

Annual School Report 2020 School Year

St Mary's College, Gunnedah



151 Bloomfield Street
Gunnedah NSW 2380

Phone 02 6742 2124
<https://stmaryscollege.nsw.edu.au>

Principal
Maxwell Quirk

About this report

St Mary's College is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The report also outlines to the school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Annual Improvement Plan.

The report demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the CSO. This report, approved by the CSO, monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. It is available on both school and CSO websites by 30 June 2021 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this report may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums, including the School Advisory Council meetings and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6742 2124 or by visiting the school's website <https://stmaryscollege.nsw.edu.au>.



1.0 Messages

1.1 Principal's Message

There were many people who assisted in the development of the College as a Catholic learning community. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the College staff for all their generous efforts. St Mary's College is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the College.

This year commenced like any other year; Opening School Mass, Swimming Carnival, Parent Information Nights, however, by March things had changed dramatically and it was to be a year like no other.

Reports of the COVID-19 virus outbreak in China began to make regular news headlines as early as February, however, as the virus took hold and began to spread into other countries, especially throughout Europe, it became evident it would reach Australia, become a pandemic and turn our world up-side-down. By April, NSW was in total lockdown, schools were closed and all learning continued from home with teachers taking their classes remotely.

Fortunately, 2020 was the year St Mary's had decided that all students were to bring their own device to school. They could bring one from home or purchase a Chromebook from the school. So, for a period of 8 weeks teachers supported student learning via the internet using such technology as Google Classroom and Zoom meetings. It was a steep learning curve for some and an exciting challenge for others. Professional Learning for staff was organised to assist staff to up-skill and colleagues who were more tech-savvy assisted those who were not.

Some students revelled in this new way of learning while others struggled to engage. Students were permitted to attend school and spend the day in supervised classrooms doing the same remote learning as those at home. The learning was effective and for some students it became their preferred model. However, they did miss the other aspects of school life, especially socialising with friends and playing sport.

By June, schools were open again but nowhere near normal. Social distancing, sanitising, disinfecting, and no excursions or inter-school activities. All parent information was done remotely. Visitors to the school were limited. P & F functions were cancelled.

However, the HSC went ahead and Year 12 were able to have a Graduation Formal after their final exam with only parents and staff attending.

So, what did we learn from our 2020 COVID experience?

We learnt how to be creative in difficult circumstances. How to support each other and endeavour to ensure that no one was left behind. We learnt a lot about how technology can be more effectively used to support learning. And we learnt that, by the grace of God, we can endure whatever comes our way.

2020 was also my last year as Principal of St Mary's College. After 8 years it is time to hand over the leadership of this great school. It has been a very enjoyable time and a highlight of my 40 years working in Catholic schools. I wish to thank the St Mary's school community, staff, students and parents for their support, friendship and affirmation over that time. I will remember St Mary's as a Community of Faith that supported my faith and a Place of Learning where staff and students work hard to be the best version of themselves and to give this version in generous service to all. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be part of this great school.

I acknowledge Fr John McHugh and the parishioners of St Joseph's Parish for their support of St Mary's during my time here. Attending Tuesday morning Mass with a class of students was always a highlight of my week. I hope you will continue to pray for me in my retirement.

Maxwell Quirk
Principal



1.2 A Parent Message

St Mary's College saw many great achievements this year; academic, sporting and great success with student social development and engagement.

Parent participation on the School Advisory Council was very much appreciated and provided valuable advice and feedback to the College Executive Leadership team. Parents were also active in the Combined Gunnedah Catholic Schools Parents & Friends Association to raise valuable funds to improve student facilities at St Mary's.

Anthony Fairfull
Chairperson
School Advisory Council

2.0 This Catholic College

2.1 The College Community

St Mary's College is located in Gunnedah and is part of the St Joseph's Parish which serves the communities of Gunnedah, Boggabri, Narrabri, Curlewis, Mullaley, Tambar Springs and Carroll, from which the College families are drawn.

Last year the College celebrated 141 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Father John McHugh, is involved in the life of the College.

2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Mary's College follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

Liturgical Life

The opening school Mass was held in conjunction with St Xavier's. There were also masses and opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation for particular year levels. Liturgies were held for special occasions. Each school assembly and mentor group began with a prayer.

Staff and Student Faith Formation

The Staff Reflection Day held in December was facilitated by a member of the Sisters of Mercy.

Student faith formation is a key component of the courses taught from Years 7 to 12. It is supported by the program of collection for charitable works, the Social Justice program, the program of masses and liturgies and class visits by the parish priest and appropriate guest speakers. Staff, parents and students were all strongly encouraged to join the celebration of Family Masses held in St Joseph's Church. The attendance of families was very pleasing.

Social Justice

Social justice education within the RE program complemented the College's charitable fundraising activities, with at least one held per term. All school assemblies were preceded by an Acknowledgement of Country.

Parish Links

The Principal and Religious Education Coordinator worked closely with the parish priest on the school's liturgical program and class visits. The parish priest is a member of the School Advisory Council and regularly attends meetings. The REC serves on the Parish Liturgy Committee. The Principal is a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.



The College newsletter is regularly available in the parish church. Parish news is published in the College newsletter and significant College news is published in the Parish Bulletin. Parishioners are eligible to nominate for membership of the School Advisory Council.

2.3 College Enrolment

St Mary's College caters for students from Years 7 to 12. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	TOTAL 2020	TOTAL 2019
Male	31	39	30	24	12	12	148	166
Female	49	53	41	32	28	19	222	212
Totals	80	92	71	56	40	31	370	378

2.4 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential, it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, school staff as part of their duty of care, monitor attendance each day. The class roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each week by the Principal or their delegate. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, sms message or email to the school preferably on the first day of absence, and certainly within seven days. The Principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations, the Principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases, students and their parents meet with the Principal to discuss the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the College during 2020 is shown in the following table.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	All Years
Average Student Attendance Rates	92.0%	90.0%	88.0%	85.0%	94.0%	93.0%	90.3%

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 school community;



- monitoring engagement of individual students in their learning and identifying strategies to enhance engagement;
- 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;
- intervention strategies for students with unsatisfactory attendance may include academic case management, social case management, referral to counselling and parent/carer involvement;
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom previous strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

When the Catholic Schools Office Armidale is notified of a student for whom chronic non attendance is an issue and previous strategies have failed, the Principal and the School Consultant will convene a meeting with the family, the student, and other agencies if required, to develop a Return to School Plan.

2.5 Staff Profile and Teacher Standards

Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile		Number of Teachers
1.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	0
2.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	40
3.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	18
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the College.	0
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the College.	11

2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

- Respect for all members of society was promoted on a whole school basis through the charitable works program, in which members of the Student Representative Council took a leading role.



- The College continued its involvement in the Riding for the Disabled Program.
- Student involvement in civic events was encouraged and those who volunteered for such events were recognised by the presentation of certificates, usually at College assemblies.
- The College maintains active participation in town ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day activities.
- Aspects of Civics and Citizenship were addressed through the History and Geography curriculum, especially in Year 9.
- Respect and responsibility was promoted through the College's Pastoral Care and Discipline Policies, which were reinforced by Year Leaders at Year assemblies and by the Principal and Assistant Principal at College assemblies and Monday morning student briefings.

2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving 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.

Parent Satisfaction

Parents were invited to participate in the My School Survey in September 2020. Of the 341 parents surveyed, 158 completed the survey with 64% agreeing with the statement 'Overall I am satisfied with the education our child/children receive(s) at this school' and 28% strongly agreed with this statement.

Student Satisfaction

Students were invited to participate in the My School Survey in September 2020. Of the 374 students surveyed, 241 completed the survey with 67% agreeing with the statement 'I like being at this school' and 18% strongly agreed with the same statement.

'I feel safe at this school' was agreed with by 66% and 26% strongly agreed with this statement.

Staff Satisfaction

Staff were invited to participate in the My School Survey in September 2020. Of the staff 50 surveyed, 43 completed the survey with 51% of staff agreeing with the statement 'I get a lot of satisfaction from working in this school' and 28% strongly agreed with this statement.

3.0 Teaching and Learning

3.1 College Curriculum

The College provides an educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority syllabuses for Secondary Education as required for Registration and Accreditation under the Education Act 1990 (NSW). In addition, the College implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office Armidale.

The College operated the mandatory NESA courses of English, Mathematics, Science, PDHPE, Creative Arts and Technology throughout Years 7 and 8. Each of History, Geography, Visual Arts and Music was run for each class for two terms per year. Students fulfilled the mandatory Languages requirements in Year 8 studying Mandarin.



Students in Years 9 and 10 undertook the NESA courses of English, Mathematics, Science, Australian History, Geography and PDHPE. The College offered two elective lines.

Students in Years 11 and 12 were offered a diverse range of courses. Several VET courses were available to senior students, either within the College (Primary Industries) or in conjunction with TAFE. Assessment was conducted in accordance with NESA Syllabus guidelines.

Each course in Years 7 to 10 incorporated relevant aspects of Literacy, Numeracy, Indigenous Perspectives and Information & Communications Technology. In Years 7 and 8, a Literacy block operates which offers all students an opportunity to improve their literacy.

All courses from Year 7 to 12 incorporate the Core Catholic Principles and Values, through which connections between syllabus content, attitudes and skills can be related to Catholic perspectives. Religious Education is a compulsory subject for Years 7 to 12 and includes the opportunity to study Studies of Religion in Years 11 and 12.

Multicultural and environmental education are incorporated into RE, Science and HSIE courses. The student support staff provide mainly in-class assistance to students with diagnosed disabilities and/or literacy and numeracy difficulties. Transition programs were undertaken in 2020 for new students enrolling in 2021. Teaching staff received Professional Development in writing Individual Education Plans for each funded student.

An after-school homework centre operated in the school library, with 2020 being its eleventh year of operation.

3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs

3.2.1 NAPLAN

There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as a result of the decision by the Australian Government for students not to participate in the NAPLAN Assessments due to the circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

3.2.2 Higher School Certificate

The results of the College's Higher School Certificate candidature are reported below. The table provided shows the percentage of students who achieved in the top three bands and shows a comparison with results from previous years.

	Higher School Certificate: Percentage of students in bands 4, 5, 6					
	2018		2019		2020	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
Studies of Religion 1	58%	71%	53%	58%	44%	58%
English Standard	57%	50%	42%	37%	80%	69%
English Advanced	75%	91%	100%	94%	100%	97%
Mathematics Standard 2	37%	53%	47%	37%	56%	53%
Mathematics	22%	78%	69%	64%	75%	68%

St Mary's College students gained three Band 6s and 29 Band 5s in 2020.

Some of the outstanding results were Legal Studies with one Band 6 a one Band 5.



Music attained two band 5s out of two students.

In 2020 the number of students issued with a RoSA	0
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3.2.3 Senior Secondary College Outcomes

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

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Senior Secondary Outcomes Year 12, 2020	% of students undertaking vocational training or training in a trade during the senior years of schooling.	15%
	% of students attaining the award of Higher School Certificate or equivalent vocational education and training qualification.	98%

3.2.4 Post College Destinations

Destination data is required to be collected by all schools for students beyond the compulsory years of schooling. This table is an easy way to represent the figures ensuring school and system compliance with this Federal requirement.

Each year the College collects destination data relating to the Year 12 student cohort. The table below sets out the percentage of students for the various categories shown.

Destination Data Year 12, 2020 Graduating Class	University	TAFE / Other institutions	Workforce entry	Destination not reported
	57%	14%	28%	7%

3.2.5 Retention of Students from Year 10 to Year 12

The percentage of students who completed year 10 at St Mary's College and progressed to year 12 for 2020 was 60%.

3.3 Teacher Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole College staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office Armidale. 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.

Whole staff development day professional learning activities in 2020 were:



Staff Professional Learning Activity	Date	Presenter
Staff Planning Day	29/01/2020	Max Quirk/Catherine Martin
CSO Compliance	28/01/2020	Max Quirk
Reflection Day	17/12/2020	Sister Christine/Sandra Garnett/Nikole Brooks

4.0 College Policies

4.1 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Students from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

This College does not have any enrolment policies or support documents in addition to the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the College's website <https://stmaryscollege.nsw.edu.au> and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office [website](#).

4.2 Pastoral Care Policy

Jesus Christ and his teachings are the basis of all that occurs at St Mary's College. Christ's teachings therefore should relate to how our staff develop student self-discipline. The college community believes in a holistic approach to individual development. Such an approach aims to develop the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual dimensions of a child. Staff aim to bring this about in the College by promoting self-worth and by encouraging each individual to answer to one's self for one's own actions.

All people attending St Mary's College have the right to be treated:

- justly
- respectfully
- fairly

No changes were made to the 'Pastoral Care Policy' this year.

The full text of the College's 'Pastoral Care Policy' may be accessed on the College's website <https://stmaryscollege.nsw.edu.au> or at the administration office.

4.3 Student Discipline Policy

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.

No changes were made to the 'Student Discipline Policy' this year.



The full text of the College's 'Student Discipline Policy' may be accessed on the College's website <https://stmaryscollege.nsw.edu.au> or at the administration office.

4.4 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale has established a 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' which is implemented by the College and all systemic 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 Catholic Schools Office (CSO) monitors the implementation of this policy.

No changes were made to the 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' this year.

The full text of the College's 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' may be accessed on the College's website <https://stmaryscollege.nsw.edu.au>, the administration office or on the CSO website.

4.5 Complaints Handling Policy and Guide

The Diocese of Armidale has established a 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' which is implemented by the college. The rationale for this 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 the contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policies.

No changes were made to the 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' this year.

The full text of the College's 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' may be accessed on the College's website <https://stmaryscollege.nsw.edu.au> or the administration office.

5.0 College Review and Improvement

Each year, the College develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the College's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the Catholic Schools Office Annual Improvement Plan. The College engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the Schools Consultant.

Key Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2020	Key Goals for 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith - Enhanced and deepened the prayer life of the school Preserved and fostered the Mercy Charism Improved learning through the Worthwhile Lesson, Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, Differentiation and Gradual Release Improved learning through Literacy and Numeracy Initiatives Promoted a supportive learning community through the mentor group program and a positive learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the human person from the Catholic perspective Increase viability of Catholic Identity Implement an effective learning cycle with a focus on coherent curriculum, authentic literacy and differentiation Develop highly functional instructional leadership teams with a focus on coaching



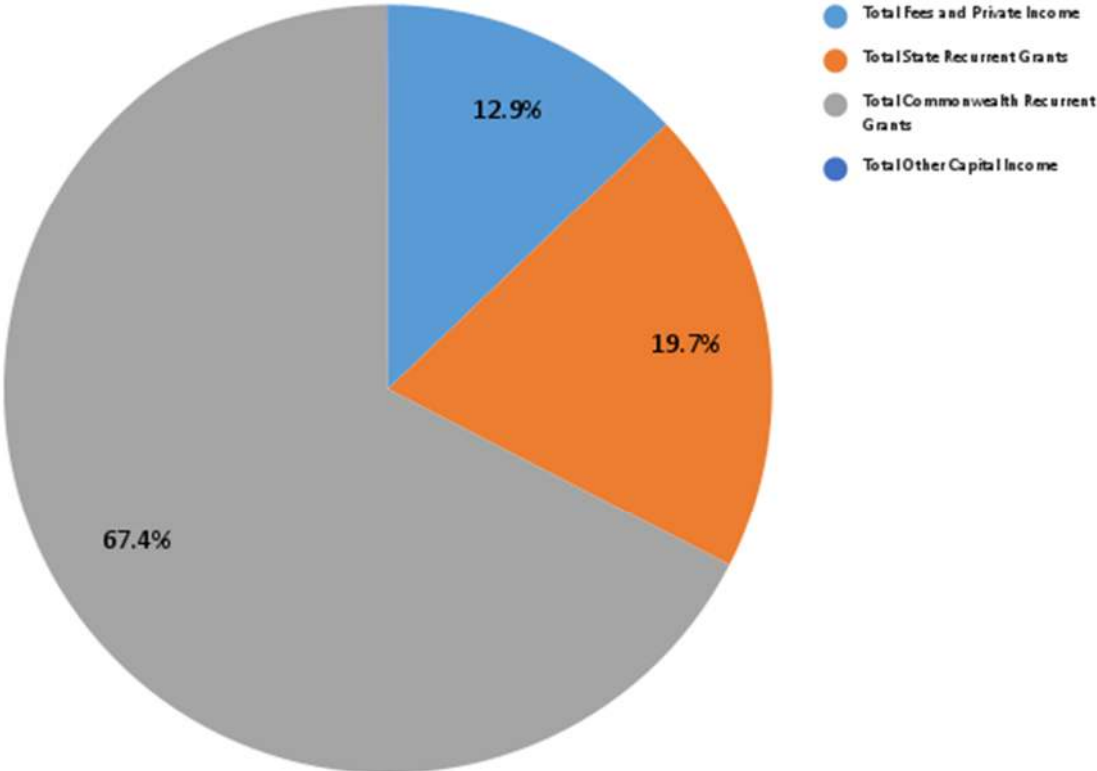
6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2020 is presented below:



2020 Income - St Mary's College, Gunnedah



2020 Expenditure - St Mary's College, Gunnedah

