



ST STEPHEN'S SCHOOL

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

DUNCRAIG & CARRAMAR
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Vision Statement

This document summarises the broad vision for the immediate future of St Stephen's School. It is intended to provide a broad explanation of who, what, how and where we are aiming to be. It represents our aspirations.

Motto:

Serve God, serve one another

Purpose Statement:

Learning today for tomorrow
with heads, hearts and
hands.

Core Values:

Learning – the primary focus
of our school

Faith – central to everything

Care – an outward sign of
faith

Service – living out the
School's motto in order to
build

Community – in partnership

Our Vision

St Stephen's School is striving to provide a stimulating, inclusive environment based on Christian values, in the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia, in which all students:

- are eager to embrace the fullness of all that the School offers as they prepare for their preferred futures
- strive for excellence in all they do
- are nurtured to become compassionate and passionate young men and women
- have a deep sense of commitment to making the world a better place.

St Stephen's School strives to provide an education which is of a very high standard while still being affordable to families.

St Stephen's School is striving to earn a well-deserved reputation as an outstanding, innovative and influential school in which best practice is the norm. As a result, it will contribute to improving education for all Australian students.





Our Vision for Learning ...

Learning is a journey filled with discoveries.

St Stephen's School is committed to providing seamless, dynamic, vibrant, challenging and diverse learning experiences in a K-12 setting, that result in informed and empowered students.¹ Learning is the School's core business.

Learning is:

- based on core content and academic rigour
- life-long
- focused on collaboration
- based on data used to monitor students' progress and to highlight where improvements and/or additional resources and interventions are needed
- well-resourced with timely and purposeful access to appropriate ICT
- consolidated and extended through appropriate homework.

St Stephen's School strives to be a school in which students:

- value learning highly
- are active seekers, users and creators of knowledge
- understand that learning is their job
- understand that they are accountable for their learning
- are given opportunities to excel in a wide range of endeavours
- are offered differentiated pathways to meet their individual needs and aspirations
- are taught to think, reflect, ask questions, problem solve, 'have a go' and to take risks
- celebrate success in all endeavours including individual academic achievement.

St Stephen's School has high expectations of staff and is striving to ensure all staff:

- are expert and passionate
- have pride and confidence in their skills and vocation
- have high expectations and do not compromise on a foundation of high standards for their students and themselves
- understand it is vital to engage students
- believe learning must be motivated by a compelling goal
- employ an action-research approach to evaluate and improve all aspects of their work
- search for ways to improve through the staff appraisal process
- win their students' and the school community's respect because of their professionalism, expertise and commitment.

Our Vision for Faith ...

Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things sometimes experienced but not seen.

St Stephen's School is striving to ensure Christian faith, in the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia, is integral to every aspect of our School's life. Christianity is the foundation on which the School is built. Our faith, which is who we are individually and corporately, is expressed in who and how we are. *Our School provides an environment in which Christian faith may be unconditionally demonstrated and other faiths are valued and respected.* A connection with St Stephen's School provides an opportunity to develop one's faith.

St Stephen's School believes:

- all people are spiritual beings, whether they acknowledge it or not
- a person's faith or spiritual journey is shaped by their age, gender and life experiences
- staff and students are pilgrims journeying together
- students are given information, opportunities and autonomy to make informed choices about if and how they will pursue their spirituality/faith and how it will be reflected in their lifestyle in the present and the future
- students and staff are given opportunities to participate in worship and devotions and to pray
- students are encouraged to ask questions and to challenge faith issues
- all staff are committed Christians or, at the very least, actively supportive of the School's ethos and values
- all staff are responsible for nurturing faith in their students and in their colleagues
- all staff are role models to students and the wider community so it is imperative staff are genuine
- all staff members' words must match their behaviour and actions
- staff are non-judgemental and inclusive of others' faith or seeming lack thereof
- Faith and Values teachers are committed Christians, appropriately qualified and their personal faith is compatible with the teachings of the Uniting Church in Australia.

¹ The School is planning to provide a kindergarten program at Carramar in 2009 and as soon after as possible at the DunCraig campus.

Our Vision for Care ...

When we care for others, we follow Christ's example.

Every staff member is a caregiver for students and for each other. Care is not a collection of programs or strategies. It is a way of thinking, of relating and of being. Care can cost emotionally. Care and learning are interconnected. We know learning occurs most readily when it is predicated by caring and mutually respectful relationships. *Our school provides a safe environment in which caring relationships can be modelled and encouraged.*

St Stephen's School is striving to provide care that:

- acknowledges EQ (emotional intelligence) is as important as IQ
- is differentiated to meet people's changing needs over time
- encourages and empowers those for whom we are caring
- builds confidence, resilience, self-knowledge and independence
- is not always a soft option as it may involve 'tough love'
- has a positive influence on students and their families
- occurs in a working partnership with students, staff and parents.

Our Vision for Service ...

The meeting point of hearts and hands.

The spirit for service comes from a heart of compassion. St Stephen's School aims to provide an environment in which students, staff and the wider School community *understand service as unselfish, altruistic acts which benefit the natural environment and local and global communities.*

St Stephen's School is striving to build a culture of service in which:

- students have a sense of how privileged our school community is and, therefore, have a desire to serve others
- students understand service may mean giving time, contributing to fundraising or involve 'hands-on' activities
- students understand service involves sacrifice and does not seek recognition or reward
- staff actively seek ways in which to add a service element to activities including excursions, camps and tours
- consideration is given to how we can support the service activities of the Uniting Church in Australia
- students integrate service into their personal and professional lives.

Our Vision for Community ...

It takes a community to raise a child.

A community is about connections. We aim to build a community in which *there is a strong sense of connectedness and community within St Stephen's School as well as with the wider community.* Our School community involves active relationships, commitment and engagement. It includes sharing and valuing the School's vision and ethos.

St Stephen's School is striving to build a community in which:

- staff, students and parents work in partnership to ensure the best outcomes for students
- there are opportunities for parents, students, past students and staff to offer their gifts and talents to the School because they want to, not because they are required to
- the School is a key place for families to make friends and to know the parents of their children's friends
- innovative ways in which to connect and communicate with and amongst parents are employed
- staff build connections and synergy between and across campuses resulting in best practice being shared readily
- the School is a focus for and provider of activities in the wider community
- the School seeks opportunities to build relationships and mutually-beneficial partnerships with organisations and agencies in the wider community.

*Glenda Parkin
April 2007*