Junior Years

Years 4 – 6

Curriculum Overview
The Junior Years Phase of Learning at Assisi Catholic College will be responsive to the needs of the students. As such, the following areas will be addressed:

**Continuity / Connection** – Continuity in the Junior Years is based on building from the familiar to the unknown and this sequential development of skills is seen as crucial.

**Relevant Curriculum** – Learners of this age have an increased capability for social conscience and abstract thought. As well there is a shift from play centred activities to more formal academics as well as a move towards teacher directed activities from solely negotiation, while still maintaining elements of these prior concepts. As a result, the curriculum in the Junior Years will be engaging, purposeful and achievable but still rigorous enough to extend existing knowledge.

**Identity** – Students of this age are typically beginning to require greater responsibility and independence but still need to see themselves as a member of peer group. Additionally, students of this age are more capable and need to be involved in decision making which affects them. While family impact and influence is still high, the shift to identification through peer groups is beginning to strengthen.

**Relationships** – Students need to feel valued and accepted by peers and teachers and are beginning to have ideas and actions influenced more deeply by peers and the media.

**Safety** – Students of this age still need to feel a sense of safety and security as well as comfort and order in their lives.

**Responsibility and Direction**

Students in the Junior Years Phase of Learning still require explicit instruction and guidance however a focus in this stage of development needs to be moving the locus of control and responsibility from teacher, more towards the student.
As such a student in the Junior Years at Assisi Catholic College will be assisted to develop the roles of a life long learner which are consistent with the Brisbane Catholic Education Learning Framework:

- Community Contributor
- Leader and Collaborator
- Effective Communicator
- Active Investigator
- Designer and Creator
- Quality Producer

and to continue their progress towards becoming reflective, self directed learners, with the overarching goal of assisting students to shape and enrich our changing world, by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Structure of the Junior Years**

**General**

Students in the Junior Years are situated in Bonaventure, as is the Junior Years Technology Centre. Students are placed with teachers based on identified student needs. Students in the Junior Years have access to Learning Support as required. Additionally, all Junior Years Classes have time during each week with a school officer.

**Personal and Social Development**

Students in this stage of development are often entering the early stages of puberty, which is characterised by changes in physical attributes such as size, strength, speed and coordination. Additionally many of them may encounter cognitive and emotional changes which make it necessary for aspects of the Personal and Social Development Framework to be embedded in daily routines, practices and approaches.

The Personal and Social development of the students is taken into account in the following ways:

- Continuation of the Assisi Habits and Values of:
  - Being Prepared,
  - Being Persistent,
  - Being Your Own Person,
  - Being Respectful, and
  - Being Responsible

  as a cornerstone for the expectations of an Assisi student.

- Peer Mediation as a tool for problem solving between students.
• Commencement of competitive sporting opportunities at Year Five on a weekly basis.
• Christian Sexuality / Relationships Education / Student protection education is integrated with daily routines and the connected curriculum. In Year 5 and 6, a specialised program is taught covering such topics as puberty, body image, the sacredness of life and sexual relations.

Pastoral Care

Students will first and foremost be pastorally cared for at the class level, by teachers and fellow students. Relationships will be built on mutual respect and appropriate interactions. Following from this, students will come to not only a sense of class identity, but also year level identity, Junior Years identity and whole school identity. Students should at all times, in the Junior Years, feel able to connect with various staff and students and feel valued in these interactions.

Additionally, students are members of a Family Team (Agnes, Clare, Francis or Rufino) and within that Family Team, they are a member of a smaller group which will comprise members from Prep to Year 12.

The Junior Years Assistant Principal Administration will maintain in regular contact with Junior Years teachers, students and parents.

Contact with families will still remain a high priority in the Junior Years and will be maintained through the Junior Years Organiser, communication books, notes, meetings, open mornings or otherwise as appropriate.

Leadership Development

The need for greater responsibility and involvement in decision making for these students will be fostered in the development of leadership for these students. This will occur in a number of ways including:
• The College Ministry and Christian Service program provides opportunities for students to exhibit Service Leadership and to contribute to the well being of the community. Students are encouraged to become active in groups such as Eco-club, Animal Club, St Vincent de Paul conference, Peace Pals etc.
• Peer Mediation to foster the Servant Leadership approach for these students.
• A formalised leadership structure for students in Year Six, which is made up of eight student leaders as voted by students and staff. The opportunity exists for this number to grow beyond eight is others show their commitment to the leadership ideals throughout the course of the year.
• A camp at the beginning of Year Six specifically for team building and leadership skills.
Religious Education and Spiritual Development

It is an Archdiocesan requirement that all students enrolled in a Catholic school complete 2.5 hours per week of formal Religious Education covering the areas of:

• Scripture
• Beliefs
• Celebrations and Prayer
• Morality

Each of these areas are covered each year. The Junior Years Religious Education curriculum follows the Years 1 – 10 Religious Education Outcomes approved by the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

In addition, Junior Years students, like all students at Assisi Catholic College participate in spiritual activities as part of the Religious Life of the School. These include:

• Mass for the Opening of the College Year
• Thanksgiving Mass
• Class Masses
• Family team Masses
• Liturgies (Holy Thursday, Anzac Day, Mothers’ Day, Fathers’ Day, Blessing of the Animals, Franciscan Christmas, Assisi Day etc)
• Classroom prayer
• Prayer to begin College and Precinct Assemblies.

In addition, each year Junior Years students experience a Spirituality afternoon which encourages the development of personal spirituality.

Curriculum Development

At all times, curriculum development will be conducted with student needs as first priority. This will be done collaboratively between the class teacher, Curriculum Coordinator, Support Teacher, APA and APRE.

The content covered in all Learning Areas will be guided by student needs and all relevant curriculum documents. Scope and sequence will be updated as required, specifically in keeping with, and working toward the impending National Curriculum, and as a lead in to this, QCAR.

Curriculum will be developed so as to be sequential and connected as well as rigorous enough to extend learning.

An element of student needs at this age level is that of inquiry and self direction. As a result, the JYTEC will be used by way of promoting a solution based approach which involves student development of ideas, research, construction, reflection and improvement.

Formal learning and teaching occurs within the nine Learning Areas of:
Religious Education
English
Mathematics
Science
Studies of Society and the Environment
Health and Physical Education
Cultural Literacy and Languages
Technology
The Arts

Technology is to be incorporated into all learning areas and not simply to be taught as a stand alone subject.

In addition to the learning and teaching undertaken in usual classes, students will also have specialist lessons each week in Physical Education and Italian as well as one lesson per week of either, Food Technology, Music, Drama or Design Technology.

Other, additional curriculum aspects in the Junior Years include focussed Junior Years writing sessions, Mathletics and Options Days which allow students to choose activities based on interest.

Team Development and Professional Development

Professional Development will be individually identified by teachers as related to stated goals, but will also be undertaken as a way of addressing needs as identified by the school for all staff. All professional development will be current and relevant to the needs to the students. Some professional development will be conducted on Tuesday afternoons at regular meeting times. Other Tuesday afternoon meetings will either be Whole College Staff Meetings, Precinct Meetings or smaller Team Meetings so as to address the needs of all groups concerned.

Opportunities will be fostered for social interaction between staff members so as to build stronger links for collaboration and relationships built on mutual respect between staff members. These in turn will be modelled by staff for students.

Staffing

The Early Years approach to staffing is one which essentially states that a young person’s sense of self and sense of God will be based on the love, respect, kindness, patience and trust which is modelled to them by others including teachers. Staffing for Junior Years flows on from this as these staff members should actively model, in all facets, the Gospel and Franciscan Values and the school’s expectations for these students.

“Preach the Gospel at all times, when necessary use words.” - St Francis
Flexibility in approach is required from these staff members so that the needs of the learner are addressed as a first priority.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment in the Junior Years at Assisi involves the continuous collection of samples which demonstrates achievement. In this way assessment is a continually evolving process and is not limited to a single point in time. Reporting should occur throughout the year by means of interaction between parents and teachers. Formal reporting takes the form of a written report at the end of Semester One and then again at the end of the year. In addition to these written reports, Parent / Teacher / Student interviews are offered at the end of Term One and the beginning of Term Three.

All reports are completed within a five point scale and take into account academic progress, as well as the development of life skills.

All students in Year Five will participate in the NAPLAN tests however these tests will not take priority over school based practices. Trends will be observed and steps taken if appropriate.