TEACHING POLICY

Rationale:

Excellent education for all students.

More student opportunities and better outcomes.

Reference: The Blueprint for Government Schools - "The Principles of Learning and Teaching"

- To build consistent and comprehensive pedagogical approaches within and across schools, while still allowing flexibility, innovation and local decision making at the school level
- To increase teacher and student capacity and outcomes
- To focus teaching to meet the needs of student diversity
- To improve teacher confidence, morale and professional practice
- To strengthen learning communities within and beyond the school.

Student learning is greatly affected by the quality of teaching that they experience. Teachers therefore must ensure that their teaching skills, knowledge and commitment are of the highest standard.

Aims:

Reading, writing and numeracy skills are a key foundation of learning however, students also need a range of other skills to operate effectively in our changing society.

Teaching practices therefore must:

- relate to what students learn,
- facilitate learning,
- relate to how learning is assessed and,
- reflect how student achievements are reported.

Implementation:

Students learn best when:

1. The learning environment is supportive and productive.
   In learning environments that reflect this principle the teacher:
   - 1.1 builds positive relationships through knowing and valuing each student
   - 1.2 promotes a culture of value and respect for individuals and their communities
   - 1.3 uses strategies that promote students' self-confidence and willingness to take risks with their learning
   - 1.4 ensures each student experiences success through structured support, the valuing of effort, and recognition of their work.

2. The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self motivation.
   In learning environments that reflect this principle the teacher:
   - 2.1 encourages and supports students to take responsibility for their learning
   - 2.2 uses strategies that build skills of productive collaboration.

3. Students' needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program.
   In learning environments that reflect this principle the teacher:
   - 3.1 uses strategies that are flexible and responsive to the values, needs and interests of individual students
   - 3.2 uses a range of strategies that support the different ways of thinking and learning
   - 3.3 builds on students' prior experiences, knowledge and skills
   - 3.4 capitalises on students' experience of a technology rich world.

4. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application.
   In learning environments that reflect this principle the teacher:
   - 4.1 plans sequences to promote sustained learning that builds over time and emphasises connections between ideas
   - 4.2 promotes substantive discussion of ideas
   - 4.3 emphasises the quality of learning with high expectations of achievement

- 4.4 uses strategies that challenge and support students to question and reflect
- 4.5 uses strategies to develop investigating and problem solving skills
- 4.6 uses strategies to foster imagination and creativity.

5. Assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning.
   In learning environments that reflect this principle the teacher:
   - 5.1 designs assessment practices that reflect the full range of learning program objectives
   - 5.2 ensures that students receive frequent constructive feedback that supports further learning
   - 5.3 makes assessment criteria explicit
   - 5.4 uses assessment practices that encourage reflection and self assessment
   - 5.5 uses evidence from assessment to inform planning and teaching.

6. Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom.
   In learning environments that reflect this principle the teacher:
   - 6.1 supports students to engage with contemporary knowledge and practice
   - 6.2 plans for students to interact with local and broader communities and community practices
   - 6.3 uses technologies in ways that reflect professional and community practices.

<u>Profession Code of Ethics:</u>

As teachers, we use our expert knowledge to provide experiences that inspire and facilitate student learning. We are a significant force in developing a knowledgeable, creative, productive and democratic society. The values that underpin our profession are **integrity, respect** and **responsibility**.

We demonstrate our **integrity** by:
- Acting in the best interests of students
- Maintaining a professional relationship with students, parents, colleagues and the community
- Behaving in ways that respect and advance the profession.

We demonstrate our **respect** by:
- Acting with care and compassion
- Treating students fairly and impartially
- Holding our colleagues in high regard

- Acknowledging parents as partners in the education of their children.

We demonstrate our **responsibility** by;
- Providing quality teaching
- Maintaining and developing our professional practice
- Working cooperatively with colleagues in the best interests of our students.

Reference: The Victorian Institute of Teaching

<u>Understandings:</u>

- Teachers acknowledge that students deserve the very best teaching possible.

- Teachers accept that students be provided with generic whole class lessons that do not allow for, or are not focussed upon, individual difference or need.

- Learning experiences will be challenging, engaging, and involve practical 'hands-on' activities and first-hand encounters where ever practicable.

- Individual learning plans will be developed for students working above or below their expected level of achievement identifying targets and achievement goals that reflect the curriculum and each child's individual needs.

- Parents will be kept well informed of their child's progress, will be invited to be active participants in their child's learning, and will be provided with ongoing opportunities to improve their own teaching skills.

- Prior to each unit of work, students will be assessed against relevant curriculum learning outcomes with subsequent learning experiences reflecting each student's needs.

- Learning opportunities will be open-ended, cater for the multiple intelligences of all students, will develop thinking skills, and will be based upon cooperative 'whole child' learning strategies.

- Both extension and intervention opportunities will be provided for all students according to need.

- Partnerships will be formed with agencies, organisations and members of the wider community where appropriate to broaden teaching and learning opportunities for students.

- Teachers will become skilled practitioners in the use of learning technologies, and will routinely encourage the use of technologies to enhance learning opportunities.

- All teachers will undertake to enhance their skills by development and active involvement in personal professional development programs.

- Teachers will be invited to School Council meetings to inform councillors of school programs.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. Performance and Development Culture:

Schools that provide an effective performance and development culture for their staff also create a more enriching and supportive environment for staff and better outcomes for students. Creating and sustaining a performance and development culture will have significant benefits for schools including:

- Improved student outcomes, by identifying areas for the improvement of individual teacher's professional practice and providing targeted professional development to address these areas, and
- Creating a more enriching, supportive and motivating environment for staff.

A sustainable performance and development system in schools improves student outcomes by:

- identifying areas for the improvement of individual teacher's professional practice, and
- providing targeted professional development to do so.

2. Professional Recognition Program:

An effective school system provides all school staff, including principals, with objective,
constructive and actionable feedback on their performance and opportunities for them
to learn and grow.

To achieve this it is recognised that the highest standards of teaching and learning in Victorian Government Schools is essential and that performance and development arrangements should recognise high performance, address low performance and include targeted professional development that supports ongoing professional growth.

The performance and development arrangements for all school staff are designed to:

- Support the school in meeting its responsibilities to students, parents and to government through linking staff performance with achievement of school and government objectives;

- Provide feedback on performance which will support ongoing learning and development of staff with a focus on ways in which student learning can be improved;

- Enhance the capacity of staff in promotion positions to apply the leadership and management competencies required in their positions;

- Recognise effective performance through salary progression;

- Provide a supportive environment for improving performance where the required standards are not met.

Teachers have a significant role in developing and implementing the most effective teaching and learning strategies in their classrooms and striving for consistent, high quality classroom teaching which will deliver improvements in student learning and directly impact on the achievement of Government education targets.

NB: Consistent with the *Victorian Government Schools Agreement* salary progression for teachers is not automatic. The Agreement provides for salary progression linked to achievement against the applicable professional standards as set out in Appendix 1 and the use of relevant data. Teachers must demonstrate that all the relevant standards have been met to receive salary progression. Indicators have been developed for the standards at each level. The indicators, whilst not mandatory, define ways in which the standard can be demonstrated and will assist in the development and assessment of performance and development plans. It is expected that all staff will participate in an annual review process.