



Philosophy of Learning Senior Years

Mission Statement

Bethania Lutheran School is a Christ-centred community supporting the educational journey by providing dynamic, innovative teaching and learning, within a nurturing environment.

Values

At Bethania Lutheran School we value the development of the whole learner. We aim to teach our students the skills that they need to be functioning, caring, valuable, contributing members of their community. We nurture our students as individual, unique creations of God and aim to develop not just academic goals but social/emotional development also.

Philosophy of Learning

We believe that every student is a unique individual created by God with their own special gifts, strengths and needs. In order for students to build their own positive image of themselves as learners and contributors to their communities they are provided with real-world, relevant and purposeful learning experiences, in alignment with the Education Goals for Young Australians within the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration of 2019. These learning experiences, which have an emphasis on Project Based Learning, are structured and presented in a variety of ways with opportunities for both personal success and challenge. Students are encouraged to take ownership of, and contribute direction to, the learning experience. The school facilitates this learning by providing timely and purposeful feedback in dynamic learning environments which promote a warm atmosphere of safe risk taking, rigorous learning and joy.

At Bethania Lutheran School our Philosophy of Learning – Senior Years is driven by guiding principles, which fit within the separate, though interconnected, Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration Goals for Young Australians.

Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

Children have individual learning styles and needs

Children in the senior primary years need varied, multiple, technology rich and multimodal opportunities and experiences to gain knowledge and understanding. Individual learning styles require a variety of flexible teaching approaches and opportunities to learn and communicate their learning. Each student's contribution is encouraged and valued both as individuals and as a part of community. Examples of the way in which the individual learning styles of children are addressed at Bethania Lutheran School include:

- Agile learning spaces encourage students to make choices about how and where they learn best
- Use of online learning platforms and digital applications to present and share content and ideas
- Utilization of a range of teaching strategies that support different ways of thinking and learning e.g. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, gamification, guru sessions
- Activities include those which do not have a right or wrong answer, every child experiences success and effort is encouraged



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Children with disabilities are supported in an inclusive learning environment

Children with disabilities are provided with rich and intensive intervention by specialized staff in the senior primary years, with all learning underpinned by the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions. Examples of the way in which children at Bethania Lutheran School receive support include:

- Classroom teachers and teacher aides
- Learning Support teachers and teacher aides
- Behavioural and social skills support

Independence is developed within secure boundaries that articulate high standards

Social, moral and ethical boundaries allow students to learn in a safe learning environment that encourages success. High expectations of achievement and behaviour are communicated clearly and each student is supported to reach these expectations. Students are encouraged to explore some freedom and choices in their learning within an environment that articulates and encourages excellence. Examples of the way in which independence is supported and developed at Bethania Lutheran School include:

- Opportunities for students to make individual and collaborative decisions about learning directions, goals, assessment criteria and demonstrations of learning
- High social, moral and ethical standards are articulated, modelled and expected of all students
- Learning goals are set with high expectations, in order that all students can attain success, some with scaffolding to aid their progress

A culture of value and respect for individuals and communities is important in the senior primary years

The development of the whole child is vital in producing contributing members of community. Moral and value based issues must be addressed with thorough, relevant and purposeful discussion and treatment. A respectful mind is taught, modelled, encouraged and practiced. Students are best valued for their individual stages of development through rites of passage that are celebrated within the learning environment. Leadership skills must be encouraged and taught as a goal for every student. Examples of the way in which values and a respectful school culture are built and fostered include:

- Academic, spiritual, physical, maturational, emotional and personal progress and growth are honoured and acknowledged within the class and school context
- Students are given leadership opportunities and responsibilities both within the school and also through service to the wider community
- Restitution and restoration techniques are taught and practiced within everyday school activities
- Individual contributions and opinions are sought and respected



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Students need real, genuine relationships with peers and adults

Students learn best in an environment of open, honest, spontaneous interactions and connections. Positive relationship is not just necessary, it should be explicitly taught, encouraged and practiced. Learning occurs best within the context of healthy and positive relationship with peers and affirming adult interactions. Examples of the emphasis placed on strong relationships at Bethania Lutheran School include:

- Classrooms are an open place where issues are solved honestly, with realistic outcomes and followed up to ensure they have been fully resolved using restorative practices
- Positive relationships and interactions are modelled by adults together with explicit instruction and forums for discussion
- Students are encouraged and given opportunity to explore their own solutions to issues within a safe and encouraging environment

Families are an important part of the teaching team

Learning within the school is maximised when home and school work in partnership. Education is a joint endeavour with students' families that is facilitated by positive links of communication that flow in both directions. Examples of the facilitation of parent involvement at Bethania Lutheran School include:

- Allowing for participation of parents in the classroom to provide support, expertise and insights
- Frequent communication both positive and negative with caregivers in different formats both formal and informal. 'Working together' is part of our vocabulary
- Personal contact via telephone, email or face to face is encouraged early to develop a personal relationship between home and school

Students bring with them their own beliefs and knowledge that we value and build upon

Progress occurs by building on prior knowledge and experiences and making links to new concepts and skills. Basic skills provide the basis upon which all other learning is founded. Learning is facilitated when the interests, skills, backgrounds, concerns and perspectives of students are reflected in the learning program. Examples of connecting learning with the personal experiences of students at Bethania Lutheran School include:

- Actively seeking to establish childrens' knowledge, beliefs and skills as part of unit and lesson planning
Planning lessons and tasks that follow sequentially and build in complexity
- Explicitly linking new ideas with the language and perspectives the children bring to the classroom
- Creating an environment of encouragement for students to have their own voice and contribute personal stories to class discussion



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Children need a connection to nature and place

A focus on nature play and a connection to the Yugambah people, our traditional land owners, is vital to develop a rich and deep knowledge of our local Indigenous culture, as well as provide students with opportunities for the exploration of the natural world around them. Examples of the way in which students are supported to develop a connection to nature and place include the exploration of:

- Yugambah language, culture and history
- Nature playgrounds, including loose parts
- Dadirri (active listening) and nature exploration experiences

Goal 2: All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community

Children are active participants in learning

Students learn best within integrated, rich, relevant, connected, challenging and interesting learning contexts. Students are challenged to explore, question and engage with significant ideas and practices so that they move beyond superficial understandings and skills to develop higher order, flexible thinking and applications. Examples of innovative, child-centred learning environments and pedagogy include:

- Agile learning spaces encourage students to make choices about how and where they learn best
- Project Based Learning with links to realistic problems and challenges that require deeper thinking, understanding, questioning and reflecting
- Flexibility of unit and lesson planning to allow investigations of children's areas of interest
- Opportunities for formal justification and analysis of ideas, actions, theories and decisions

A supportive, warm and positive learning environment encourages risk taking, resilience and independence

A warm, positive learning environment provides routine, structure and stability, which helps students feel secure and confident to take risks and be supported in their choices. Students must be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and given choices in the direction of their learning. Problem solving, resilience and creativity are encouraged, taught and modelled with the aim of producing motivated, independent, lifelong learners. Examples of the well-rounded and supportive learning environments within Bethania Lutheran School include:

- The use of technology enable students to engage productively with their global world, deepening their understanding of content and skills
- Providing stimulus materials and programs that challenge children's ideas, raise questions, encourage discussion and ongoing exploration. Best attempts will be respected
- Individual strengths and areas for growth are explored, built upon and encouraged within many settings including working collaboratively within a group
- Investigative tasks encourage students to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own learning



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Assessment and feedback are a part of learning to facilitate growth and learning

When providing feedback, respect for each other is valued and consistent. Purposeful feedback, praise and direction are employed constructively to monitor student growth and guide future planning. Recognition for achievements and opportunities for the assessment of all learning types is vital. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning. Assessment should be purposeful, wide ranging and where possible, real life.

- Formative feedback is a tool used by students to receive feedback and provide feedback to others
- Students implement kind, helpful, specific formative feedback strategies with their peers
- Effort, perceptions and attitude are valued and commented upon
- Evidence from assessment is used to inform unit and lesson planning
- Students display, explain and celebrate their learning to an audience