



## CATHOLIC SCHOOL RETREATS

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**RATIONALE** 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).<sup>1</sup> Through the retreat experience students come to know Christian love and are exposed to a Gospel centered 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.

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**DEFINITION** 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 is strongly encouraged.

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**SCOPE** This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia.

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**PRINCIPLES**

1. St Joseph's Primary School aims to provide experiences for students to know, contemplate and celebrate Jesus.
2. St Joseph's Primary School retreats are an integral part of Catholic school life. They are inclusive, purposeful, meaningful and take into account the culture, developmental needs and experiences of students.

- 3 St Joseph's Primary School retreats complement the catechesis experiences offered by St Joseph's Primary.
- 4 Retreat planning takes into consideration the charisma, ethos and mission St Joseph's Primary.
- 5 Retreats are planned in a way that engages students in rich experiences of Catholic symbol and ritual.
- 6 Staff that attend the retreats are committed to the faith formation of our students.

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## PROCEDURES

1. Parents and students of St Joseph's Primary School shall be informed about the nature and purpose of the retreat and the level of student involvement required (Sacramental Years 3,4 and 6).
2. St Joseph's Primary School retreat program considers the religious and cultural backgrounds and the developmental needs of the students.
3. St Joseph's Primary School retreat program includes appropriate prayer and liturgical experiences.
4. St Joseph's Primary School retreat program includes creative and engaging activities and approaches with young people which connect to systematic catechesis.
5. Staff involved in a school retreat are familiar with the retreat program and its expectations prior to and during the retreat.
6. The roles of retreat staff are clearly defined.
7. The St Joseph's Primary School retreat program includes appropriate evaluation procedures.
8. All retreats are held by the sisters of Schoenstatt in the Emilie House at the Schoenstatt Shrine, 9 Talus Drive, Armadale
9. See *Excursion Policy* for more details.