in 2014, and is continuing. We will be finalising the curriculum after we are satisfied we have consulted widely.

### **Has the Draft Curriculum been finalised?**

No. The curriculum is still in draft mode. In Term 3 2020 a trial of the first draft of the curriculum is taking place. We will be monitoring the trial closely. We will continually review the curriculum. The next draft will be produced following the trial and further consultation.

### **Can amendments to the curriculum be made?**

Yes. It is expected that the feedback received from our students, parents, clergy, parishioners, teachers and others will help shape the next stage.

### **Why is there commentary in the media and on social media about this curriculum?**

The Draft New Curriculum is all about providing children and young people with a Catholic view from Scripture and Tradition about issues that they are wondering about.

Some commentators have suggested that the Draft New Curriculum is presenting a perspective on these issues that is not consistent with our Catholic teaching. This is inaccurate.

The curriculum is about giving our young people a way to talk about important questions in a way that is consistent with our shared faith.

### **What does a young person's sexuality or gender identity have to do with their faith? Has the Church's teaching changed on this?**

Parents are children's first teachers (Canon 793 §1), particularly on these matters. At Catholic schools, the approach to these sensitive matters will be firmly based in the traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church.

A very small section of our new curriculum involves 15 and 16 year-old adolescents (Year 10 only) exploring the Catholic view on issues like sexuality and gender identity. This content will be age appropriate.

This learning is aimed at encouraging students to become attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible adults.

This supports the teachings of the Catholic Church. We are using methods of inquiry that date back 700 years to St Thomas Aquinas, which are still relevant today.

### **Is Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta changing the teachings of the Catholic Church with this new curriculum?**

The new curriculum does not change the content of the Catholic Church's teachings.

The Magisterium of the Catholic Church (the way the Catholic Church interprets the Word of God) underpins the content of the Draft New Curriculum and follows the teachings of Pope Francis, the head of the Magisterium.

Further, this Draft New Curriculum is grounded in Canon 803 §2, "The instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine; teachers are to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life."

The Draft New Curriculum is about updating the learning methods to help young people understand and embrace our Catholic Traditions and Faith.

### **Has any part of the curriculum been influenced by a particular point of view?**

We have been rigorous in our consultation process ensuring we speak to people from many points of view.

At the same time, we have consciously founded our curriculum on the concepts of Catholic Social Teaching. We know parents send their children to Catholic schools to learn the Church's rich Tradition of social justice and to live out our faith in daily life.

### **Why are children learning about social media in religious studies?**

Social media is a big part of the lives of young people. Our curriculum teaches children to seek the truth and inform their own conscience, and to think critically about what they are seeing and hearing on social media.

This learning is also aimed at encouraging students to become attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible adults.

### **I have a question – who can I ask about the new curriculum?**

More information can be found at <https://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/Learning/Religious-Education>.

We have a dedicated email address [feedback@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:feedback@parra.catholic.edu.au) for questions.

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