

Christian Studies: roles and responsibilities

Role of the principal

Principals have a primary role in the support and development of Christian Studies in Lutheran schools. As such, they:

- **passionately advocate for Christian Studies:** work with the Christian Studies leader to develop a vision and plan for the ongoing support and development of Christian Studies ; share vision with staff, school chaplain/pastor, students, parents, caregivers, governing bodies and local congregations; foster professionalism, excellence, innovation and theological integrity in Christian Studies
- **comply with BLEA policy:** fulfil requirements as stated in the policy statements and CSCF; ensure time and budgetary allocation is consistent with other learning areas; allocate time for the Christian Studies leader to lead and coordinate Christian Studies in the school
- **invest resources into developing strong Christian Studies educators:** allocate time and resources for professional development specific to theological and pedagogical needs of Christian Studies; ensure that staff are accredited to teach Christian Studies according to LCA Staffing Policy for Lutheran Schools; provided resources to support professional development opportunities
- **mentor and train Christian Studies leaders :** provide the Christian Studies leader with a job description: meet regularly with the Christian Studies leader to review the implementation of the vision and school plan for Christian Studies; ensure that the Christian Studies leader has opportunities for developing leadership skills and curriculum knowledge
- **commit to the continued growth of Christian Studies:** develop a five-year plan for continued development, succession and innovation of Christian Studies; consult with regional office

Role of the Christian Studies leader

The Christian Studies leader is the key contact person for Christian Studies. The Christian Studies leader is responsible to and reports to the principal on all matters relating to Christian Studies. A role description may include the following:

- **Commit to whole school responsibilities:** work with the principal to develop a vision and plan for the ongoing development and support of Christian Studies across the school; develop common understandings of the nature and purpose of Christian Studies; develop and facilitate the school's overall Christian Studies program and school plan; get to know staff so that support can be more personal and relevant; model new ideas
- **Support Christian Studies teachers:** identify the needs of Christian Studies teachers in the school, plan and coordinate a professional development program, run small workshops to develop specific skills, organise guest presenters; share information related to all Christian Studies professional development courses or events; skill teachers with strategies to plan and write Christian Studies units of work, to teach Christian Studies; challenge experienced staff to be creative, to adopt new skills; provide induction and mentoring for new Christian Studies teachers and create links for all teachers to work with each other and share ideas; consult with regional education officer to support needs of teachers
- **Manage, administer and liaise:** coordinate the selection, purchase and distribution of materials and resources to support the Christian Studies curriculum; manage the budget and keep proper records; liaise with Christian Studies leaders in other schools and with regional and national support personnel

Role of the Christian Studies teacher

The Christian Studies teacher:

- **commits to professional requirements:** has a sound understanding of the learning area and has completed relevant requirements of the accreditation program, as specified by Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) Staffing Policy for Lutheran Schools; grows and develops professionally and spiritually through collaboration with peers, professional reading, ongoing study, attendance at seminars, workshops, retreats
- **enacts a personal faith journey:** has a personal commitment to Christ and a mature faith; prays for the spiritual growth and development of each student; witnesses to the Christian faith in appropriate ways that do not pressure or manipulate students' own beliefs or faith
- **develops an inclusive learning environment:** creates and fosters an atmosphere of respect, care and openness where students have freedom to explore Christianity, their own questions, faith and personal response; accepts that students and teachers in Christian Studies are critical inquirers; uses a range of stimulating resources such as print, multi-media, guest speakers, the arts; provides learning experiences that cater for a range of learning styles and for students to work both collaboratively and individually
- **embraces teaching and learning that:** makes explicit the relevance and purpose of what students are learning; builds on students' prior knowledge and understanding; actively engages students in sharing, discussing, researching, collating, analysing, critically reflecting and using their learning in meaningful ways; provides opportunities for students to think and reflect on important contemporary spiritual, moral and ethical issues