

# 2023

## ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

SERVICE | LEADERSHIP | JUSTICE

*Together in Christ*



### St Mary's Catholic College

Pacific Highway, GATESHEAD 2290

Principal: Cathy O'Gorman

Web: <http://www.gatesheadsm.catholic.edu.au>

## About this report

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St Mary's Catholic College (the 'College') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), Maitland-Newcastle. The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the College community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

Detailed information about the College's improvement journey is documented in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the College directly or by visiting the College's website. Information can be also be obtained from the My School website.

## Message from key groups in our community

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### Principal's Message

In 2023 the renewal of the College, as a comprehensive Year 7 to 12 community, has continued to gather momentum and this reflects so positively on the shared expertise of staff (teacher-support and teaching), the support of students and parents and a collective desire to build a Catholic College community inspired by, and honouring, the legacy of the Sisters of St Joseph who toiled relentlessly to establish St Mary's in 1964.

The Sisters' vision was to build a culture honouring our Catholic traditions and Josephite heritage. A culture welcoming of all and where there was absolute respect for the dignity and integrity of the individual student as a person and as a learner.

The commitment of current community members in pursuing the realisation of this vision continues to be exemplary. It is reflected in staff members daily striving to present God to our students as a way of living; setting high standards and expectations; being committed to professional learning especially through daily reflection on their own practice and dialogue with colleagues. It is reflected in the commendable progress teachers are making in shifting the teaching/learning process from a focus on the 'what' to the 'how' and 'why' of learning.

The success of the community's commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in the outstanding HSC results gained by the College's five Higher School Certificate classes (2019-2023). It is also reflected in the significant increase in demand by parents/carers to enrol their children in the College.

### Parent Body Message

The College provided a welcome parent gathering early in the year which was well received. Positive feedback has been received on the parent engagement through Information Evenings, Parent-Student-Teacher conferences for all years and Award Ceremonies. Parent and Carer survey data affirmed the positive teacher-student-parent relationships and the safe and supportive learning environment evident within the College. The survey also acknowledged the satisfaction with the level of communications between the College and parent body, as evidenced by fortnightly informative newsletters, the accessibility and use of Compass, and the news-posts distributed via Compass to keep parents updated.

### Student Body Message

The creation of a strong school community was crucial in assisting students to work to and achieve their potential. Being part of an environment where relationships are prioritised has assisted us in building our capacity to grow and develop the skills required of a life-long

learner. The teaching staff have educated students to understand the importance of positive Student-Teacher relationships as the basis for academic achievement. The conduct of special school events such as RU Ok Day, the Feast Day celebrations and the continued initiative of the Push-Up Challenge in support of youth mental health unite the community and build school spirit. Students knowing and feeling like they are part of a united community helps in every aspect of school life and enables students to feel safe and cared for which are vital factors underpinning our success in learning.

The Student Pastoral Council provided a forum through which students in junior years could develop their leadership skills and be a voice for the student body promoting charity events and giving feedback on the daily operations of the College. College leaders were grateful for their opportunities to lead through actioning student voice and further refining their leadership skills.

## School Features

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St Mary's Catholic College is a comprehensive 7 to 12 high school serving the needs of Catholic families in the Eastlake Macquarie region. The school was founded in 1964, in the finest traditions of the Sisters of St Joseph. Originally established as a girls' Year 7 to 10 school, it became co-educational in 1983. This change was part of the re-structuring of Catholic Secondary Schools in the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie area in the late 1980's - early 1990's.

In mid-2015, Diocesan authorities announced, as a consequence of the review into the provision of Secondary Education in the Diocese, that St Mary's would transition to Stage 6 (Year 11 and 12) in 2018-2019. The Graduation of the first HSC class in 2019 completed the College's transition to a comprehensive Year 7 to 12 community.

St Mary's Gateshead is the feeder high school for 6 Catholic primary schools - St Paul's Gateshead, St Joseph's Charlestown, St Mary's Warners Bay, St Patrick's Swansea, St Francis Xavier's Belmont and St Pius X Windale. Students from the associated Catholic primary schools currently comprise approximately 65-70% of Year 7 enrolments.

The school is located geographically between the ocean and Lake Macquarie in an area stretching from Charlestown to communities south of Swansea. The socio-economic status of the families encompasses the complete range of income levels and needs.

The completion of Stage 2 of the site redevelopment and the continued outstanding success of the College's Higher School Certificate classes to this day highlighted the commitment and desire of community members to realise the potential and to seize the opportunity to ensure that St Mary's Catholic College becomes an outstanding Year 7 to 12 Catholic College.

The growth of the College population continued in 2023. Despite delays in plans for the next stages in site development, these plans are now progressing.

The College has a history and tradition of community members' involvement in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include: sport, creative and performing arts, debating, public speaking, chess, Science & Engineering Challenge, fundraising efforts for charitable organisations and causes, College Leadership and Landcare and Environmentalism, for instance. Students have achieved to the highest standards or excellence and representation at Diocesan, State and National levels in a wide range of extra-curricula activities.

## Student Profile

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### Student Enrolment

The College caters for students in Years 7 – 12. Students attending this College come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2023: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
467	471	54	938

\* Language Background Other than English

### Enrolment Policy

The [Enrolment Policy](#) applies to all school enrolments within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. School authorities manage local enrolment processes and procedures in a manner consistent with the rationale and guiding principles articulated in this Enrolment Policy and accompanying [Enrolment Procedures](#). It aims to:

- Set direction for school procedures and practices for enrolling students into Catholic primary and secondary schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.
- Establish a common, consistent approach in enrolment practices.
- Assist the system of Catholic schools to:
  - provide schooling, where possible, for children of Catholic families who seek enrolment
  - cater for the individual needs of each child equitably within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources
  - encourage parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools to give support to parish and school life, especially in education in faith.

### Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2023 was 86.35%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group					
Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
89.17	84.78	85.33	84.76	83.65	90.38

## Managing Student Non-Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The College, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, College staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

College staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the College community
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented
- documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern
- the designated CSO officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom the College's strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

## Student Retention Rate

Of the students who completed Year 10 in 2021, 58% completed Year 12 in 2023.

## Senior Secondary Outcomes

The table below sets out the percentages of students undertaking vocational training in their senior years as well as those attaining the award of Higher School Certificate (or equivalent vocational education and training qualifications).

Senior secondary outcomes 2023	
% of students undertaking vocational training or training in a trade during the senior years of schooling	23 %
% of students attaining the award of Higher School Certificate or equivalent vocational education and training qualification	100 %

## Post School Destinations

Each year the College collects destination data relating to the Year 12 student cohort.

University: 67 students

TAFE: 12

Apprenticeships/Traineeships: 16

Work/ Gap Year: 14



## Staffing Profile

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### Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2023:

Total number of staff	112
Number of full time teaching staff	60
Number of part time teaching staff	25
Number of non-teaching staff	27

### Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

Teachers at this College are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocesan Schools System (systemic schools) at these levels is as follows:

- Conditional 107 teachers
- Provisional 69 teachers
- Proficient 1887 teachers
- 4 Highly Accomplished teacher
- 1 Lead teacher

Additionally, there are approximately 10 teachers who are currently actively engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation. Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the College.

### Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO). The College takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

## Summary of professional learning at this school

In 2023 staff professional learning focussed on:

Continuing to build the capacity of teaching staff as teachers of senior courses of study as the College transitioned into the fifth year of senior schooling (Stage 6).

The explicit teaching of skills in analysis and understanding of data with a particular focus on PAT, NAPLAN and HSC data including RAP analysis and DeCourcy data.

Enhancing the capabilities of teachers in all key learning areas as teachers of literacy and numeracy, with a particular focus on the implementation of specific strategies in the teaching of reading and writing (based on the work of Beverly Derewianka).

Building the capacity of teaching staff to employ high impact teaching strategies that deepen students' engagement in learning. This involved Teacher Professional Learning in deconstructing Learning Intentions and Co-constructing Success Criteria; the use of Sharratt's 5 Questions and the feed-forward question - where to next?; developing pedagogy suitable for lessons of longer length;

The development of teaching strategies to explicitly teach and assess the capabilities of Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Communication and Collaboration; including collaborative construction of rubrics

Upskilling in the use of AI as a teaching resource and tool

Issuing staff new to the College with personal copies of Professional Literature - to better inform their teaching practice and deepen coherence across the College.

## Catholic Identity and Mission

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Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle participate, under the leadership of the Bishop and in partnership with parents and parishes, in the mission of the Church to provide quality education in the context of a living Catholic Christian tradition. Within this context, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle educate from and for vibrant, welcoming and diverse communities with a particular commitment to the poor; for justice, integrity and peace; and with hope for the future.:

At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools educate:

- From and for the community of faith
- From and for excellence in learning
- In a rigorous, creative and critical pursuit of truth

(Adapted from: The Catholic School's Office Diocesan Vision Statement, 2016)

### Catholic Imagination and Spirituality

In the Name of the Father (Abba Father - Mk 14:36)

St Mary's as a Catholic College professes belief in God. Being Catholic requires an authentic Catholic pedagogy. St Thomas Aquinas OP in "Summa Theologica" reasons the quality that is inherent in God is Mercy. God's Mercy is our existence. And so at St Mary's Catholic College, we proclaim and centre foundation on Faith, formation and Ministry. Our pedagogy is based on creativity, love and personality. Our College holds that no creation or thing exists alone nor for itself. Our Staff are encouraged to remember the sense of Sacred as they help our students to discover the arts, science, technology and creativity of human endeavour and learning. We endeavour to have daily communion with God at school through our thoughts, our work, our deeds, and be coming good human beings, through praying, sharing, learning, courage and serving. This is spoken in one of St Mary's Mantras "be safe, be respectful, be a learner."

And of the Son - (I am the Way, the Truth and the Life -John 14:6)

Jesus, the Christ, gives us the name 'Christians'. In the early church, the Christians were known by their geographical area. It is noted that St Ignatius of Antioch when he united the Christian groups in his writings to call them "Catholic" meaning "universal".

And of the Holy Spirit - Galatians 5;22-23 (But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-discipline. Against such things there is no law.)

St Mary's emphasises Catholic Social Teaching and Right Justice. Our serving, includes Caritas; SVDP; Land Care; Breakfast Club; and support for Catholic Missions, to which we devote during the month of October. In 2021, St Mary's Catholic College had the idea to keep our new hospitality kitchen functioning. Our dedicated staff prepared meals for our community who paid "forward" for extra meals that were taken to homes of needy families. We continue with this initiative today.

Prayer is held as a natural daily act. Each morning we have a post on compass. Our Staff Spirituality Days reinforce the calling of being a Shepherd and Teacher as was Jesus. Teachers are given the opportunity to seek to improve their own personal spiritually and to envisage their part in the wider Mission of the Church. Our Year 12 Retreat is Sacramentally and Spiritually based from the Word spoken through Micah giving meaning to Belonging, Vocation, Response, Service, Forgiveness, Communion, and Commitment. The Year 7 – 12 Formation Spirit Days have their themes inspired by the Words of Christ in St John, living "life to the full".

Hail Mary, full of Grace. (FIAT mihi secundum verbum tuum - Luke1:38)

The College is grounded by the College Name, St Marys, and our College Feast Day, "The Annunciation". Our College Motto reflects this "Yes" of Mary, when she accepted the Motherhood of the Word. In the Liturgical Year, we highlight Ash Wednesday, the Season of Lent, Holy Week, Ordinary Time, Advent and Christmas.

Family, Parish and Diocesan evangelisation and catechesis

The school has continued to share in the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church in the parishes of MacKillop, East Lake Macquarie and Boolaroo-Warners Bay. The Principal and Ministry coordinator are active members of the Mackillop Parish Council and the Parish Priest of MacKillop parish continues to be a valued supporter of the liturgical dimensions of school life.

During 2023 students and staff participated in Project Compassion and our student leaders in the JJAM Retreat and Bishops retreat as well as our college and student leader development retreat. The College has continued to be actively supportive of the work of the local chapter of St Vincent de Paul in caring for those in great need. This shared commitment to the poor reinforces to our students the importance of our school motto: "Ready To Serve" in calling them to a way of life focused on genuine love and care for their neighbour.

Christian Discipleship

The continued emphasis given to the school motto: "Ready To Serve" is intrinsic to deepening students understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. They know that our school Motto is a call to service, a call to reach out to those in need in our world, seeing a need and doing something about it and is fundamental to expressing commitment to honouring in their lives the call of the Gospel to be a sign and symbol of God's love.

A commitment to Christian discipleship is further promoted through the presence and work of Youth Vinnies; the role of the Student Leadership Team and Student Pastoral Council; community service outreach; support for and involvement of students in fundraising for charitable organisations and causes; the leadership of students is shown by their participation at the College Breakfast Club, RUok day, Push-Up Challenge in support of youth mental health and other community building initiatives. Students' input on the annual staff Spirituality Day adds to the Spirit of the day to show the reciprocity of the respect.

#### Religious Education and Curriculum

The explicit teaching of Religious Studies supports and complements the liturgical and spiritual life of the school. In accordance with the mandatory Diocesan K-12 Religion Studies Syllabus. The college is continuing to introduce the Pedagogy of Encounter to stage levels. Each year group is taught a thoroughly detailed and systematic program of study to develop students' knowledge and understanding, tolerance and respect for other Christian and non Christian religions and for the spirituality of Aboriginal Australians. The teaching of Religious Education is given a priority in the College. This is expressed in the preferential allocation given to the placement of Religious Studies classes in the weekly school Timetable; the priority given to the allocation of teachers to teach these classes; the support provided for the professional development of teachers and the efforts made to build a team of specialist Religious Studies teachers in the College.

#### Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The promotion of respect and responsibility has a collective commitment to ensuring that our daily activities were aligned with our Statements of "Values, Mission and Vision" and our underlying beliefs and traditions as a Catholic school; through the involvement of students in social justice initiatives; Prayer and the situation of student behaviour management in a framework based on Restorative Justice principles and positive behaviour/support practices.

## Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

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### Secondary Curriculum

The Secondary Curriculum follows the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabus for each course offered as required for Registration and Accreditation under the Education Act 1990 (NSW) and implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office (CSO).

The Curriculum is structured around the outcomes and content for each learning area and general capabilities for learning across the curriculum including literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, personal and social competence and intercultural understanding.

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The curriculum is designed to comply with NESA's mandated requirements for NSW Secondary Schools. The offering of Additional Courses of Study in Stage 5 and Senior Courses of Study in Stage 6 is driven by student choice and is reflective of the College's commitment to provide a curriculum which is truly responsive to meeting the express needs of students. The strength of this commitment has been tangibly expressed in the high number and rich variety of Stage 6 Courses of Study being made available to students in Years 11 and 12 despite the small size of the student population in each year group. In 2023 the scope of the Stage 6 curriculum continued to be broadened (including VET Frameworks, SBATs and eVET patterns of study) to better cater for the growth in Stage 6 enrolments and retention of senior students at the College.

Students in the Learning Support Program are very well supported by our highly skilled and experienced staff who have exceptional empathy with their students. They know their students' needs (emotional, social and academic) and they have in place clearly defined and well established policies and procedures to support all their students in accessing the curriculum and completing assessment tasks. This is complemented by the team in engaging in activities which deepen student's belonging and connectedness to the community. The team actively supports all teachers of students with special needs in curriculum differentiation

and conducts detailed induction processes for incoming students. The College offers several Life Skills Courses to support students with special needs in Stage 6. In 2023, the appointment of a Literacy Coordinator enabled the provision of a targeted Reading Intervention Program for identified students, supported by both the Learning Support staff and Aboriginal Education Teacher.

The College's School Improvement Plan for 2023 remained focused on building a culture of collaborative learning; deepening the level of coherence and alignment of pedagogical practices in all classrooms through a systematic approach intent on developing the capacity of teachers as Leaders in Learning. Integral to this process was a school-wide approach to embedding Learning Intentions, Success Criteria, Feedback and Formative Assessment in every lesson as well as developing students as independent and self-regulatory learners. Teachers also focussed, in 2023, on the explicit teaching and assessment of the capabilities of critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration and communication. There was also a continued focus on analysis of data, base-line testing and the development of students' numeracy and literacy skills.

The integration of technology across all KLAs continues to be enhanced with ongoing professional learning in Artificial Intelligence and its use as classroom resource, particularly for differentiated curriculum. Professional Learning for all staff was provided in the area of on-line learning environments including the use of Microsoft and AI tools.

## Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

### NAPLAN

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The purpose of NAPLAN is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in literacy and numeracy. The test provides a measure of the student's performance against established standards and against other students in Australia. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching with a view to improving student performance.

From 2023, NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards with 4 levels of achievement to give teachers, parents and carers clearer information on how students are performing:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

The percentage of student achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency standards in NAPLAN at St Mary's Catholic College for 2023 is reported in the table below.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2023		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 7	Grammar and Punctuation	78%	64%
	Reading	79%	68%
	Writing	69%	63%
	Spelling	79%	73%
	Numeracy	81%	67%



NAPLAN RESULTS 2023		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 9	Grammar and Punctuation	71%	56%
	Reading	79%	63%
	Writing	70%	58%
	Spelling	77%	71%
	Numeracy	78%	64%

### Higher School Certificate (HSC) Diocese

The results of the College's Higher School Certificate (HSC) candidature are reported for particular subjects. The table provided shows the percentage of students who achieved in the top two bands and shows comparison with results from previous years.

NB: A number of new syllabuses were implemented this year which means there was a change in either subject name and/or course number. For this reason, results from previous years may appear as 0%. Some courses no longer run and therefore will show as 0%.

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The fifth HSC class in the history of the College has continued to build on the pleasing results of the first four HSC cohorts. The following achievements emphasise our commitment to scholastic excellence:

11 students were placed on the 2023 HSC Distinguished Achievers list; students had major works nominated for inclusion in ArtExpress; First Class Exhibition; InTech (Timber) and nominated for OnStage Drama; The top ATAR was 99.65 with that student gaining 6th place in NSW for Visual Art as well as being recognised as the Diocesan Dux; Students gained first in course across the Diocese in 13 courses of study. 29 x Band 6's were achieved across multiple subjects (16 courses of study in total) and 99 Band 5's.

This is a remarkable achievement and we are incredibly grateful to the class of 2023 who have continued to build on the achievements of the past four cohorts in establishing the college as a place where the wellbeing, learning and academic achievement of students are

prioritised and made possible. We recognise the collective effort of the teachers, mentors and students in achieving these great results.

Higher School Certificate	Percentage of students in the top 2 bands (Bands 5 and 6)					
	2021		2022		2023	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
Ancient History	38 %	34 %	17 %	34 %	50 %	33 %
Drama	20 %	46 %	-	-	100 %	60 %
English Extension 1	100 %	94 %	-	-	100 %	94 %
English Extension 2	-	-	-	-	100 %	86 %
History Extension	-	-	-	-	100 %	85 %
Mathematics Extension 2	0 %	87 %	0 %	85 %	100 %	86 %
Retail Services Exam	-	-	100 %	10 %	100 %	16 %
Society and Culture	100 %	45 %	50 %	43 %	100 %	45 %
Visual Arts	83 %	63 %	58 %	66 %	71 %	66 %

### Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

Eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate will receive the NSW Record of School Achievement (RoSA). The RoSA has been designed to provide grades for all Stage 5 (Year 10) and Stage 6 (Preliminary) courses completed during secondary education. In 2023, the number of students issued with a RoSA was 396.

## Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

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### Pastoral Care Policy

The College's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies guidelines and procedures are informed by the [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#).

The Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy 2022 aims to provide a framework for the policies, programs, resources and practices implemented at system and school level with the purpose of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of students, and all within its school community. It refers to the overall climate of care that exists within a Catholic school.

The environment is designed to be safe and inclusive, one that promotes academic rigour. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents, and the wellbeing of all.

### Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The College's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned the CSO [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) and to the [Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion Procedure](#). The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours whilst ensuring respect for the rights of all students and staff. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this College. The College does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by College persons and non-College persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the College. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the College's website.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

The Catholic Schools Office has established an [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all schools in the diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the Anti-Bullying Policy may be accessed on the College's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

## **Complaints Handling Policy**

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has established a [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the diocese. The rationale for the policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world. CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) may be accessed on the College's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

## **Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility**

The College motto "Ready To Serve" and the mantra "Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be a Learner" are a vital part of daily College life, because they promote the values of respect and responsibility. These values are further emphasized and reinforced by staff being committed to setting and maintaining high standards and expectations in regard students' conduct and application to learning.

In 2017 the Catholic Schools Office released a Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Procedure plan which identified three focus areas, Successful Learning, Positive and Caring Relationships, and Safe and Inclusive Environments. We express these in our College mantra, Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be a Learner. We are working to reform College practice in ways that elevate and incorporate the importance of the student voice in our daily routines. We are working to increase the number of students involved in meaningful leadership roles throughout the College and creating forums and pathways for students to engage in regular and meaningful dialogue about college practices and then feedback to staff. The diocesan Wellbeing framework acknowledges that wellbeing encompasses the multi-dimensional and interconnected domains of cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual growth and so we are responding by broadening the professional depth of our Wellbeing team, incorporating psychologists and social workers and clarifying referral pathways to external support agencies best positioned to support us in the many and varying presentations of cognitive and emotional ill health that we encounter.

Our college is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning and nurturing positive and caring relationships that underpin the achievement of this outcome. The College prioritizes the building and maintenance of positive and caring relationships between staff, students, and parents. There is strong collegial trust and support among teachers and school leaders with an emphasis on treating parents and carers as partners in the promotion of student learning and wellbeing. We are committed to maintaining

a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, and inclusive, and that promotes intellectual rigor and high academic standards.

At St Mary's we seek to pursue the "fullness of being" in every student. Relationships before curriculum is a term embedded into the culture of our community. Students are challenged to embrace a growth mindset where they are consistently striving to grow in the fullness of being, both as students and community members. The promotion of respect and responsibility is also furthered through a collective commitment to ensuring that our daily activities echo our Statements of Values; Mission and Vision; and our underlying beliefs and traditions as a Catholic College, through the involvement of students in social justice initiatives and the application of student behaviour management in a framework based on Restorative Justice principles and Positive Behaviour Support best practice.

## School Improvement

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The College implements the system's review cycle of improvement which outlines the processes and benchmarks for creating the culture and practice of continuous improvement with students as the focus. Strategic Improvement Plans are future focused documents that map the College's directions, aimed specifically at improving educational and wellbeing outcomes for all students through the following areas:

- Catholic Identity and Catholic Curriculum
- Learning and Wellbeing

Each year, the College develops a Strategic Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. A copy of the school's Strategic Improvement Plan may be obtained from the College administrative office.

### Key Improvements Achieved

- The remarkable improvement in HSC results in only our fifth year of presenting students for the HSC class - despite the class having experienced disruptive periods of remote learning/home-schooling due to COVID during preceding years. Growth across many subjects has occurred, with an increase in the percentage of Bands 4- 6 achieved by the cohort.
- The continued improvement in the capacity of classroom teachers, as a consequence of a systematic and intensive Professional Learning program, to enhance their capacity to employ high impact contemporary pedagogical practices which have improved students' engagement in learning and their educational outcomes, as evidenced by students achieved results. Targeted delivery of strategies for reading and spelling were a focus for the year – with increased growth tracked across PAT data.
- The growth in confidence and competence of teachers as HSC teachers, with additional teachers gaining experience as HSC Markers in 2023. The number of teachers applying for marking has also increased, demonstrating increased self-efficacy in HSC teaching.
- Continued implementation of Literacy initiatives, with specific strategies embedded in teaching programs based upon the research of Beverly Derewianka
- A Reading Intervention Program, under the leadership of an appointed Literacy Coordinator, conducted for selected students - with significant growth tracked across the two terms of implementation.
- Introduction of a Numeracy Coordinator and the formation of a Numeracy Team with a focus on implementation of numeracy strategies across all KLAs.
- Continued focus on building the capacity of staff in analysing and interpreting HSC and De Courcy data to improve students learning and wellbeing outcomes, with targeted

PL provided to all staff in this area. This has resulted in revision of teaching strategies/ targeting specific areas in programs across all KLAS.

- Development of a policy and coherent practice around the use of AI in learning and assessment, with the provision of PL for all staff in this area. A set of protocols was published to all students and there has gradually been a decrease in detected plagiarism.
- A sustained focus on deepening the teaching staff understanding of the importance of deconstructing learning intentions and co-constructing success criteria in order to improve students' educational outcomes. Students are able to articulate what they are learning and why; how they are going; and what they need to improve.
- Classroom observations demonstrate growth in teacher understanding of the significance of the use of anchor charts and the “third teacher” in classrooms.
- Continued implementation of the Gifted program and the role of Gifted Education Mentor and Pedagogical Mentor within the college
- Focus on the core capabilities of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creative thinking, via explicit embedding of teaching and assessment strategies. Students can articulate an understanding of these competencies and have engaged in self-assessment against explicit rubrics, constructed by teaching staff.

### **Priority Key Improvements for Next Year**

- Continuing to successfully implement lessons of longer length in order to enhance students' engagement in learning, improve their educational outcomes and shift the teaching/learning focus from the what to the how and why of learning
- Continuing to build the capacity of staff to collate and analyse data in order to improve students' educational outcomes
- Continuing to build the capacity of the teaching staff as competent and confident Stage 6 teachers
- Continuing to grow the staff and student population of the College
- Continuing to modify the reporting and assessment timeline, processes and procedures with a shift to a greater emphasis on formative assessment and more immediate feedback
- Continue to purposefully embed in the life of the College a formation framework which is clearly linked to the beliefs and teachings of our Catholic tradition
- To continue the focus on earth stewardship through our well established and highly acclaimed Landcare program
- To continue to nurture a culture of learning that is adaptive, innovative and continuously improving through the employment of high impact contemporary pedagogical practices that improve students' engagement in learning, their educational outcomes and wellbeing.

## Community Satisfaction

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Consultation with parents, students and teachers is valued and sought. Their feedback contributes to the planning and the achievement of improved outcomes for students. This year, the College has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the College from parents, students and teachers. The school undertakes extensive surveying of all stakeholder groups annually. This data is shared with the school community and contributes to the priorities for future planning.

### Parent satisfaction

Feedback gained from parents on formal and informal occasions highlight a significant level of satisfaction with the school. Their comments consistently emphasise the quality of care provided to students; the well-developed sense of community; the provision of mentoring (Year 10 to 12); quality curriculum delivery, a high level of student engagement in the learning process and the provision of a safe, secure and disciplined community where students are able to achieve to and exceed their best as people and as learners. The parent/carers of the College's 2023 HSC class provided overwhelmingly positive feedback affirming the support of the College for their children as members of the College's sixth HSC class.

A significant barometer of parent satisfaction with the school's operation is the continued increase in applications for enrolment. Applications for enrolment to Year 7 continue to be well more than projections, and there is a consistent demand for places in the other year groups. This trend is occurring at a time when the school age demographic in the Eastlakes Macquarie Region, our student drawing, has been falling.

### Student satisfaction

Students' responses to the most recent 'Tell them from Me' survey emphasise that they feel safe at school and feel that they have someone who they can consistently turn to for encouragement and advice, that they have a positive sense of belonging and connectedness to their school community, are intellectually engaged in the classroom and find learning interesting, enjoyable and relevant. Furthermore, they experience learning, which is well organised, has clarity of purpose and provides immediate feedback which enhances their learning, they recognise that teachers have high expectations, and work hard to create a positive learning climate characterised by positive relationships and a high level of relational trust and critically they express their appreciation for this. Students like and accept themselves and are proud of their accomplishments, find classroom instruction relevant to their everyday lives and understand there are clear rules and expectations for creating a positive learning climate.



## Teacher satisfaction

Teachers acknowledge the extent to which they work with, and in support of, school leaders to create a safe and orderly school environment which supports quality learning and teaching. In terms of the eight drivers of student learning, teachers recognise and appreciate the role of college leadership in establishing challenging and visible learning goals for students; the importance of collaboration in developing cross-curricular or common learning opportunities; establishing learning goals; formulating assessment strategies with other teachers; and in developing cross-curricular or common learning opportunities. Teachers provide regular written feedback to students on their work and set high expectations for student learning. Teachers are increasingly using data to inform their teaching practice; they give feedback to students to improve their performance on formal assessment tasks.

Teachers collaborate to help students set challenging learning goals. There is an increasing emphasis on enhancing students' use of technology to analyse, organise and present subject matter. Within all classrooms there are clearly established expectations for classroom behaviour while students with special learning needs receive feedback on their work.

# Financial Statement

This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2023 year is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income 2023	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$12,474,459
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$3,305,662
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$3,529,655
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$3,182
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$1,007,810
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$20,320,768</b>

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2023	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$101,516
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$14,471,409
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$6,171,121
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$20,744,046</b>

### Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

END OF 2023 REPORT