



Mary MacKillop

Catholic Regional College

Professional Learning Policy

Professional learning and development is at the heart of an effective and continuously growing teaching profession. (Fullan & Hargraves, 2016)

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Professional Learning is to support teachers to identify their own areas for growth within the framework of college priorities, established in the Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), and fulfil the Education State declaration that 'All teachers have an obligation to improve their practice'. Further, through 'Collaborative Professionalism' teachers can build 'self-efficacy, moral purpose and a willingness to teach to one's best' so that they can provide improved learning outcomes for all students.

'If we create a culture where every teacher believes they need to improve, not because they are not good enough but because they can be even better, there is no limit to what we can achieve'. (Dylan Wiliam, 2019).

Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College also believes that professional learning programs that are targeted and needs-based provide optimum opportunities for professional growth, and improved student outcomes. The aim of the college is to provide opportunities for all staff to further their professional knowledge, skills and/or qualifications, and to further develop their awareness, knowledge and skills in current teaching and learning practices and pedagogies which are synonymous with high performing schools and a high performing learning culture.

Professional learning priorities are accessed through staff meetings, KLA meetings, team meetings, Professional Learning Programs, whole school sessions, specialised groupings, coaching, team teaching, mentoring, VIT support meetings, and other collegiate activities. All staff are mandated to attend staff meetings and the KLA meetings they belong to.

All staff members are responsible for the development of knowledge specific to their roles in the college. The quality of teaching is the most significant in-school factor affecting student outcomes. There is strong evidence that better appraisal and feedback leading to targeted development can improve teacher performance. This policy offers guidelines and procedures to coordinate and facilitate this process to ensure all teachers are supported in working towards their goals, including through access to high quality professional learning.

2. PURPOSE

- To enhance the capacity of all staff to contribute to the achievement of college priorities and goals, as articulated by the college Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan.
- To provide the appropriate support for teachers and the school community to continually develop their knowledge and skills in current teaching and learning practices to address their needs and context.
- To ensure understanding of, and compliance with, DET and DOSCEL policies and regulatory protocols - including Ministerial Orders 199 on staff conduct and duties, and Order 870 on child safe standards - and the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- To provide and support appropriate career opportunities and succession pathways where required.
- To inform performance management processes.

Professional learning is informed by the AITSL documentation:

- 'Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of teachers and School Leaders'
- 'Australian Teacher performance and Development Framework', and
- 'National Professional Standards for Teachers'

3. PRINCIPLES

Professional Learning at Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College, as a high performing learning community, is:

- Focused on **improving student outcomes** and **accelerating student learning growth**.
- Focused on school-based learning that may be complemented by external learning opportunities.
- Informed by research, data and evidence, internally and externally generated, including:
 - NAPLAN
 - Insight SRC data
 - Student Teaching and Learning surveys
 - VCE data
 - Staff identified 'Areas of Growth' in pedagogy.
- Collaborative so that knowledge, expertise and experience is shared amongst staff. Staff are expected to share professional understandings, knowledge and skills within the college (staff meetings, KLA meetings, team meetings, Professional Learning sessions and other cross curricular team groupings and so on) to improve their own professional development and that of their colleagues.
- Directly relevant to the work of staff and linked to college goals and targets, and thus be planned in accordance with the Strategic Plan, team and personal professional learning areas for growth.

The implementation of professional learning at Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College will ensure that the professional growth of staff is developed co-operatively, resources are used effectively and evaluation of the program occurs frequently and rigorously.

Examples of professional learning opportunities offered at the college include:

- Whole staff meetings and presentations
- Leadership meetings
- Teachers Meetings
- KLA team meetings
- Professional Learning Days
- Coaching, mentoring, team-teaching and other collegiate meetings
- Classroom sharing, team teaching and celebrations of learning
- Peer Observation
- Access to external opportunities run by organisations such as DOSCEL and subject associations
- Appraisal
- Induction

Professional learning will be developed for the whole college (but not necessarily at a whole staff level) based on the following areas:

- DOSCEL priorities
- College Strategic Plan
- Annual Implementation Plan priorities
- Whole school professional learning needs
- KLA area priorities and needs
- Student management priorities and needs
- Projects determined by the Principal and Leadership Team

4. FUNDING AND OPPORTUNITY

Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College allocates an annual budget for Professional Learning, the purpose of this is to allow the Budget Holder in charge to manage the portfolio in a fair, equitable and targeted manner. Where appropriate, the principal may authorise further spending where needs are identified.

While there is no set formula for funding or access per staff member, the college reserves the right to determine how many and what kind of learning activities a teacher may attend that are dependent upon college funds and resources.

Teachers need to be mindful of the requirements for the annual VIT re-registration process (particularly in regard to 'special needs/disabilities', and individual teacher contexts), however it is not up to the college to either monitor compliance with this, or to source or provide specific PL opportunities to meet these requirements.

Approval for staff to undertake particular PL may not be granted where there are alternate or more appropriate programs, sessions or facilitators that better meet particular college or staff needs, where the PL does not align with either the particular teacher's or the college priorities, or where sufficient staff have already been approved to attend.

The VIT has mandated that, in order for teachers to annually renew their registration to teach, each teacher must undertake a minimum number of professional development hours each year (20 hours), including a component that addresses the special learning needs of the individual students in their classes (no specific time allotment is designated, rather it is 'needs' and 'context' based).

It is the responsibility of each teacher to ensure they meet this requirement, and the college will support this through professional learning opportunities. Staff should note, however, that many of the activities which are already a part of the Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College calendar and processes may actually contribute to meeting this requirement.

5. PROCEDURES

Staff are encouraged to complete the online Professional Learning Application in EMS360. When completing the application staff need to identify the VIT standards covered in the Professional Learning activity.

Applications need to be submitted at least 14 days prior to the Deputy Principal Strategic Development and Organisation for approval prior to registration being completed by the applicant.

If staff wish to have the activity recorded on their CEVN OPL (Catholic Education Victoria Network Online Professional Learning) they can submit a copy of their certificate to the Compliance Officer to officially record the Professional Learning Activity.

It is an explicit expectation that all staff will share their learning after attending a PL activity. This could take the form of informal sharing (i.e. in conversations with colleagues, sharing of resources in a staff room, demonstration in a classroom), and should also be more formal and demonstrably delivered to groups of peers, such as at:

- A presentation to a scheduled staff meeting
- A presentation at a KLA meeting
- A presentation at a specially convened meeting for relevant staff members

6. REFERENCES

Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (2016). Bringing the profession back in: Call to action. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Wiliam, D. (2019) Teaching Not A Research Based Profession. University College London <https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/dylan-wiliam-teaching-not-research-based-profession>

7. REVIEW

Implementation Date: April 2022

Reviewed: November 2024

Next Review Date: November 2025