



ST MARY'S COLLEGE

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Inspired by the person and teachings of Jesus Christ and informed by the Touchstones of Edmund Rice Education Australia, St Mary's College Melbourne is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. We aim to offer a liberating education, based on a Gospel spirituality, within an inclusive community, committed to justice and solidarity. St Mary's College provides a caring and supportive environment where every student has a place, a voice and their story is known. Excellence in learning and holistic wellbeing programs grounded in respectful relationships, enable each student's intrinsic worth to shine.

Gospel Spirituality

We invite all in the St Mary's College community into the story of Jesus and endeavour to make his message of compassion, justice and peace a living reality; engaging all in ways that help them appreciate the contemporary Catholic church in action through expressions of a living faith, including ritual and prayer, social justice activities, policies, inclusive practices, and just relationships.

We aim to live Jesus' example of forgiveness and reconciliation and are committed to the service of those in need, living and growing as a faith-sharing community by fostering a personal relationship with Jesus.

Explanation of Enactment at St Mary's College:

- Engaging students and staff in prayer and ritual in ways that assist them to further appreciate the contemporary Catholic church, featuring traditional expressions of faith, social justice activities and inclusive practices.
- Providing a religious education program that is in line with Diocesan guidelines and supporting faith formation experiences for staff and students.
- Aiming to develop deeper partnerships with the St Mary's Parish, precinct schools and parents/care-givers/guardians to engage and support them in their critical role in the formation of their daughters and sons.
- Increasing the understanding and awareness of students' Catholic identity, faith or spiritual life.
- Increasing opportunities for staff and the College parent community to live out their own contemporary faith through a deeper understanding of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Developing deeper partnerships with parents/care-givers/guardians by engaging them in their understanding of Gospel spirituality and supporting their role as primary educators.
- Developing collaborative partnerships with our Catholic feeder primary schools.

Justice and Solidarity

We are committed to justice and peace for all, and we call all in our community to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalised, and the earth itself.

We aim to open students' hearts and minds by embracing our world to help them imagine possibilities and build hope-filled attitudes.

We encourage values that foster a critical awareness and belief in justice and respect.

Explanation of Enactment at St Mary's College:

- Building a strong community life that develops and embeds comprehensive justice-centred approaches to student wellbeing.
- Developing sensitive and emotionally capable young people whose actions reflect the values of compassion, social responsibility, and respect for the dignity of all people.
- Utilising a variety of sources to learn of the needs of every student, and catering for them in ways that liberates them to fulfil their potential.
- Developing procedures and practices, informed by contemporary research, that allows all students to feel they belong, so they grow, are safe and feel valued.
- Delivering a liberating education in all learning programs animated by empathetic staff using informed practice and research fostering excellence, inclusivity and access for all.
- Ensuring that learning at St Mary's College is a whole community undertaking, that explores a broader world view.
- Educating young women and men to work with and walk alongside those at the margins, to grow in empathy and to respond in faith and action.
- Developing in our young people a sense of global solidarity, particularly through engagement with the Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders network.

Liberating Education

We model a love of learning for all in our community.

We invite students into the processes of learning that opens hearts and minds through quality teaching and learning experiences, fostering creativity, curiosity, courage and compassion.

We aim to serve the individual learning needs of each student, providing authentic teaching and learning experiences.

We endeavour, through the curriculum, to enable students to explore issues relating to justice and peace, service and solidarity, and environmental practices.

Explanation of Enactment at St Mary's College:

- Delivering innovative learning programs for girls and boys, animated by highly equipped teachers who use contemporary pedagogical practices that foster excellence, inclusivity and understanding.
- Embedding in all programs the understanding that learning is a shared experience that can transform lives.
- Delivering curriculum programs that acknowledge the differing learning needs of all students.
- Accessing latest educational research and scholarship, ensuring professional learning is best practice.
- Developing a cycle of review and renewal of all teaching and learning programs.
- Utilising continuous feedback and evaluation protocols to inform and support learning.

Inclusive Community

We are a community that is welcoming and accepting, fostering just and meaningful relationships which enable all members to participate, prosper and thrive.

We offer pastoral care that respects the dignity of each person as reflecting the image and likeness of God. Our practices and policies promote social inclusion, exemplifying our belief that diversity is not only an essential part of community, but should be celebrated.

We aim to be true to Catholic Social Teaching, demonstrated through fee relief and assistance for the poor and marginalised.

We seek to engage with diverse communities beyond the school gates and regularly reflect on how to be more inclusive.

Explanation of Enactment at St Mary's College:

- Overtly fostering a community that nurtures just and respectful relationships enabling all to participate, thrive and feel valued.
- Participating in productive and collaborative relationships with local, national and international partners in ways that are consistent with the mission of the school.
- Providing opportunities for staff to explore and celebrate cultures and communities that are expressions of the College cohort and thus, the mission of the Church.
- Developing programs to promote positive and respectful relationships between girls and boys and the wider College community.
- Developing targeted engagement activities with Old Collegians, female and male to enhance their involvement in the College.
- Designing programs and practices that allow all to participate with dignity and confidence, always reflecting a truly inclusive school.
- Ensuring programs promote the safety and participation of all students, regardless of gender, sexuality, religion, vulnerability, ability, ethnicity, cultural or language background (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students).

Communication

The College Statement of Philosophy is accessible to staff, students, parents and the wider community via our public website.