PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POLICY

1. Rationale

Penola Catholic College is committed to providing leadership and support in the area of Professional Learning and reflective practice in order to create a culture of continued improvement for all staff.

Inspired by the College Vision & Mission statements, we aim to live the values of justice, openness, respect, inclusiveness, educational endeavor and social awareness. In alignment with Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (AITSL, 2012), the Victorian Institute of Teaching Standards for Professional Practice, and other legislative standards and Catholic Education Melbourne requirements for staff in schools, we aim to keep Teachers and Support Staff up to date with professional expectations as well as with College goals and priorities. Thus we seek to create a culture of learning, self-reflection and professional improvement, which is the responsibility of individual staff as well as of the College Community as a whole.

We promote life-long learning for all members of our community. Consequently, we strive to foster in all staff, a desire for excellence, a drive to continually improve and renew knowledge and skills and a resilience that enables them to adapt in the changing climate of educational philosophies, contemporary pedagogies and current local and international research.

Through Professional Development we endeavour to provide:

- opportunities to express and develop faith and spiritual growth;
- accreditation to teach in a Catholic school;
- opportunities for changes in course structure, organisation, course development and evaluation;
- inspiration and support for more creative approaches to classroom practice and improved teacher effectiveness;
- exchange of teaching and learning practices within the school;
- insight into educational theory and access to new approaches and initiatives within education;
- exposure to various contemporary pedagogical practices, research and policies;
- skill development for all staff to improve effectiveness in their roles;
- skills for working effectively in the administrative aspects of the school organisation;
- support and assistance in preparation for future leadership roles;
- coaching and mentoring opportunities;

- opportunities for feedback to the whole school staff or relevant groups as well as opportunities, insights and strategies for dealing with current pastoral and wellbeing issues;
- opportunities to improve and enhance the wellbeing of all staff;
- opportunities to meet VIT and other legislative requirements for professional development for registered teachers to engage in standards referenced professional development activities that update knowledge about pedagogy, content and/or practice

2. Definition

Professional Learning at Penola Catholic College provides the opportunity for staff to deepen their knowledge and understanding of God and God's place in their lives with a commitment to the Charism of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, as well as pedagogy, content and/or practice.

Professional Learning is an ongoing process of staff development, enrichment, reflection, collaboration, sharing and support. Successful professional development enhances skills, competencies and a sense of professionalism through individual learning and shared experiences. This enables all staff to grow in greater awareness of self and of one's place in community, thus contributing to individual development, which further enhances opportunities for all students.

The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (AITSL, 2012) 'Professional learning will be most effective when it is relevant, collaborative and future focused, and when it supports teachers to reflect on, question and consciously improve their practice,' assisting teachers to meet the identified needs of students. http://www.aitsl.edu.au/verve/_resources/Australian_Charter_for_the_Professional_Learning_of _Teachers_and_School_Leaders.pdf
We promote the **cycle of reflective practice which** requires teachers to make assessments about what their students need to know and do. This in turn informs what teachers need to learn to address the learning of their students. The impact on students' learning through the revised practice can then be assessed.
Professor Helen Timperley in her article 'Using evidence in the classroom for professional learning' describes a cycle of teacher inquiry and knowledge building as illustrated in the diagram below:

www.education.auckland.ac.nz/webdav/site/education/shared/about/school

Various forms of Professional Learning

Penola Catholic College acknowledges that Professional Development can take place in many forms and may include a variety of formal and informal activities such as:

Ongoing school based practice

- Practices supporting personal and faith development
- Attendance at school based in-services
- Self–directed Professional Learning e.g. professional reading, Online modules for OHS
- Enhanced Teaching and Learning through the use of ICT
- Staff, Campus and KeyLearning Area meetings
- Professional Learning Teams / Action Learning Teams meetings /Planning and Coaching Teams
- Project Teams
- Membership of College Committees
- Engaging in collegiate classroom activities and team teaching
- Shadowing and / or workplace visits to observe and discuss best practice
- Mentoring and induction programs
- Broadening the experiences of staff by working across year levels and Campuses
- Experiencing various roles and Positions of Leadership within the College
- Appraisals and Annual Review Meetings
- Co-curricular program offerings e.g. School production, organisation of international trips/camps etc.

Membership of Professional Associations/Organisations

- Participation in role-related Networks and their associated activities E.g. Curriculum Coordinator, Religious Education Coordinator, Librarians, Secretaries or specific focus networks
- Participation in Professional Associations

Policy Review Date: **June 2017**
Approved by the Board: **14 June 2017**
To be Reviewed: **June 2021**   **Professional Learning**

- Participation in CECV, State Government, Partner Universities and National projects
- School visits and networks with other schools
- VCAA Marking, examination setting panel membership, etc.

<u>Formal Programs</u>

- Faith formation through programs in theology, prayer, scripture and Christian leadership
- Programs which fulfill the requirements for accreditation to teach in a Catholic School and to teach Religious Education in a catholic School (see Appendix 1 for accreditation requirements)
- Internally or externally provided formal Professional Learning programs provided at the College
- Seminars & Conferences
- Training workshops to learn about, implement and reflect on specific skills, knowledge and theory relevant to the chosen curriculum focus or school need
- Participation in specific projects based on classroom/ workplace practice
- Teacher exchange or industry programs
- Projects conducted by the school
- Post-graduate study
- Provisionally Registered Teachers' – Victorian Institute of Teaching Full Registration Program
- Re-accreditation of Registered Teachers – VIT Requirements

3. Guiding Principles

As part of each individual's professional commitment, staff members are expected and entitled to participate in Professional Development activities. This is also requirement of the Multi Enterprise Agreement and VIT Re-registration of fully qualified teachers from 2007. The College promotes a three-layer approach to Professional Learning for all staff: College Plan; Committee/Team Plans and Individual plans. These are set/developed at the start of each year and reviewed at the end of each year.

As part of the College Strategic Plan, which is reviewed every 5 years, the College sets priorities for the professional learning required in order to effect the College Strategic Plan. The College priorities are informed by Commonwealth, State, CEM and CECV directives, the School Review process, Annual Action Plans as well as the local needs of staff, students and wider College Community.

From these, the College Executive specifies the professional learning focus/foci for each year. Each of the College Committees/Teams, (e.g. KLAs, Campus Administration Teams, Maintenance Team etc.) set annual goals and action plans. In order to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills required to achieve these goals, Heads of Learning develop a "Professional Learning Plan". These are informed by/reflect the College priorities and foci as well as the individual needs of the Key Learning Areas and Planning and Coaching Teams. Priorities would also be set with regard to attendance at relevant annual conferences.

From these Individual staff members construct "Individual Professional Learning Plans", which will reflect both the College and their Team priorities as well as any individual needs. These individual plans will be discussed and reviewed at the Annual Review Meetings and assist individuals in the setting of goals for each year.

The guidelines for participation in Professional Learning are as follows:

3.1   Time Allocated to Professional Development

➢ Staff members of Penola Catholic College are expected to participate in Professional Learning activities that are organised by the school for the whole staff including after-school programs and the four College Professional Development Days per year, both internally and externally provided.

➢ Staff members of Penola Catholic College may participate in at least one other Professional Development activity each year and no more than the equivalent of two school days or 16 hours per year in alignment with their professional learning goals

➢ Some staff members may be required to attend network & other meetings due to their position within the College. These would be in addition to the normal two-day PL allocation.

➢ Teachers involved in externally funded project teams may have to forfeit other PL involvement during school time for that particular year if they exceed their allocated 2 days.

➢ Requests for additional days during class time will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

➢ Requests for participation in Professional Development Activities including webinars, outside of school hours will generally be supported.

3.2 Feedback

If we are to be a learning community in which collegiality and effective Professional Development is encouraged and embraced, then staff who attend Professional Development sessions that have attracted funding or time release have a responsibility to provide some form of feedback to the College Community.

This achieves two main goals:

➢   A wider dissemination of information, ideas and best practice as quickly as possible.
➢   A review of funding can be based on the effectiveness of these disbursements.

Feedback includes the completion of an Evaluation form for all Professional Development programs that are supported by the College through money or time. The evaluation form is lodged with the Head of Teaching & Learning Glenroy or the Deputy Principal Teaching & Learning, who informs relevant Committee Chairpersons of the programs, conferences or workshops that have been attended to facilitate Professional Sharing.

Other examples of appropriate feedback may include:

1. Addressing a faculty meeting with an item of interest or skill gained from the in-service. This may also involve the passing on of written documentation.
2. A written article for the College or Staff newsletter.
3. A verbal report to the whole staff at a College staff meeting.

4. A written evaluation report submitted to the Head of Teaching & Learning (see attached evaluation form to be reviewed)
5. Committees are required to have Professional Sharing as a permanent agenda item to encourage verbal or written reports from individuals who have attended professional development workshops or sessions.

3.3 Funding

Professional Development Budget

The Principal, Deputy Principal Teaching & Learning and Business Manager in consultation with other relevant bodies will review Professional Development funding yearly.

Funding and Release Time

Approval for funding and / or time release is determined on the basis of individual benefit and benefit to the College, taking into account previous opportunities, the needs of other staff members, and the role held within the College by the applicant.
If the cost of professional learning exceeds $1000 there will be an expectation that you will remain at the college for at least twelve months after the professional development. If you leave prior to this period, you will be required to repay all or part of the incurred costs at the discretion of the principal.
Applications for funding for PL may be as a result of an Action Learning Team Proposed Project. These will be considered by the College Executive.

Care is taken to ensure equality of opportunity for full-time and part-time staff.. Equity of distribution of funds across all College groups and individuals will be taken into account. The College annual focus or priorities also determine attendance at optional Professional Development Programs.

Staff Scholarship Fund

To encourage the continual professional development of all staff (teaching and support staff), each year the College offers scholarships that contribute financially towards further studies. All staff intending to study in the next academic year are eligible to apply. Preference will be given to people undertaking studies in Religious Education, however further study in a broad range of areas that would lead to positive outcomes for students, staff and the College community would be considered. The maximum for any staff member allocated a scholarship would be $1,000 per year.

3.4 Professional Reading

All staff are required to take responsibility for their own professional development through the reading of relevant articles and journals as well as regularly checking websites for important updates in educational thinking and practices such as the VCAA and the CECV websites. Penola Catholic College subscribes to a number of publications. These include: EQ Australia, Learning Matters, Teaching Learning Network, IARTV occasional and seminar papers, Education times, Curriculum Perspectives, and Religious Education Journal of Australia.

3.5 Evaluation

This policy is to be reviewed according to the Policy Review Schedule. Future inclusions would involve directions on "Induction of Staff" and "Appraisal".

APPENDIX LIST

1. Requirements for Accreditation to teach in catholic School and to teach Religious Education in a Catholic School
2. Procedure for Application to undertake Professional Development
3. Approval Process
4. Proformas
   Application Form
   Team/PLT PL Proforma
   Evaluation Forms
   Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school application form
   Accreditation to teach Religious Education in a Catholic school application form
   Staff Scholarship application form.
   Individual Professional Development Plan Proforma

APPENDIX 1 - Accreditation

Accreditation to Teach In a Catholic School

Penola Catholic College is committed to the continuing development and fostering of the Catholic character of school community. Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school is to be seen as the means of assisting all teachers to develop a deeper understanding, not only of the nature of the school as part of the Church's mission, but also of their role as members of staff.

Accreditation is issued after the achievement of the following criteria:

> ➢ Applicants have engaged in 50 hours of study

> ➢ That the studies included coverage of the following areas:

- Child, adolescent and faith development (minimum of 10 hours)
- The aims, objectives and rationale of the Catholic school (minimum of 10 hours)
- Revelation and the Catholic Church: Jesus Christ, Scripture, Church and its Liturgy, Life and Tradition, Sacraments, Morality, Justice and Peace. (Minimum of 15 hours)

Hours may be achieved by participation in:

> ➢ CECV approved College based in-service activities
> ➢ Diocesan and regional seminars
> ➢ Formal course
> ➢ Award bearing courses

Since it is vital for the effectiveness of the Catholic school community that all the members understand its purpose and mission, teaching staff must be accredited or working towards accreditation to teach in a Catholic school.

Teachers having achieved the above criteria should apply for certification of accreditation via the CEM on the relevant application form.

Accreditation to Teach Religious Education in a Catholic School

Policy Review Date: **June 2017**
Approved by the Board: **14 June 2017**
To be Reviewed: **June 2021**   **Professional Learning**

Those who have already been accredited to teach in a Catholic school and wish to be accredited to teach Religious Education will be required to have undertaken, or to undertake various studies for accreditation. Means to achieve accreditation to teach Religious Education in a Catholic school are as follows:

  *CEM applications -
      1. The applicant has successfully completed a formal course and its assessment. The course should include units on:

       ➢ Church History and Teaching
       ➢ Biblical Studies
       ➢ Sacramental Theology
       ➢ Religious Education method and practice.

OR

      2. The applicant has been accredited to teach in a Catholic school or has been teaching in a Catholic school before 1 January, 1997, and:

       ➢ Has been teaching Religious Education in a Catholic school in Australia prior to 1983, and
       ➢ Has regularly participated in approved Religious Education in-services during their teaching, and
       ➢ The application for accreditation is endorsed by the Principal.

      Teachers who have completed the above requirements, can apply to the CEO for accreditation to teach Religious Education in a Catholic school. This is done on the relevant application form.

APPENDIX 2 - Procedures

PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING TO ATTEND A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY	
STEP 1	Obtain a Professional Development Activity Application form which is available from MyPenola under Teaching and Learning/Professional Learning and Sharing/PD Application Form. You can follow this link http://my.penola.vic.edu.au/homepage/1074
STEP 2	Check the Campus Diary (located in the Daily Organiser's office) to determine what is already happening on the day and references to Campus needs. Write in your initials, PD Activity title and times of the PD in the Campus Diary. *It is the responsibility of the applicant to write the details of the professional development activity in the Campus Diary __BEFORE__ submitting the application.*
STEP 3	<u>Making a booking</u>: **This should only take place once approval has been obtained by the College.** Be aware of cancellation fees, as it will be your responsibility to pay the cancellation fee. If possible make a tentative booking. However, if it is not possible to make a booking without incurring a cancellation fee please <u>do not book</u> or pay any money until approval has been given by the College. <u>PD via Webinars</u>: If you wish to participate, please complete the PD application form and pay on your credit card, then pass the receipt and PD form on to Paula D'Amore to arrange reimbursement. Seek approval from Lucy D'Angelo or Rob Dullard before making any payments. If the webinar is free, proceed and register yourself, then submit paperwork just the same.
STEP 4	Fill in your PD application form and attach all relevant documentation regarding the Activity to the application form. This **MUST** include: 1. A completed registration form (including sessions preferred etc. if applicable) 2. Cost of PD (including GST costs)

Policy Review Date: **June 2017**
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To be Reviewed: **June 2021**   **Professional Learning**

	3. Accreditation to teach in a Catholic School A, B, C if the Course is accredited by the CEO. Also listing the hours of accreditation. 4. ABN Number if payment is required 5. Provider contact details (address & fax number) 6. For CEO PD activities complete online registration at My PL (on CEVN) **NB: Staff must keep a copy of activity details (e.g. venue, times etc.)** **Please keep a copy of all information attached to your PD application as we will not be able to provide you with workshops selected or other activity information after your application has been processed.**
STEP 5	Obtain approval from the relevant Head of Learning or Manager by getting them to sign your PD application form.
STEP 6	Applications **must be lodged** with the Deputy Principal Teaching & Learning (B) or Assistant Head of Teaching & Learning (G) or administrators at least **_two weeks_** before the activity.
STEP 7	You will be advised by an email whether your application was approved or not approved. Once this comes through and the approval has been granted, you can then go ahead and register your activity. **Online Registrations:** When filling in an online registration you may be asked for a school PO number. Please contact the Teaching and Learning Administrator (Paula D'Amore) and she will organise one for you. Once you have submitted your registration you should receive a tax invoice. **It is your responsibility to get a tax invoice from the company regarding your activity. PLEASE NOTE: PD applications will not be processed or paid without an invoice.** Please email the invoice to the Teaching and Learning Administrator or place a hard copy in her pigeon hole. When invoice is received the Administrator will process the PD paperwork and submit it altogether to the Accounts Office for payment to be made accordingly.
STEP 8	**The Evaluation Form:** The evaluation form is available from MyPenola under Teaching and Learning/Professional Learning and Sharing/PD Evaluation/Reflection Form. You can follow this link http://my.penola.vic.edu.au/homepage/1074. This needs to be completed within two weeks of the activity and sent to the Administration for Teaching & Learning. The evaluation form is part of the approval process. You will need to keep a copy of the evaluation form for your own portfolio for VIT purposes. Please ensure you keep your VIT Professional Learning Portfolio up to date. **PLEASE NOTE: If your evaluation form from a previous PD Activity has not been submitted, any applications for future PD Activities will not be approved.**
NOTES:	**CEO Applications** – must be completed online by individual staff member. **CREDIT CARD Payment procedures**: Any registration that requires a credit card payment may only be reimbursed once approval has been given by the College. No payments should be made prior to approval. Once a receipt has been received by yourself please forward to the Administrator for DP Teaching & Learning for reimbursement. **DO NOT make payment unless you have written approval for the activity** **PLEASE NOTE:** Purchasing of resources – materials at PD sessions can only be done with written authorisation of the HOL. If there is something of interest, orders can be placed once you have returned to the College. This will avoid unnecessary duplication of equipment and materials and allow the library staff to keep accurate records of the College's educational resources.