



LITERACY POLICY

Introduction

The Mission Statement of Penola Catholic College inspires and informs the Literacy Policy.

Imbedded in the Mission of the College and in the Literacy Policy is the desire to provide a holistic and excellent education for our students. We are committed to developing skills and talents through a broad and inclusive curriculum, which caters for a range of literacy needs within the College. In addition we value the development of critical thinking and critical literacy and a spirit of inquiry in all our students.

Definition Of Literacy

Literacy is the ability to make meaning from language and visual images, and the ability to communicate. Thus it is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts. It involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading, writing and the creation of multi-modal texts. Literacy includes the ability to read visual images and numerical symbols, as well as the cultural knowledge that enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations.

Being literate in the secondary context involves taking students beyond decoding, spelling, building vocabulary and understanding grammar to reading and writing sophisticated texts appropriate for different audiences and contexts.

Rationale

At Penola Catholic College we acknowledge that being literate is crucial for an individual's sense of worth and ability to cope successfully within a cultural context and in our modern society.

Being literate also has a critical dimension because literacy and language are linked to thought. We express our thoughts and elaborate on them through the oral and written word. It follows then, that to be literate, an individual must acquire sophisticated skills of reading, viewing, listening, speaking, writing and interpretation. These skills empower individuals to be able to function confidently and competently in the workforce and in society with all its cultural dimensions. Being literate means being able to create, interpret and respond to the texts that make up our world. Whilst literacy development continues throughout life, one of the core responsibilities of the teachers within the College is to help students attain competence and confidence in literacy to prepare them for the adult world, which they will encounter.

Penola Catholic College has a dedicated Literacy Leader who is responsible for driving whole school literacy development. Literacy Coaches also support staff to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to explicitly teach the literacy demands of their subjects.

Guiding Principles For The Enhancement Of Students' Literacy Skills

At Penola Catholic College we advocate a whole-school approach to literacy within mixed-ability classrooms where teachers differentiate to cater for the needs of all students

Literacy is influenced by the contextual demands of every Domain and subject in the curriculum; therefore all teachers in all Learning Areas at Penola Catholic College are responsible for developing more literate students in their subject areas. In addition, a whole-school approach entails: adequate resources for literacy teaching and learning; school literacy plans; professional development; and home, school and community links.

Specific Whole-School Approach to literacy

- Pre-testing all new Year 7 students prior to commencing at Penola.
- Participation in the PAT and NAPLAN tests at Year 7 and 9
- Explicit literacy teaching and learning in Learning Areas; for example, adopting a genre approach to writing and a collaborative approach to teaching texts across all the Learning Areas as well as a collaborative approach to teaching reading across all Learning Areas
- All English teachers are required to complete the *How language works* teacher development course.
- All teachers are strongly encouraged to complete the *Literacy for learning* teacher development course.
- The College has also invested in developing our own accredited *How language works* and *Literacy for learning* tutors.
- Provision for intervention for 'at risk' learners
- Provision for EAL learners
- Provision for enrichment in literacy for talented and gifted students within mixed-ability classrooms.
- Provision of classes for English as an Acquired Language (EAL) students
- Embedding literacy within the planning and coaching teams (PCT's)
- Literacy is a permanent agenda item on all College and Learning Area meetings.
- All VET teachers must complete the module TAELN4II – Address language, literacy and numeracy skills to deliver a VET program
- Provision of wide reading sessions in the ERC for year 7 & 8 students

At Penola Catholic College we believe that life long learning is dependent on a high degree of competence in literacy

Technological change and the advent of a global society have meant an enormous growth in information and a fast rate of change. Our students are growing up in a knowledge

society where they will face ever-changing cultural contexts, workplaces and work practices. Preparation for such a society implies preparation for life-long learning. Developing the skills and capacity in students to access, discern and interpret information is a particularly crucial role of the College.

Specific Approaches to Literacy and Life-Long Learning

- Teaching and learning research and electronic research skills
- Teaching and learning comprehension, note-taking and summary skills
- Teaching and learning how to prioritise and organise information.
- Teaching and learning the deconstruction of written, oral, visual and multi-modal texts.
- Teaching and learning the construction of written, oral, visual and multi-modal texts.
- Promoting reflective and evaluative skills

At Penola Catholic College we prepare students for the impact of Information and Communication Technologies on the literacy requirements of individuals.

Literacy requirements change and develop constantly, particularly through the accelerating expansion of Information and Communication Technologies. The interactive nature of communication through web sites, email networks and real-time online collaborative networks offer alternative ways of communicating and learning. Students need and are given support in learning to manage and create electronic texts and applications for the acquisition of advanced skills for the manipulation of Information and Communication Technologies.

At Penola Catholic we acknowledge the need for skills in critical literacy.

Critical Literacy is about empowering students by raising awareness of the dominant social, economic, vocational and political forces, which determine our thinking, our environment and our way of life. In teaching critical literacy skills, students at Penola Catholic College are encouraged to question what is normally taken for granted.

When teaching critical literacy teachers and students ask questions about

- Topics of study
- The texts studied
- How students construct texts utilising the conventions of various text types
- How texts and words may be manipulated to promote or construct a certain world view

Critical Literacy is not only developed through sound pedagogy, but also through the pastoral structures and programs of the College, which promote leadership, independence and interdependence.

At Penola Catholic College we actively promote teachers' Professional Development in Literacy

Secondary school curriculum is structured in discreet learning areas taught by different teachers with specialised knowledge as well as through an interdisciplinary approach. A whole-school approach to literacy calls for extending the skills of secondary teachers in language and literacy teaching and learning. The Secondary Literacy Improvement Project (SLIP) has been used (2012-15) to develop the collective knowledge about how language works. As of 2016, the College will no longer have SLIP representatives as literacy is seen as the responsibility of ALL. Also, Professional Development is used to support teachers in using Information and Communication Technologies, both as teaching tools and as the source of new texts.