



# St Mary's School Altona

## 2021 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1273

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## Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Sonia Riccardi, attest that St Mary's School is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2021 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.

21/03/2022

**NOTE:** The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

## Governing Authority Report

2021 has been a momentous year for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, with Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) assuming governance and operations of 290 schools which previously operated under unincorporated structures.

MACS was established to ensure these schools continue the mission of Catholic education to proclaim the Good News while equipping our young people with the education, knowledge, skills and hope to live meaningful lives and enrich the world around them.

Our schools were again asked this year to respond to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. Although asked to implement many measures to keep our staff and students safe, our schools were able to continue delivering a high-quality Catholic education through the resilience and dedication of our principals, school leaders and teachers.

Alongside this important work, we were also able to deliver a new policy suite for schools to ensure our students are safe and which enhance the consistency and transparency of school decision-making, while preserving school autonomy and respecting the local context of our schools.

School Advisory Councils have been established to actively support the principal and embed the life of the local Church in the life of each school. It has been wonderful to see so many parents and members of the wider parish community engaged in these critical forums.

Thank you for the support you have given our schools in 2021. We look forward to continuing to work with you as we strive to provide the young people of the Archdiocese of Melbourne with the best kind of education possible, one that fosters a formation of the whole person that is deeply and enduringly humanising.

Yours sincerely

Jim Miles

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

## Our School Vision

We are a welcoming and supportive Catholic Community.

We proclaim the presence of Jesus Christ in all people.

We value and celebrate our faith, diversity, individuality and life-long learning.

In the Spirit of Mary MacKillop





## School Overview

St Mary's has been an integral feature of the Altona community since the Sisters of St Joseph opened the first school in 1928. We have continued to build on this rich educational foundation grounded in the charism of Mary MacKillop. We proudly proclaim ourselves as a Caring Catholic Community in Education.

Our 2021 enrolments saw 270 children organised into 12 class groupings. The majority of our Year 6 children transition to Catholic Secondary Colleges, with most enrolling at Emmanuel College (St Paul's and Notre Dame campuses) and Mount St Joseph's Girl's College.

During 2021, we offered Physical Education, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and LOTE (Italian) as specialist subjects.

We proudly value, acknowledge and explicitly promote the school's Catholic heritage and traditions. Displays throughout the school; the respectful manner of all interactions; and social justice in action are key features of St Mary's. Additionally, the welcoming nature of the school, the inclusiveness of its practices, the links to the parish and its commitment to supporting all families are evidence of this.

Our large classrooms are well presented with colourful displays designed to support student learning. The school utilises Digital Technology across all aspects of the curriculum, with students having access to a variety of tools, including Chromebooks from Year 3 and banks of iPads for the junior school. The Technology, Research and Information (TRI) Centre provides students with access to both hard and digital resources to further explore and expand their learning. The expansive playground and equipment provided offers a variety of play experiences and opportunities for all students.

Our pedagogical philosophy hinges on the belief that we are all learners and teachers. To this end, we aim to develop inquiring and reflective minds through learning and teaching approaches which empower our children to be lifelong learners. Experiential and 'hands on' activities underpin the school's approach to immersing and engaging students in their learning.

Our focus on personalised learning aims to differentiate learning, taking into account each child's needs, abilities and interests. This is providing them with every opportunity to realise their potential and grow as strong, contributing members within our school and active citizens in the wider community

## Principal's Report

I am honoured to be presenting St Mary's Annual Report to the school community for 2021.

After the year that was 2020, hopes were high that 2021 would be different. While this is true, it was still not the 2021 we had pinned our hopes on.

Once again, much of the year was spent in the remote learning environment, but as expected, students, teachers and parents all did the very best they could.

As we emerged from our homes, restrictions and rules around isolation meant that schooling was still disrupted for many members of our community.

Staff transitioned to hybrid models of learning with great resilience and innovation, sometimes teaching students in their classrooms as well as some joining them online. It was not ideal, but everyone rallied together to make the most of the opportunities they had.

Children were thrilled to be able to see their friends again as the number of days on-site accumulated.

Despite the limited time on-site across the year, I was pleased by the gains made in student learning, whilst continuing to work on well-being, given the disruptive nature of the existing climate.

Staff set their sights on developing a deeper understanding of differentiation and committed themselves to ensuring students' individual needs were met.

I am so deeply proud to belong to the St Mary's community and I am looking forward to a great many things ahead for each of us..

## Education in Faith

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

At St Mary's, we strive year upon year to be a Catholic community of prayer, faith and action. We seek to continuously find ways to improve the learning outcomes of our students by building and strengthening our teacher's capacity to be active, engaging, relevant and reflective practitioners within a contemporary Catholic context.

In 2021, St Mary's began the year having prioritised the teaching and learning area of Religious Education while continuing to focus on and strengthen Catholic Culture and the role of prayer in our Annual Action Plan with the overarching goal remaining: To strengthen the Catholic identity of St Mary's as an active and prayerful, contemporary faith community.

Over this year, it was intended that we would work towards the development of this goal by working on the following key improvement strategies:

- Develop a whole-school approach to teaching Lent and Advent including assessment and moderation.
- Continue to strengthen prayer in classrooms and at staff meetings/ gatherings
- Develop a plan for strengthening parish-school connections through prayer, liturgy, and sacraments

### Achievements

Though not to the degree of 2020, the pandemic again took a heavy toll on schooling in 2021 and this too impacted our ability to implement all the improvements strategies and plans we had to build towards our goal of strengthening the Catholic identity of St Mary's as an active and prayerful, contemporary faith community.

In terms of strengthening prayer in classrooms and at staff meetings/ gatherings, we were able to make gains in enshrining the place of prayer at meetings within templates and standard documentation and all staff were involved in the planning and leading of prayer within these events. Although there was some movement of teachers between levels and classrooms, staff were able to build on the work in 2020, focusing on developing a sacred space within their room as well as learning, practising and embedding prayerful behaviours within the school day, to embed these practices and routines within classrooms quickly and with less need for support in 2021. Classrooms showed evidence of dedicated prayer spaces, articulation of icons and artefacts, and co-constructed prayers to complement school and traditional prayers used within class routines.

Staff too built on the momentum of 2020 in the area of prayer and each staff member was allocated a prayer journal for the collection or recording of shared prayer experiences, storage of prayers used and space for journaling in reference to opportunities for prayer in their daily work



lives. Prayer focussed professional development and resources were presented to staff including working with renowned presenter Fr. Elio Capra SDB.

The work our archpriest Michael Kalka and our Religious Education Leader had done to develop a plan for three sacramental journeys within our students' primary school years remained largely out of reach due to the ongoing lock downs and lingering restrictions which curtailed the Sacramental program significantly in 2021. A success towards the middle of the year proved to be the opportunity to invite our 2020 Year Six students and families back to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation which they missed out on being able to celebrate in 2020. This was a wonderfully attended celebration and was very centred on the connection between confirmation candidates, their families and their parish. This experience set the precedent for us being able to provide a simplified celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation for our 2021 graduates later in the year also. The feedback from families who attended one, or in some cases both, of these sacraments gave testament to the strengthened connection between school and parish that had been built and will greatly inform our sacramental programs in 2022.

At St Mary's in 2021, we continued to work on our whole-school approach to teaching Lent and added a greater emphasis on Advent in Term 4. Time was given in the lead up to both of these seasons of the church at staff meetings to plan for and assess pre-assessments then later in the terms moderate work samples collaboratively. Current research into assessment and in particular, effective assessment strategies informed staff practices and positive change in the amount and quality of professional dialogue around both the practices used and the knowledge of the seasons and their histories was noted.

To continue our ability to improve and build capacity across our school, a small group of teachers were selected to form a Religious Education (RE) Team. These staff members represent the junior, middle and senior classes in our school and were offered professional development opportunities at the Western Regional Office to kick start their journey as RE leaders. This was in addition to the number of RE based professional development opportunities staff had access to in 2021 including a half day at our biennial conference focused on Sacraments & Sacramentality. Much of this professional development is aimed not only at boosting our teacher knowledge and skill but in assisting staff to gain and maintain their accreditation to teach or lead in a Catholic school. This is a new mandate across our Catholic system which now requires teachers and leaders to show evidence of having done 50 hours of RE based professional development over each five year period.

#### VALUE ADDED

- Prayers became a staple of staff meetings
- People were rostered on to lead prayer at staff meeting each week
- Morning prayers were consistent each morning now
- Continued development of morning prayer routines was observed
- Staff were provided with and used prayer journals

- Prayer professional development led by Fr. Elio Capra SDB was presented to staff
- Use of online prayers and prayer resources was widespread
- Dedicated time to set up prayer spaces in classrooms was timetabled in as a non-negotiable
- Each class wrote own class prayer at the beginning of the new school year
- Pre and post assessments were used in Lent and Advent units
- Assessments were codersigned and shared at staff meetings
- Work in Religious Education and in particular work on Christian values and social justice was linked at a staff and then a classroom level with the work on Restorative (Relational) Practices and professional development that was attended having been led by Dave Vinegrad
- Amended processes for Confirmation in 2020 & 2021 were put in practice
- Continuing to run paraliturgies during these times was a strength as even during lockdowns these were prepared and shared with classrooms and the school community over digital platforms
- There was a focus on teaching/embedding expectations for students when in church which included relearning some of the common responses as well as etiquette
- Godly Play professional development lead by one of our own staff members was presented at a staff meeting (this was new learning for some and a timely refresher for others)
- Religious Art activities became a feature of home learning and an opportunity for cross-over between Visual Art and Religion classes

## Learning & Teaching

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

At St Mary's in 2021, we aimed to build on the strength of the work done in 2020 to further improve the learning outcomes of our students. We aimed to do this through a consistent focus on and use of data gathered by teachers using research backed assessment tools and methods and analysed to enhance the delivery of evidence informed practices in the classrooms. The focus in 2021 was not only on building teachers' capacity to engage in collaborative analysis of data so as to design a curriculum that supports and challenges every student to achieve expected growth and standards, but was to go further to begin to see and plan more effectively for students as cohorts, small groups and individual learners.

Over 2021, it was intended that we would work towards the development of our focus by outlining the following key improvement strategies:

- Continue to interpret big picture data - trend, growth analysis
- Upskill Middle leaders on 'facilitating PLCs'
- Use data for planning purposes, including developing a cycle for 'Learning Sprints'
- Develop and begin to implement a plan for gathering and analysing Wellbeing data.

### Achievements

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the 2021 school year, the degree to which each improvement strategy was able to be realistically worked on and advanced differed on a case by case basis. Specifically relating to the key improvement strategies, broadly the following achievements were made:

- PAT - staff were given time early in the year to analyse and use data from the 2020 PAT assessments to identify cohorts, trends, track progress over time and plan for future directions
- PAT - data conversations/meetings were held in November following the latest round of assessments
- An end of year analysis was facilitated to collate and analyse a range of student data both formatively and summatively
- Time given in staff meetings and PLCs for data analysis throughout the year and for a range of assessment instruments and data sets
- The large majority of our biennial staff conference was dedicated to assessing and monitoring student data using online software programs held in conjunction with SREAMS and presented by Phillip Holmes-Smith and Emma MacNamara
- These conference sessions were seen as good for all staff who had the opportunity to attend so as to better understand the process and be more able to use common language/develop understandings around data and data analysis
- Student Performance Analyser (SPA) was used to input and track student data for the purpose of analysis and comparison

- Data literacy professional learning opportunities were taken up by a range of staff
- BAS results in reading comprehension were analysed and used to help plan for focussed Reading instruction in classrooms to meet small group and individual points of need
- BAS data was used to create data wall which were kept and revised, staff were given opportunities throughout the year to look for student growth & track their own students as a measure of their instructional effectiveness
- Explicit instructions/expectations around collection and use of data were made clear and team/school norms were established
- The members of the Curriculum Team attended further professional learning on PAT and use of data run by ACER themselves
- The Literacy and Maths leaders were able to facilitate team meetings and whole school sessions focussed on PAT & BAS data and how to best use it to inform intervention and focus teaching group selection
- Staff regularly analysed data and used this to inform goal setting for their class and for students requiring Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs)
- Data and data analysis was used by staff in developing Professional Improvement Plans (PIPs), these were shared in a staff meeting and worked on over the course of the year
- The focus on data analysis promoted thinking amongst staff about how to extend students in the classroom and led to an investigation of whether the higher achieving students were being given equitable assistance to continue to grow and develop
- Leaders joining team planning sessions was seen as helpful. This included the Teaching & Learning, RE, Literacy & Numeracy Leaders.
- More observations were taken by classroom teachers and were used to support planning
- Data was used consistently in planning sessions to drive collaborative discussions and planning for needs
- Cross class teaching groups focused on need, based on data collected, were a feature of new and improved teaching practices evidenced, developing throughout the school.
- The Maths Leader facilitated Professional Learning sessions with staff to improve knowledge of the Multiplicative Thinking and the Learning Assessment Framework.
- Use of multiplicative thinking tools and analysis of normative based assessments allowed teachers to assess student's thinking and application of strategies along with their computational abilities
- The Curriculum Team met with Corwin to plan for coaching and Visible Learning PL in 2022
- The staff began work on the Intervention Framework with focusses on Response To Intervention (RTI) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- The Teaching and Learning Leader and the Literacy Leader attended First Year Literacy Leaders professional series over the course of the year
- Liaison with our regional Literacy consultant (Nives Nibaldi) was a regular part of the work of the Literacy Leader and informed school decision making processes as well as data analysis and literacy intervention strategies used

- Our Learning Diversity Leader and Numeracy Leader became User B licenced, with the Teaching and Learning Leader to undertake training in 2022
- Essential Assessment was used consistently across all strands of Mathematics for pre and post assessments. Data from these Essential Assessments was used to create and inform learning sprints in Mathematics

Other achievements that were significant and occurred during the 2021 school year were as follows:

- Time was made at each term's Big Picture Planning (BPP) day for the specialist teachers to be released to work with teams to find ways of collaborating, sharing the learning and creating complementary curriculum decisions
- In these BPP sessions, particular focus was given to generating authentic cross-curriculum links and in planning to including opportunities for students to develop greater personal/social, critical & creative, as well as ethical and culturally informed skills and practices
- There was a focus on developing a whole school approach to Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) and a foundation focus of using the Zones of Regulation

#### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

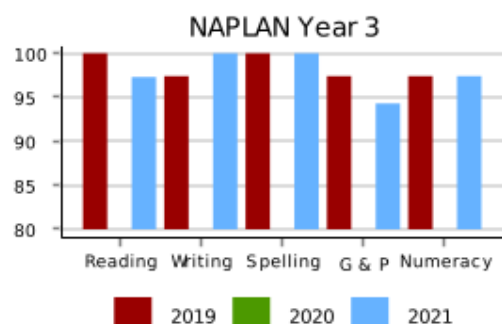
- In Literacy, staff gathered data around reading using BAS, PAT-R, and focus group sessions. Staff used the information collected from BAS to create data walls to support the analysis of student data, measure growth and inform future teaching focus. They participated in Professional Learning Community (PLC) discussions about the PAT-R data and how to use the information for targeted teaching. To support teacher capacity in facilitating literacy sessions, the Literacy Leader attended team planning sessions regularly and modelled lessons for classroom teachers. An audit of big books was undertaken and an online catalogue was created to streamline the use of these resources. To support the Little Learners Love Literacy program, more decodable take home and classroom library books were purchased. New staff attended professional development in SMART Spelling and Little Learners Love Literacy programs. Staff worked together during PLCs to moderate writing samples from students to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.
- In Mathematics, and in particular Numeracy, regular assessments prior to the teaching of new units were implemented using Essential Numeracy and the results of these assessments were used to group students according to need, design relevant curriculum and target teaching at individual and small group level. Post unit assessments were also implemented again using Essential Numeracy to both gauge the success of the ways in which the unit had been presented as well as track student progress over time. Later in the year, summative PAT-M assessments were used to assess and measure student achievement and measure growth over the previous twelve months.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	97.4	-	-	94.3	-
YR 03 Numeracy	97.4	-	-	97.4	-
YR 03 Reading	100.0	-	-	97.3	-
YR 03 Spelling	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Writing	97.4	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	94.1	-	-	92.5	-
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	95.0	-
YR 05 Reading	97.1	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	-	-	92.5	-
YR 05 Writing	100.0	-	-	92.5	-

\* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

\*\* Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

\*\*\* No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.





## Student Wellbeing

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Student Wellbeing is paramount at St. Mary's as is our desire to develop students as self-managing (independent) and collaborative (interdependent) learners who take responsibility for the learning, actions and wellbeing of themselves and others.

Of greatest importance is our goal to have a community of learners who are:

- connected to the school
- connected to their peers
- able to build and maintain respectful relationships

### Achievements

2021 was the first full year under the leadership of Sonia Riccardi, our Principal who began with us mid year in 2020. We began the year thinking that the pandemic was behind us and that we would have a relatively smooth year. Dave Vinegrad (Behaviour Matters) worked with staff on the first day of Term 1 around Relational Practices, coaching them in classroom management techniques and giving strategies for building relationships. We were off to a flyer.

In Term 1 we focussed heavily on Wellbeing; identifying and practising strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing and delving into building positive relationships and personal wellbeing. This was very fortunate learning as it set the students up well for what they were to face in regards to their learning for the remainder of the year.

As fate would have it we once again faced many lockdowns and many weeks/months of lockdowns and online learning.

Not deterred by this however, once again, one of our greatest achievements throughout the year was how we as a school community pulled together to ensure the wellbeing of our students, our families and our staff during the lockdowns.

Student engagement, student voice, relationship building and maintenance, staff wellbeing were all high on the agenda throughout the year. Our staff embraced the challenge of moving between online and face to face learning and moved into overdrive to provide sound learning opportunities for our students while still caring very much for the social/emotional needs of all community members regardless of their location..

Returning to school from online learning meant a greater focus on wellbeing, on re-establishing relationships and ways of working and just being together. Building stamina for coping with the school day was also high on the agenda.

Although family members were still not allowed onsite for much of Term 4, we found ways to keep them connected with school life. We finished the year with many successes including seeing our Year 6 students graduate and celebrate their final year at St. Mary's.

#### VALUE ADDED

- Staff Professional Development with Dave Vinegrad (Behaviour Matters) on Relational Practice: Half Day PL & Staff Meeting
- New Restorative Practice cards printed and distributed to staff
- Staff meeting Term 2 on Relational Practice / SEL
- Resources regularly shared with staff
- Our School Counsellor was engaged to work with us 2 days per week; an extra day added from the previous year. She worked with referred students both online and face to face and also provided professional learning opportunities for staff
- Chaplaincy Funding acquired for a 2 year period.
- Loss and Change groups and Social Skills groups run by our school counsellor and our Speech Pathologist
- The Social / Emotional Learning curriculum and the Capabilities were well considered and included in lesson planning, including making links in other curriculum areas
- Online class meetings were held at all year levels. Each meeting began with a wellbeing focus and allowed students to connect with each other and with their teachers
- Online friendship group meetings were also arranged in response to feedback which told us that the students were missing just chatting with and seeing their friends
- Regular 1:1 check-ins and support for those students most vulnerable; students with special learning and social/emotional needs attended online sessions with their class teachers and Learning Support Staff assigned to their classes
- Our vibrant and engaging Facebook page served to inform the members of our community about activities undertaken and helped to maintain connections between families
- Members of leadership made wellbeing calls to families simply to check in and see how they were going and assist with issues that may have arisen
- Student leaders engaged in online meetings with Leadership to discuss and organise community engagement activities such as National Buddy Day, Spring Into Happiness and Kindness Day and Guess the Staff member and House Team leader competitions to name a few.
- School assemblies were sent to the community via Google Slides, allowing for further community engagement. Students were awarded Principal Awards and Aussie of the Month, class news was advertised and competitions were run through these assembly documents.
- Wellbeing Wednesday, introduced in 2020 following feedback from parents about students having difficulty completing tasks set by specialist teachers and from staff in relation to

planning release, was re-introduced. All class teachers were given release time on Wednesdays and specialist staff set tasks for the day and were available for students who had questions regarding the work set in their subject areas. This reduced pressure on families by allowing them to complete specialist subject tasks as a family. It also allowed class teachers time to meet with colleagues as well as giving specialist teachers their planning time. Students and families also reported that Wellbeing Wednesday acted as its name suggested and was a great way to re-energise.

- Students needing to be supervised onsite during lock-downs were well cared for by Learning Support staff, part-time teachers and members of leadership. They engaged in the same learning programs as those learning at home and a few extra activities to help them remain connected
- Seesaw and Google Classroom were the platforms used for student learning and family connections.
- Members of leadership manned each gate before and after school so that connections could be maintained with family members as well as to welcome and support students in their return to school each day.
- Birthday cards and awards were sent to students via post, something the recipients loved.

## STUDENT SATISFACTION

Much of our data over the COVID lockdowns was anecdotal, however we did have many discussions with staff, students and parents throughout the lockdowns to evaluate and refine our processes.

We were fortunate to be able to complete our MACSSIS Surveys in Term 4 and we gained positive feedback from our students, parents and staff. Notable was the increase from 68% (2019) to 73% (2021) in Teacher Student Relationships, specifically the strength of the social connection between teachers and students, with and beyond the school. We also increased from 49% (2019) to 52% (2021) in Enabling Safety (Student perceptions to access to and quality of staff support in order to feel connected, safe and respected within the school. Even more pleasing for us, as for most of the year our staff and students hadn't been face to face and yet the students still felt supported and connected.

Parents/guardians were pleased with the use of Google Classroom, Zoom and Seesaw as methods of communication. It helped them to feel engaged in their child's learning and connected to the teachers. The Facebook page was also well received as parents were able to see photos of what other families/ friends were doing. Parents/guardians commented that the attitude of the teaching staff was understanding, flexible and accessible and they liked the Seesaw teacher demonstration videos, zoom calls, Seesaw in general, that were teachers accessible by email and the e-assemblies.

In terms of staff, weekly check-ins with individual teams throughout lockdowns meant that when issues arose they could be addressed in a timely manner and processes altered where possible. While life remained challenging for staff throughout COVID, this way of working eased some of the angst.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

St Mary's School teaching staff mark an electronic roll twice per day. Administration staff contacts parents /guardians about any unexplained absences as soon as practicable on the day of absence. This is done via text message in which parents are asked to call the office to confirm and explain the absence.

Families have continued to be very diligent in informing the school regarding student absenteeism, and this very high level of attendance, as detailed in the table below, indicates the importance families place on ensuring children are consistently at school.

Reasons for student absence are documented within attendance rolls and parent notes filed for future reference. Days absent are reported to parents via each child's semester report. During COVID lockdowns, teaching staff monitored and recorded student attendance. They contacted parents and notified members of leadership if students did not attend online learning sessions or hand in work tasks over a number of consecutive days. Members of leadership would also contact parents/guardians if attendance was an issue.

## AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y01	95.2%
Y02	95.6%
Y03	95.4%
Y04	96.1%
Y05	96.0%
Y06	95.5%
Overall average attendance	95.6%

## Child Safe Standards

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

In 2021 our goal was to further our commitment to providing a safe environment for all students by actively implementing processes that establish expectations and accountabilities for people working with our students.

Evidence of the achievement of our goal would lie in the following:

- Students in our community are aware of their right to feel safe and be safe and that they can speak to trusted adults if they do not feel safe.
- Students are encouraged to engage in conversations about welfare and safety during Circle Time sessions.
- A culture of child safety exists within the school community where the safety and best interests of the children we work with are paramount. Regular discussions occur amongst staff in staff meetings, planning sessions and incidentally throughout the day.
- Our MACSSIS survey results showed an increase from 49% (2019) to 52% (2021) in Enabling Safety (Student perceptions to access to and quality of staff support in order to feel connected, safe and respected within the school).

### Achievements

At St. Mary's School, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from, and inherent in, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

- Staff members have participated in regular professional learning, briefings and training sessions to ensure the school's legislative obligations related to Child Safe Standards are addressed and that the school's Child Safety Strategy remains front of mind.

Sessions have included:

- Online Mandatory Reporting Modules
- Protect - Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending
- Revisiting the school's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct

Child Safety and Wellbeing are standing items on the Staff Meeting agenda allowing for frequent discussion among staff about how to best cater for the needs of our students.

Information is provided to parents to inform them of the Child Safe Standards. Their obligations and the school's expectations in regard to these is also explained.

- St Mary's School Code of Conduct for staff, parents, Parish Priest and visitors signed annually by all

- A risk management evaluation is undertaken prior to any excursions or incursion. The required documentation is submitted to the principal for approval.
- The whole school participated, either face to face or by using online platforms, in the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence; National Buddy Day; Spring into Happiness & Kindness Day; and the National 'Day for Daniel' to promote child safety awareness, all initiatives which encourage relationship building and student voice, both pivotal in ensuring the safety of all children and young people.
- Cyber safety information sessions were facilitated by Cyber Safety Project for staff, students and parents. These sessions focussed on building skills for a successful and responsible digital life which became especially important due to the online nature of schooling since COVID emerged
- Our Junior School Council reviewed and ratified the Student Version of the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Student Leaders discussed matters of Child Safety to ensure a safe environment for all students in Junior School Council Meetings



## Leadership & Management

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To formalise reflective practices (observation, feedback, mentoring and coaching) to enhance staff performance

### Achievements

With most Positions of Leadership extended by a further twelve months, our Leadership and Curriculum Team memberships remained consistent. This meant we were able to seamlessly continue to work together towards our 2021 goals.

These teams met weekly and worked collaboratively to ensure consistent messages and actions were enacted.

Curriculum leaders attended team planning meetings on a semi-regular basis. This allowed for individual teams to also invite curriculum leaders to attend their planning meetings on an as-needed basis. This format proved successful as it allowed for both strategic attendance by leaders as well as when teams felt they needed some mentoring and expertise in specific areas.

The decision to fund a full-time Learning and Teaching Leader meant we were able to establish extra support for teachers and students. This leader was also able to release our Literacy and Numeracy leaders to attend planning meetings as well as other teachers to observe colleagues. Funding permitting, this will continue to prove a valuable decision in the future, as we move to explore more observation, mentoring and coaching opportunities.

We were incredibly fortunate to be able to hold our first biennial staff conference, as restrictions lifted just in time. These 2 days away were not only a wonderful boost to staff morale and collegiality, but were days of great learning.

On our first day, Philip Holmes-Smith and Emma MacNamara led us through the exploration of our student reading and maths data. They facilitated discussions around what the data was telling us both currently and historically and helped us develop an understanding of what our priorities should be. Whilst this was an incredibly difficult day on an intellectual level, the challenge was welcomed by staff and we walked away having a deeper understanding of our students, their needs and of course, what we needed to do better.

On the second day, Fr Elio Capra led staff on an exploration of Sacramentality and living sacramentally. His light-heartedness and sense of humour made it a most enjoyable session.

**EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING****Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021**

The following professional learning opportunities were accessed in 2021:

- Positive behaviour
- Little Learners Love Literacy
- SMART Spelling
- Cyber Safety
- Mary MacKillop Colloquial
- Bicycle Education
- Data analysis and interpretation
- Sacramentality
- Progressive Achievement Tests: analysis and usage
- First Aid training
- CPR training
- NAPLAN Data interpretation
- VCOP and Big Write
- Zones of Regulation
- Introducing Scriptures
- Exploring Culture
- Able Training workshop

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021

36

Average expenditure per teacher for PL

\$937

**TEACHER SATISFACTION**

Considering the impact that COVID and remote learning had on staff as well as a change in leadership in the middle of 2020, the staff survey results were extremely positive.

There was considerable growth in the perceptions of relationships between staff and leadership with 91% of staff feeling the relationships were positive. A major contributor was the contact that leadership had with staff during lockdown. Weekly meetings with teams to check in with how they were managing and if there were any concerns were welcomed and valued.

Another significant area of growth for staff in 2021 was the understanding staff displayed regarding our Annual Action Plan. This was mainly due to the Leadership Team ensuring that all professional learning/staff meetings were underpinned by the statements from the AAP so staff could understand where it fit in the plan. Having our AAP physically displayed around the school for all to see and read also was beneficial.

In 2021, again due to COVID, the availability for staff to participate in professional development, other than online was nil. As a school who has always encouraged staff to attend PD this had an impact on how staff felt about the possibility of participating in professional development. Fortunately, now that so many restrictions have been lifted, staff once again are being enrolled in PD on relevant topics through a variety of organisations.

All in all, the data reveals that the staff at St Mary's feel safe and confident in the leadership and believe that we have what it takes to improve the instruction for all students so that they achieve to the very best of their ability.

#### TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	80.8%
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#### ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	84.6%
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#### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	38.1%
Graduate	19.0%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	61.9%
Advanced Diploma	28.6%
No Qualifications Listed	9.5%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	32.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	23.7
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	18.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	17.7
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1.0

## School Community

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To strengthen the Catholic identity of St Mary's as an active and prayerful, contemporary faith community

- Further develop and strengthen the prayer life of the school
- Strengthen the school and parish connections

### Achievements

As we are acutely aware, COVID had a significant impact on the mental well being of our students. Being disconnected from their friends was difficult for the majority of students. There was great excitement when students eventually returned to onsite learning. A massive banner attached to the front gates of the school welcomed them back.

A vast majority of students responded that they felt that there was a positive connection between themselves and teachers and feel that they are valued members of our community. Our Junior School Council as well as our School Leaders are valued roles in our school. While opportunities were reduced in 2021, these young students were still involved in a variety of activities that included fundraising, social activities for the community and running school assemblies.

Another strength is that students have a positive mindset of themselves as learners. They are aware that teachers hold high expectations for them as learners and encourage them to be persistent and to do things to the best of their ability.

### PARENT SATISFACTION

2021 began with the promise of a fresh new start where life in general for all would return to some normalcy. This promise was short-lived as another strain of Covid-19 developed and snap lockdowns became another feature of our lives eventually resulting in a lockdown that lasted more than a term.

The impact of this is evident in the data that we received from the MACSIS survey which was completed in Term 2021. Interestingly in 2019, we had 55 families respond to the survey and in 2021 only 18. This small number could be indicative of the way people generally were feeling in Melbourne at the time. Even so, while the MACS average response to feeling positive about the school was 69%, our score was 72%.

St Mary's has always prided itself on being a welcoming community, with visitors often commenting on what a warm and special feel our school has. The survey revealed that 69% of parents felt that there were barriers that prevented them from interacting or being involved at St Mary's. This is not at all surprising as we were unable to have parents on the grounds/buildings etc. They could not attend assemblies/Masses in person. This definitely resulted in parents feeling removed and lacking involvement in our school community. As COVID restrictions are lifted we are confident that this score will improve as families once more are able to be onsite and our usual activities can resume.

It was reassuring to note that we again were higher than the norm for parents' perceptions of the social and learning climate of the school. Considering that for the majority of the year we were involved in remote learning, parents could clearly see that teachers were endeavoring to provide the best education they could as well as continuing to provide social interactions for students albeit through a screen.

Another positive response was that most families felt that the communication between the school and themselves was timely, frequent and of a high quality. Our use of online platforms such as Operoo and Seesaw has removed the need for hardcopy notes which can be easily lost and allowed information to be sent directly to parents' devices. All involved have found this to be a much easier and more effective way of communicating with families.



## Future Directions

After a positive end to the 2021 school year, we look forward to the further easing of restrictions in 2022.

In Religious Education we will continue to provide opportunities to strengthen the prayer life of our school. We also look forward to once again being able to celebrate Mass as a school and extended parish community.

We will also begin mapping out a scope and sequence of learning about Saint Mary MacKillop so that each year, we will build on student knowledge of this remarkable Saint.

We will continue to improve our data analysis and targeted teaching in Literacy and Maths and work closely with auxiliary staff (including intervention and extra support staff) to ensure we are doing all we can to cater for our students' individual needs.

We will commence a 3-year journey that will see us explore and implement best practices as outlined in John Hattie's Visible Learning research. This cycle will include external yearly reviews of our Learning and Teaching and an improvement action plan designed to target specific areas of our practices, based on these reviews.

We are excited to begin work on establishing our school values. This work will drive the behaviour expectations of all members of our community, in both how we interact and how we learn. We will explore people in history who demonstrated these values and will re-launch our house teams, naming them after these significant people.

2022 promises to be a year of exciting challenge for students and teachers as we extend ourselves and encourage each other to work hard and progress towards our potential.