



BUNBURY CATHOLIC COLLEGE

RETREAT POLICY

Originally released: 2018
Due for review: 2020

‘Catholic schools need to provide the best apprenticeship that they can in the Christian life.’ (Mandate, para 59). School retreats are an integral part of the life-long faith formation of young people. They promote systematic, intentional catechesis as part of the comprehensive evangelisation of students.

Catholic school retreats are relational at heart. To be effective, retreat programs acknowledge the individual’s unique reality and bring the power of the Gospel into contemporary culture in a way that engages and empowers young people.

The Catholic school retreat aims to put students in ‘communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ’ (GDC, 80). Through the retreat experience students come to know Christian love and are exposed to a Gospel centred way of life. Students hear the Gospel and are empowered to connect the Gospel message to their lives and to find ways of continuing the Church’s mission. They participate in the life of the Christian community through liturgy and through activities which emphasise growth in Christian faith.

DEFINITIONS

The term retreat refers to time away from the normal school program where participants have the opportunity to reflect on their relationship with God. The emphasis is on students’ awareness of the presence of God in their lives. Retreats may vary in style and duration. They include experiences of prayer, discussions, reflective silence and quiet time alone. The celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are often included in Retreat experiences at Bunbury Catholic College.

SCOPE

The CEWA Retreat Policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia.

PRINCIPLES

- At Bunbury Catholic College retreats aim to provide experiences for students to know, contemplate and celebrate Jesus.
- Retreats are an integral part of the life of Bunbury Catholic College. They are designed to be inclusive, purposeful and meaningful and take into account the culture, developmental needs and experiences of students.
- Retreats at Bunbury Catholic College complement the catechesis experiences offered by the College.

- Retreat planning takes into consideration the charism, ethos and mission of the school, both Marist and Mercy Traditions.
- Retreats are planned in a way that engages students in rich experiences of Catholic symbol and ritual.
- Retreat staff are committed to the faith formation of young people.

PROCEDURES

- Bunbury Catholic College's retreat planning policy is compatible with the CEWA policy statement.
- Bunbury Catholic College's retreat planning policy follows the Catholic Education Commission Policy statement 2-B4 'School Camps and Excursions'.
- Parents and students are informed about the nature and purpose of the retreat and the level of student involvement required for each retreat experience at Bunbury Catholic College.
- Bunbury Catholic College's retreat programs consider the religious and cultural backgrounds and the developmental needs of our students.
- Bunbury Catholic College's retreat programs include appropriate prayer and liturgical experiences.
- Bunbury Catholic College's retreat programs include creative and engaging activities and approaches with young people which connect to systematic catechesis.
- Staff involved in the College's retreats will be familiar with the retreat program and its expectations prior to and during the retreat.
- The roles of retreat staff shall be clearly defined for all Bunbury Catholic College retreats.
- The retreat programs at Bunbury Catholic College include appropriate evaluation procedures, including feedback from students.
- External groups that provide retreat experiences for Bunbury Catholic College are provided with copies of this policy and are required to follow it.

REFERENCES

Bishops of Western Australia, Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015

Congregation for the Clergy, General Directory for Catechesis, 1997

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia policy statement 2-B4 School Camps and Excursions

Appendix I

Bunbury Catholic College provides Retreat opportunities for each Year group, culminating in a three day overnight Retreat for Year 12 students. The College is also committed to an annual Retreat experience for its entire Staff. Each retreat is designed to support the faith-life journey, provide time for renewal and address the spiritual needs of the group. The Year 7 Twilight Retreat (one evening/night) centres on Catholic Teachings of Sexuality; The Year 8 Retreat (one day) has the theme of Stewardship and Creation; The Year 9 Retreat (two days) focuses on Catholic Teachings of Sexuality; and the Year 10 Retreat (one day) is based on Social Justice Teachings. The one day Year 11 Retreat consolidates what students have experienced from the Year 7 and 9 Retreats on Catholic Teachings of Sexuality. The three day, overnight and off- campus Year 12 Retreat has a structured and developed programme based on our Marist Charism that begins with a focus on the self, then reflects on relationships with others, especially family, and ultimately our relationship with God and the life and message of Jesus. The Staff Retreat over the years has incorporated input by guest presenters on topics such as our charisms and traditions; social justice; service to others and the community; vision and mission; evangelisation and spirituality and *Laudato si'*, along with reflection and prayer opportunities.

All retreats provide

- Opportunities for reflection, extension of one's personal faith journey and understanding of God
- Time out to examine myself, my ways of relating (to myself, others and God)
- For Year 12 students and Staff, the opportunity to experience God's love in Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist
- Opportunities to get to know our peers in new ways, building relationships and bonding experiences