

Religious Education (RE) Reference Group

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Pursuant to Canons §804.1, §804.2 and §806.1, the local Ordinary carries responsibility for the teaching of Religious Education (RE) in all Catholic schools located within his Diocese. He is to be attentive to the needs of students such that they receive formation and education in their Catholic faith, which is responsive to educational research, and ensure that RE teachers are afforded every opportunity to be outstanding in their faithful witness as teachers.

Given the significant amount of time that has elapsed since the last review of religious education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, coupled with significant changes in the governance and structure of Catholic schooling, a review of religious education was commissioned by the Archbishop of Melbourne in 2022. A report was published in November 2023 making a series of considered, future-focused recommendations committed to the renewal of RE in our Archdiocese.

Purpose

The Reference Group will oversee implementation of recommendations of that review, primarily the development of a new RE Curriculum for Catholic schools in Melbourne Archdiocese. The Reference Group will be guided by and find inspiration in the doctrine and teaching of the Church, official documents of the Church especially that of the Second Vatican Council and teaching of the Holy Father. A new curriculum will be accompanied by resources that will support teachers in achieving outcomes of excellence in RE.

Membership

Chair: Br David Hall fms has been appointed the Chair of the Reference Group by the Archbishop.

Membership

Members will be representatives of a cross-section of stakeholder groups.

Responsibilities:

The Reference Group will:

- Offer a framework that accounts for the mission to evangelise, capacity for catechetical instruction, and the building of academic excellence.
- Offer a timeline for implementation of the recommendations.

- Engage with expertise from MACS, RI and MPJP schools to ensure RE approaches are directed towards excellence in our shared faith tradition.
- Engage with the RE Review Panel.
- Offer advice on theological and pedagogical principles that can inform a contemporary approach to Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in light of the recommendations.
- Guide the writing team on learning progression for an F-12 curriculum.
- Identify and recommend appropriate resourcing for RE teachers, to assist in their mission of Catholic education and the spiritual and academic flourishing of their students.
- Support the development of instructional materials which promote excellence in RE.
- Explore and make recommendations on ways for the future RE Curriculum and resources to be supported as part of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Catholic tertiary contexts.
- Consider the contemporary needs of students and teachers in primary and secondary Catholic school learning environments, and the current cultural contexts of RE teaching, in any advice.

Deliverables:

- Revised RE curriculum successfully implementing RE Curriculum Report (2023) that is Christo-centric, mission aligned, pedagogically and developmentally appropriate, content-rich and shaped for contemporary need.
- New pedagogy for RE is firmly grounded in evidence-based teaching practices including explicit guidance on instructional best practice.
- Strengthening support for primary schools to facilitate a sensory based approach (such as Godly play or Catechesis of the Good Shepherd) for F-2 as a foundation.

Governance and Support (Reporting):

- The Reference Group will report regularly to the Archbishop through the Chair
- Secretariat, project planning support and writing will be supported by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS).

Meetings:

- The Reference Group will meet regularly in person or online.

Timeline

- The Chair will recommend a feasible timeframe in consultation with the Reference Group and the Archbishop.