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Telling Our Story

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Vision Statement

St John the Apostle Primary School is an all-embracing educational community. We are inspired by Jesus and are united in love, truth and courage. We are on earth the heart of God.

Mission Statement

As a learning community we strive to:
- inspire faith and spirituality, teach Catholic Traditions and encourage a passionate response to the needs of our contemporary society;
- encourage all members of our school community to be critical, reflective, life-long learners who are committed to doing their best;
- provide a safe and nurturing environment where persistence and resilience are valued and where the dignity and well being of self and others are paramount;
- allocate appropriate resources to ensure a rich and equitable learning environment exists.
St John the Apostle
United in Love, Truth and Courage

**School Motto and History**

**Our School Motto**

United in love, truth and courage.

**A Brief History**

St John the Apostle School was opened in 1979 by Archbishop (later Cardinal) Edward Clancy. The Foundation Principal was Mr Ken Evenden and the Parish Priest was Fr Harry Morissey msc.

The symbols on the school badge are (from top left in a clockwise direction):

- The two lions are from the coat of arms of Cardinal Edward Clancy, who opened the school while he was Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn. The book and quill remind us that the school is named after the author of one of the four gospels. The eagle is the symbol for St John in the Book of Revelation. The chalice reminds us that St John was present at the Last Supper, and the large pot refers to the legend that he was boiled in oil.

The motto of the school is a fitting reminder of the qualities shown by St John in his relationship with his God.

The school has four house teams, named after people from four sectors of society, each meritng imitation. The houses are Florey (the academic sector - Howard Florey was an Australian Nobel Prize winner in medicine), McKay (the sporting sector - Heather McKay was a champion Australian squash player), Namatjira (the cultural sector - Albert Namatjira was a famous Australian Aboriginal artist), and O'Brien (the spiritual sector - Archbishop O'Brien was for many years Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn).
St John the Apostle School is a Catholic Primary school within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn. We serve the Catholic parish of St John the Apostle, Kippax.
Father in heaven,
We the family of St John’s Primary School,
Ask you to unite us all in love, truth and courage.
We want to love you and each other.
We want to learn the truth that Jesus taught us.
Give us the courage to live good lives.
Help us to treat each other as special members of our special family.
Create a close bond between pupils and teachers and parents.
Give us pride in our school, and may our school always be proud of us.
We thank you for our school and our families.
But especially, we thank you for being our Father who gives us life and love.
Help us always to live as your children.
May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved
Forever
St John the Apostle
Pray for us
St John the Apostle School
United in Love truth and Courage
School Song

We are a part of Our Lord who went before,
The name that he gave and the badge that he wore.
May the love of our Saviour and His presence that lives on,
Brightly gaze on the banner of St John’s.
We’ll work and we’ll play with all our might
In the truth never fearing the light.
St John’s, St John’s throughout our lives we’ll always try
To hold our values forever high.
St John the Apostle School
United in Love truth and Courage
Background

St John the Apostle Primary School opened in 1979 and is in its 31st year. The first Principal Mr Ken Evenden, was charged with the responsibility of choosing a motto for the new school. His choice of “United in Love, Truth and Courage” is as relevant today as it was 31 years ago. It speaks to us of the importance of being faithful to our God, of caring for others and having the strength to stand up for what is right.

Our Vision states that ‘St John the Apostle Primary School is an all-embracing educational community. We are inspired by Jesus and are united in love, truth and courage. We are on earth the heart of God.’

St John the Apostle School has an enrolment of 377 students in 16 classes from Kindergarten – Yr 6. We are a Catholic systemic school in a Missionary of the Sacred Heart Parish. We are truly blessed to be part of the MSC family. Our priests play an active role in the formation of faith for families and staff and display a genuine commitment to the well-being of all in the community. This connection to the MSC with their sense of Heart Spirituality helps shape our culture.

The MSC priests, over the school’s 31 years, have supported the school with visits, celebration of masses and attendance at many of the school’s liturgical celebrations. Our Parish Priest Fr Michael Fallon msc and the assistant priest, currently Fr Mark Hanns msc, have continued this commitment. Father Mark has been our school chaplain and he regularly visited the school to spend time with both students and staff. Class masses, weekend masses, whole school masses, Sacramental Programs, staff liturgies, staff spirituality days, leadership and graduation ceremonies, are ways in which the priests support the endeavours of St John the Apostle Primary School. We look forward to welcoming our new assistant priest this year.

The setting aside of a room to be the School Chapel has helped overcome the difficulties of distance between the school and the church and has provided a sacred prayer space for staff, parents and students.
The Sacramental Program is a Home-based program. While much of the preparation is done at school, the involvement of the parents in Home groups and the involvement of the priests are important to the program’s success.

Weekly Focus Assemblies has given an opportunity for the whole school to gather as a community for a time of prayer and reflection.

Teachers are using the revised version of the Archdiocesan RE Guidelines “Treasures New and Old” and are using the Praxis methodology. Most staff have gained qualifications in Religious Education.

Class assemblies occur a number of times a year, with each class is rostered to take a turn to lead prayer, entertain and demonstrate what they have learned. Merit awards are handed out, successes are celebrated and children are reminded of school rules. Parents regularly attend these assemblies. Line-up assemblies, where the school prayer is said and National Anthem is sung, occur twice a week.

The partnership between home and school is an important one. Parent involvement in the life of the school is very good. There are a large number of parent or community volunteers who assist in a number of ways including:

- Classroom/excursion helpers
- Clothing pool
- Tuckshop
- Library
- Wakakiri helpers
- Fete workers
- Working bees
- Attendance at school assemblies and liturgies
- Carnival helpers
- Sewing group
- Gardeners
- Community Council
- Choir
- Seasons for Growth

Good communication is vital to foster the home/school partnership. The weekly Newsletter, beginning of year Parent Information Evenings and Information Sheet, school web page, Sacramental Parent Evenings, Student Progress Reports, Teacher/Parent interviews and End of Year Reports are the main ways of keeping parents informed. Parents who have assisted the school are thanked in the Newsletter and individually with Certificates of Appreciation. Parent queries/concerns are dealt with in a friendly and professional manner and follow up of issues is deemed appropriate. Parent sessions explaining components of the Maths program, informing parents of the Seasons for Growth program, helping children with reading and helping
parents access class home pages have been held over the last two years. Parents may request interviews throughout the year.

Our students are a wonderful group who work hard to become the best they can be. They are well mannered, respectful and keen to be involved in their learning. The Yr 6 students happily accept the responsibilities of leadership and are great ambassadors of our traditions. There are a number of programs in place that support our students including:

- Buddy groups;
- Kindergarten orientation days
- Merit awards
- ‘Seasons for Growth’ program
- Student Representative Council
- The election of House Captains
- The Yr 6 Leadership team

St John the Apostle School staff recognise that providing a rigorous education program is the core business of the school. Teachers are all well qualified and are very dedicated to both their own professional development and to ensuring that the needs of the students are being met. Teaching and learning strategies are varied and interesting, catering for the range of abilities and learning styles of the students in their care.

Our Mission Statement is concerned with developing a learning community who strives to:

- inspire faith and spirituality, teach Catholic Traditions and encourage a passionate response to the needs of our contemporary society;

- encourage all members of our school community to be critical, reflective, life-long learners who are committed to doing their best;

- provide a safe and nurturing environment where persistence and resilience are valued and where the dignity and well being of self and others are paramount;

- allocate appropriate resources to ensure a rich and equitable learning environment exists.

St John’s staff willingly accepts our obligation to ensuring that instruction methodology remains current, evidenced by our willingness to regularly review documentation and practices in the Key Learning Areas. Over a number of years there has been a growing awareness of the need for teachers to be well versed in the use of technology. The Community Council support this resolution by generously providing appropriate funding.
Our commitment to the pastoral care and well-being of our community has shaped a number of our policies including:

- Pastoral Care/ Student Welfare and Management Policy
- School Fees Policy
- Crisis Management Policy
- Critical Events Policy
- Sharps Policy
- Sun Smart Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Health Promoting Schools Policy
- Chemical Safety Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Road Safety Policy
- Student Class Allocation Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Budget Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- Library Policy
- Student Leadership Policy
- Professional Development Policy
- RFF Policy
- Induction of New Staff Policy
- Job Share Policy
- Homework Policy
- Hall Hire Policy
- Safe Conduct of School Sport Policy
- Before and After School Care Policy
- Assessment and Reporting Policy
- Media Usage Policy
- Bus Policy
- Programming Policy
- Child Protection- Responding to Allegations Policy

The success of St John the Apostle School is enriched by the willingness of each section of the community; students, staff and parents to work towards the common goal of providing a rich learning environment and a shared vision of Catholic education.
The St John the Apostle School Culture

Philosophy

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Relationships

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Behavoural Expectations

Key values & beliefs

Traditions

Catholic Ethos

(O’Donnell)
2001
**Philosophy**

St John the Apostle School is a Catholic School and as such we are grounded in the ethos of Catholic Education. Our beliefs are based on recognising Jesus in each other, respecting the dignity of each person, our actions grounded in Gospel values. We seek to integrate faith and culture in the lives of all in our community.

Our School Motto of “United in Love, Truth and Courage” encourages us to be caring of others, faithful to our God and to have the strength to fight for what is right.

We believe in ensuring that each member of the community is given the opportunity to reach his/her full potential. We offer a diverse and challenging range of experiences designed to provide opportunities for growth and development.

Teachers are encouraged to take on leadership roles. In this way, a sense of shared ownership is fostered. We believe that teachers should be assisted to develop their skills and so be able to seek promotion to Leadership positions in the future.

Ultimately, St John the Apostle Primary School exists for, and on the behalf of, its student body. It is beholden upon all members of the community to endeavour to offer the students a well-rounded and meaningful education based on Christian values.

**Purpose**

Our purpose is to instil in children an abiding respect and commitment to the Gospel and love of the traditions of the Catholic Church. We provide an education that allows each member of the community to reach their full potential. To that end we have developed curricula, policies and procedures that fosters a love of life long learning and a readiness to face challenges confidently.

**Policies**

When writing policies, St John the Apostle School, considers their implications for us as a faith-filled community. Our policies identify areas of responsibility beyond issues related to curriculum. We address issues that are important to ensuring the safety and well being of students, staff and parents. In light of our commitment to equity, policies are also put in place that clearly set out
the protocols that we will follow to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our community.

**Relationships**

St John the Apostle School endeavours to help each member of the community develop a loving relationship with God. We provide opportunities for prayerful celebrations, including Mass, Sacramental Programs, time for reflection and meditation.

We have in place systems whereby relationships between all members of the community are meaningful and built on mutual respect. Student Representative Council, Yr 6 Leadership, Seasons for Growth, Buddy Classes, Community Council, School Board, Parent Information Evenings and Parent Teacher Interviews are some of the ways that we build relationships.

In all relationships with each other we encourage generosity, kindness and respect. We clearly articulate our behavioural expectations for all members of our community to ensure that individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

St John the Apostle School has a number of behavioural expectations that we see as important, including basic courtesies and good manners. The community is encouraged to recognise that students, parents and staff have both Rights and Responsibilities. Our Pastoral Care/Student Welfare and Management Policy outlines our beliefs and expectations.

Within St John the Apostle School decision making is a consultative process, characterized by rich discussion, with staff encouraged to state their position, honestly and without fear. Within this culture staff must be prepared to talk about issues that concern them and attempt to understand the points of view of others.

Parent input is welcomed and parents are invited to voice both their concerns and their approval. Parents are listened to in a courteous manner and follow up of concerns is part of the process.

**Traditions**

St John the Apostle School endeavours to teach members of the community about the rich traditions of the Catholic Faith. We use the revised Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines, “Treasures New and Old”. There are a number of traditions that we hold dear including our Parish based Sacramental Program, class and stage level Masses, our Focus Assemblies, Yr
6 Leadership Program, Yrs 5 and 6 camps and a number of other practices that help us build community, including staff liturgies and celebrations.

**Key Values and Beliefs**

The centrality of the Gospel values to our community means that we are committed to offering an education program where every child can experience success.

We are committed to recognizing and supporting the partnership between parents and school and actively seek opportunities for parents to be involved. Parent volunteers are welcome and their generosity is acknowledged and appreciated.

The community is involved in promoting social justice, including the raising of money for charitable and missionary endeavours.

Our School Fees Policy recognises that not all families wanting a Catholic Education can afford the financial burden imposed. Fee assistance is given to families who are unable to meet this commitment. Families seeking help are assisted by the Finance Secretary to determine what they can reasonably pay. Families have been given financial assistance to attend camps and other excursions. Our School Fee Committee supports this position.

**Practices**

In an effort to ensure the best outcomes for our students we have a commitment to providing an education program that is rigorous. We are working towards developing a differentiated and integrated curriculum, so that all students can reach their full potential. Our Special Needs/Resource Program assists students who are below their stage level and we are developing a program for students who are working above their cohort. We have a number of Extra Curricula programs that allow students to develop other skills.

**Environment**

There is evidence of St John the Apostle being a Catholic School through the display of crucifixes and other religious icons. The mosaic in the foyer is immediately noticed on entering the front door and our Vision and Mission Statement is displayed. Each classroom has a prayer table. There is a prayer space in the staff room where staff are encouraged to write prayers of petition and thanksgiving. Our chapel provides a sacred space for classes and staff to celebrate liturgies.
The physical environment of the school is important. Classrooms are kept tidy and aesthetically pleasing. Children’s work is displayed; classrooms have adequate lighting, heating and ventilation. Furniture is purchased as needed and students take pride in keeping their rooms tidy.

**Curriculum**

St John the Apostle School follows the Curriculum Framework for ACT Schools Every Chance to Learn. Each year we participate in the Curriculum Validation process to validate our teaching and to ensure that our curriculum practices are current. Members of the Leadership Team oversee the Curriculum Process. The School’s Budget recognises the importance of providing up to date resources in all Key Learning Areas.

The success of St John the Apostle School is enriched by the willingness of each section of the community; students, staff and parents to work towards the common goal of providing a rich learning environment and a shared vision of Catholic education.