



# Santa Sophia Catholic College Secondary

## 2024 Annual School Report



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## Introduction

### **About the Annual School Report**

Santa Sophia Catholic College Secondary is registered by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) as a member of the Catholic system of schools in the Diocese of Parramatta.

The Annual School Report provides parents and carers and the wider school community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. The Report describes the achievement of school development priorities in 2024 and gives information about the next years priorities.

This Report is a legislative requirement under the Schools Assistance Act 2008 and the Education Amendment Act 2004.

The information in this Report is complemented by the school website where other school publications and news can be viewed or obtained from the school.

## Key Messages

### From the Principal Mr Mark De Vries

At Santa Sophia Catholic College, we embrace the belief that every child's learning journey begins at home, with parents as their first educators. This foundational partnership continues throughout their schooling and beyond. As a Catholic learning community, our mission is to nurture the whole child in a Christ-centred environment while preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of the future workplace.

To achieve this, we are committed to cultivating learner agency within our students. Learner agency empowers students to take ownership of their educational journey, guided by a strong sense of purpose and enriched by constructive feedback. By fostering these capabilities, we enable students to set meaningful goals, reflect on their learning progress, and adapt strategies for continuous improvement. These elements not only align with our vision but also reflect our dedication to developing well-rounded individuals equipped for success in a dynamic world.

Our educators at Santa Sophia are dedicated to understanding each student's unique needs, strengths, and aspirations. Through rigorous inquiry and innovative teaching approaches, we strive to create engaging and supportive learning environments. By integrating research-based practices, we ensure that every child is challenged and supported to achieve their fullest potential.

The collaboration between home and school remains central to our success. Research consistently shows that strong parental and community involvement positively influences student outcomes in learning, attendance, and behaviour. Together, let us continue to build on this partnership to inspire a lifelong love of learning and foster the growth of our children as capable, responsible, and faith-filled individuals.

We thank you for your ongoing support and look forward to another year of nurturing the wisdom, hope, faith, and love that define Santa Sophia Catholic College

The Annual School Report is a government initiative that allows our parents and carers to gain information about some of the structures and performance of our school and its role in the wider community. It is, however, a written document that cannot replace that very real and human need for personal interaction. We invite all parents and carers who wish to discuss any aspect of this report to make contact and work with us collaboratively.

### From the Parents/Carers

At Santa Sophia Catholic College, we value the role parents played in 2024 in attending events provided by the college. In particular, they engaged in student-led conferences that provided their child with support and confidence to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Parents also engaged with their child's digital portfolios which provided both the student and their parents with a form of formative reporting on student involvement in a newer school.

Parents were very also involved in the life of the college through their participation in the Have your Say surveys regarding questions or concerns about aspects of college life such whole school liturgies, the student leadership induction day and grandparents days. We also valued the role parents played in providing feedback on uniform and the learning culture of the college.

The Parents as Partners page on our college website has also been utilised by parents to increase their involvement in the school community.

Parents and carers were formally surveyed in a centrally administered feedback system that provided information to staff about their child's experience and their own experience of college. The results will be used to look at further improvements at the college.

### **From the Students**

The students at Santa Sophia Catholic College are a reflection of the school in many ways and student involvement, in a newer school specifically, has been monumental in the shaping of the student body.

Throughout 2024, students were involved in leadership roles through the Student Representative Council, which were vital for the communication between the college and students allowing them to give feedback on a wide range of college matters.

Other aspects of student involvement included sporting, religious and extracurricular opportunities such as debating, public speaking, dance and musical initiatives and masses, all of which were designed for the interests of all students.

Additionally, there were elective courses where students were able to collaborate with the wider community and serve them with outreach initiatives. This involvement within the school and the wider community exhibits the care and compassion that comes from the students.

At all times the students were supported in the engagement in college life and in taking ownership over their learning experiences.

Students at the college were formally surveyed in a centrally administered feedback system that provided information to staff about the students and their experience of school.

## School Context

### History of the college

Having commenced in 2019 with just Kindergarten, Santa Sophia Catholic College provides a Christ-centred environment, aimed at educating the whole child, and helping students to be people of true wisdom through faith, hope and love. Our College is a Catholic Learning Community that serves the dynamic new areas of Box Hill and Gables. It is establishing a new approach for pre-school to post school learning within an extended school day. It achieves this through a developmental and student-centred approach to learning with a focus on 'learning how to learn'. Santa Sophia Catholic College has an educational approach which sees all members of the community as learners. With the learner at the centre, the College uses student interests, innovative learning approaches and a flexible curriculum to intentionally enhance every child's learning adventure. Based on leading educational research and the best of today's technologies, we will prepare students for the workplace of the future by teaching them how to think critically and creatively, how to communicate effectively and how to work collaboratively. We are a school that fosters imagination and innovation. At the end of 2021, the construction of the permanent buildings were completed at Gables and the College relocated to this site in Term 4. In 2022, the College became fully operational on its permanent site with an enrolment of over 590 students in all years from Year 7 to Year 11.

### Location / Drawing Area

In recent years, Santa Sophia Catholic College relocated to its permanent site at Red Gables Rd, Box Hill, and draws on students from Gables, South Windsor, Pitt Town, Oakville, Maraylya, Box Hill, Rouse Hill, Kellyville, Schofields and Quakers Hill.

## Workforce Composition

### Staffing Profile

| Staffing Profile   |     |
|--|-----|
| Total Number of Staff  | 119 |
| Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people | 3   |
| Number of full time teaching staff   | 81  |
| Number of part time teaching staff   | 11  |
| Number of non-teaching staff   | 27  |

### Total number of teaching staff by NESA accreditation level

Teachers at the college are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 (NSW). Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher is voluntary.

The contracted number of accredited teachers within Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) are as follows:

| Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) accredited teachers |      |
|--|------|
| Conditional Teachers   | 458  |
| Provisional Teachers   | 102  |
| Proficient Teachers and/or above                               | 3258 |

Teacher status at Santa Sophia Catholic College Secondary can be sourced directly from the college.

## Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member working within CSPD is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including: whole of school staff days, subject-specific engagements, conferences, meetings and a range of professional learning opportunities provided by CSPD.

The college takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking its staff's 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.

Specific and focused Professional Learning for the staff of the college this year has included:

- The rigour and engagement in student learning leading to learner agency feedback was a focus for the school year.
- Staff engaged in professional learning delving into inquiry cycles concerning data, assessment and reporting.
- The professional learning was targeted at meeting the school wellbeing goal of reducing negative behaviour incidents.

## Catholic Identity and Religious Education

### Prayer, Liturgical Life and Faith Experiences

Education within the Diocese of Parramatta is a ministry of the Catholic Church, walking with humility in the way of Jesus, serving all of God's people. The Gospel messages of love, forgiveness, tolerance and compassion are lived experiences that are visibly evidenced at college. We offer families high-quality accessible education that challenges each student to discover a meaningful, hope-filled and flourishing life. Our caring teachers share faith and learning with students, including through their own example. Every day, be it in the playground, at an assembly or in the classroom our students experience a genuinely religious way of understanding the world. The invitation to meaningful prayer and liturgy, as well as participation in the Sacraments, nurture and give expression to the religious dimension of school life in the context of the Church's celebration of the liturgical year.

### Social Justice

All students at the college are encouraged to regularly engage in activities to support Catholic Mission with fundraising and awareness-raising initiatives. Students are encouraged to work closely with their local parish, community groups, support local charities and participate in outreach or immersion experiences for the benefit of the whole community and the student's personal development.

This year students and staff from the college engaged in the following initiatives and activities:

- The Social Justice strategic plan aimed increase student participation in Social Justice, establish a socially aware for the marganilised.
- Students supported fundraising efforts for vulnerable communities, including Project Compassion, the Ration Challenge and the Vinnies Winter Sleepout
- Two teachers attended the Cultural Immersion Tour to Timor-Leste and will offer students the same opportunity in 2025.

All of these initiatives enabled the students and staff to practise their faith through action as Jesus demonstrated in the Gospels.

### School, Home and Parish Partnerships

Parents and carers have been actively encouraged to engage in a variety of school activities including parent forums, information evenings, parent/teacher/student meetings, liturgies, social events and opportunities to provide feedback. Regular communication with parents and carers occurred through phone calls, meetings and the Compass information platform.

### Religious Education

At the heart of our college is the Religious Education program. It is through this area of study that students learn to value the Catholic identity, traditions, values and Christ's teaching. Our Religious Education program is embodied by the quality of our relationships and how we deal with the daily issues of life.



CSPD schools use Sharing Our Story, a Religious Education curriculum that has been used for more than 20 years. In all subject areas, we offer an education completely consistent with the teaching of the Church on the dignity of all aspects of the human person. We also appreciate the need to provide age-appropriate learning opportunities.

### **Professional Learning of Staff in Religious Education**

Professional Learning in Religious Education offered to staff this year included:

- Staff professional learning centered on Christian anthropology and Catholic pedagogy according to the CSPD Formation Framework "Life In Abundance".
- Staff engaged in training on Explicit Teaching and inquiry pedagogy in anticipation of the implementation of the New RE Curriculum.
- Professional learning meetings were provided where staff had access to professional readings to help develop their pedagogical practice.

## Learning and Teaching

### **National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (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 carers and teachers about the achievements of students in literacy and numeracy. Questions are based mostly on the literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills students have learnt from previous years of schooling.

Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching and learning with a view to improving student performance. Commencing in 2023, NAPLAN test results are reported using proficiency standards. Students' results show how they performed in each of the NAPLAN assessment areas against 4 proficiency levels:

- 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 percentages of students achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency levels are reported in the table on the next page.

### NAPLAN Results Year 7 2024

| Year 7                  | Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards |           |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|
|                         | School  | Australia |
| Reading                 | 80%   | 67%       |
| Writing                 | 74%   | 65%       |
| Spelling                | 79%   | 72%       |
| Grammar and Punctuation | 68%   | 61%       |
| Numeracy                | 78%   | 67%       |

### NAPLAN Results Year 9 2024

| Year 9                  | Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards |           |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|
|                         | School  | Australia |
| Reading                 | 75%   | 63%       |
| Writing                 | 74%   | 61%       |
| Spelling                | 83%   | 72%       |
| Grammar and Punctuation | 63%   | 55%       |
| Numeracy                | 77%   | 63%       |

### Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

Eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate (HSC) 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 2024:

- The number of students issued with a RoSA in Year 10 was 15.
- The number of students issued with a RoSA in Year 11 was 2.

## Higher School Certificate (HSC)

Percentage of students in performance bands 4, 5 and 6 (trend data) in select courses as compared to the state.

| HSC Results           |                                       |       |        |       |        |       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| HSC Subject           | Percentage of students in top 3 bands |       |        |       |        |       |
|                       | 2024                                  |       |        |       |        |       |
|                       | School                                | State | School | State | School | State |
| English Standard      | 73%                                   | 67%   | 0%     | 0%    | 0%     | 0%    |
| English Advanced      | 100%                                  | 96%   | 0%     | 0%    | 0%     | 0%    |
| Studies of Religion 1 | 81%                                   | 80%   | 0%     | 0%    | 0%     | 0%    |

Total number of Year 12 students engaged in either a VET or NESA endorsed courses: 1.

NESA endorsed courses and or VET courses undertaken by Year 12 students include: Design Fundamentals.

## School HSC Highlighted Performances

Percentage of students in performance bands 4, 5 and 6 (trend data) in highlighted courses as compared to the state.

| HSC Results           |                                       |       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| HSC Subject           | Percentage of students in top 3 bands |       |
|                       | 2024                                  |       |
|                       | School                                | State |
| Investigating Science | 100%                                  | 68%   |
| Ancient History       | 87%                                   | 64%   |

## HSC Results Comment

Our achievements in Mathematics this year have been outstanding, and I am proud to report that we have comprehensively surpassed the state average.

In the Mathematics Extension 2 course, all our students have achieved results in the top two bands.

In Mathematics Extension 1, an incredible 50% of our students achieved a Band 6 result.

In the Standard Mathematics course, we are above the state average for students attaining 3 Band 6 results, which is an impressive outcome.

We also saw commendable results in Business Studies (3 Band 6's), Investigating Science (2 Band 6's), and PDHPE (2 Band 6's), with a combined total of 7 Band 6 results across these 3 subjects.

Overall we achieved a total of 16 Band 6 results. Additionally, we secured 84 Band 5 results, with 7 students scoring

## Student Profile

### Enrolment Policy

Santa Sophia Catholic College Secondary follows the Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) Enrolment Policy Procedures and Guidelines. The full text or a link to the full text of the school's enrolment policies, including all prerequisites for continuing enrolment, can be obtained from the school office or can be accessed on the school's website.

### Student enrolments

| Student enrolments 2024 |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Number of Boys          | Number of Girls |
| 423                     | 479             |
| Total Enrolments: 902   |                 |

### Student attendance

| Student attendance rates 2024 |                 |      |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|
| Year                          | Attendance Rate | Year | Attendance Rate |
| 7                             | 91%             | 10   | 87%             |
| 8                             | 90%             | 11   | 91%             |
| 9                             | 87%             | 12   | 94%             |
| College Average: 90%          |                 |      |                 |

### Managing non attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents and carers, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

The compulsory schooling age range is 6-17. Parents and carers are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, explaining the absences of their children in writing within several days to the school, and taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

School staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences. They maintain accurate records of students' attendance, follow up unexplained absences through written and verbal communication, implement programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise, and provide clear information to students and parents/carers regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

The school principal or their delegate may grant permission for late arrival or early departure from school, leave or exemption from attendance only in individual cases, on written request from parents and carers. For longer exemptions, an application for approval is made through Diocesan authorities. The principal/delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents/carers promptly if an unexplained absence occurs. If truancy is suspected, the principal will contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence. If a satisfactory response is not received, the matter will be referred to the relevant staff at CSPD who will follow up unexplained absences as per legislative requirements.

### **Student retention rates**

The retention rate of students for Year 10 to Year 12 was 86%.

### **Post School Destination**

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

| Post School Destination                |     |
|--|-----|
| University                             | 74% |
| Technical and Further Education (TAFE) | 5%  |
| Workforce                              | 12% |
| Other/Unknown                          | 9%  |

### **Characteristics of the student body**

The table below shows the number of students in each of the categories listed.

| Student Body Characteristics                   |     |
|--|-----|
| Language background other than English (LBOTE) | 405 |
| Students with disabilities (SWD)               | 190 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander          | 24  |

## Wellbeing

The wellbeing and safety of all students is central to the purpose of Catholic Education and we acknowledge that healthy relationships and exceptional pastoral care are core to each child's positive experience at school. Santa Sophia Catholic College Secondary is a place where students are nurtured to grow, to belong and to be safe.

A sense of wellbeing and connectedness promotes optimal development of the person as a whole and contributes to academic success. We have a strong focus on pastoral care and our school has a counsellor to support our students. CSPD provides resourcing for additional wellbeing initiatives and teams to support attendance, behaviour and intervention for students at risk.

Our wellbeing initiatives include:

- Dalmarri Indigenous Art elders worked with indigenous students to co-create the Yarning Circle artwork and to teach language and culture to students.
- RUOK Day saw students participating in class based activities to encourage having conversations with others and asking for help when needed.
- Harmony Day involved concerts to celebrate cultural diversity, with students wearing orange/cultural dress to accompany classroom activities.

Santa Sophia Catholic College Secondary bases student wellbeing on the [CSPD Student Wellbeing Policy \(2022\)](#) and the [CSPD Student Wellbeing Framework](#). The guidelines identify the rights and responsibilities of every student in the school and are based on the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Corporal punishment is expressly forbidden at the college.

Related policies include:

- [Bullying of Students - Prevention and Response Procedure \(2022\)](#)
- [Student Use Of Digital Devices And Online Services Policy \(2022\)](#)
- [Guidelines for Parents and Carers in Raising Complaints \(2023\)](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Policy \(2022\)](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [Student Attendance Policy \(2021\)](#)
- [Student Attendance Procedures \(2022\)](#)
- [Bullying of Students - Prevention and Response Procedure \(2022\)](#)
- [Weapons Procedures \(2022\)](#)
- [Banned Substances Student Procedures \(2022\)](#)
- [Family and School Partnership Principles](#)

### **Actions promoting respect and responsibility**

Santa Sophia Catholic College Secondary actively promotes respect for others and responsibility for self. During the past year, our community has engaged with the following actions and opportunities:

- A special guest speaker worked with students in all grades to give strategies around resilience, respectful behaviours and meeting their potential.



- Our Year 12 students, as part of their legacy to give back to the community, spent time visiting a local nursing home, engaging with senior citizens.
- The Young Healthy Minds Forum allowed students to learn about mental health and resilience, and how to bring initiatives back to school.

## Community Satisfaction

During 2024, CSPD and our college utilised a variety of measures to obtain feedback from parents and carers, students and staff regarding community satisfaction.

Areas of strength from the parents/carers feedback include:

- The majority of parents feel their child is included and treated fairly at school.
- Parents encouraged their child to do well at school.
- The majority of parents feel their child's Religious Education enables them to respond to important questions in their life.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- Students feel accepted and included by their peers.
- Students are motivated in their learning and are striving to succeed.
- Students feel there are clear rules and expectations.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- Staff feel confident with implementing the College's Positive Behaviour Support for Learning (PBS4L) initiative.
- Staff feel confident about addressing problematic behaviours in the classroom.
- Staff are very confident about having restorative justice conversations with students.

## School Improvement and Learning

### Priorities

| Current Year Priorities |  |           |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|
| Priority 1              | Mathematics - By the end of 2024, at least 75% of students will demonstrate growth relative to their previous performance and improvement in their mathematical performance. | Achieved. |
| Priority 2              | English - By the end of 2024, at least 75% of students K-12 will demonstrate growth relative to their previous performance and improvement in their literacy performance.    | Achieved. |

| Projected School Priorities |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Priority 1                  | To improve student learning outcomes in each Key Learning Area.                         |
| Priority 2                  | To improve students' understanding of the Catholic approach to engaging with Scripture. |

## Financial Statement

Financial information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth and State Government in the Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for 2024 is detailed below:

| Recurrent and Capital Income               |              |
|--|--------------|
| Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup> | \$17,811,117 |
| Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>     | \$0          |
| State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>        | \$4,713,358  |
| Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>       | \$4,741,431  |
| Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>          | \$438,232    |
| Total Income                               | \$27,704,138 |

| Recurrent and Capital Expenditure          |              |
|--|--------------|
| Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>           | \$296,143    |
| Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup> | \$16,656,523 |
| Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>           | \$18,191,981 |
| Total Expenditure                          | \$35,144,647 |

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<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth relates to Commonwealth Recurrent Grants including per capita funding and special purpose grants

<sup>2</sup> Capital relates to Government Capital Grants received for construction of school assets

<sup>3</sup> State relates to State Recurrent Grants including per capita funding, interest subsidy and special purpose grants

<sup>4</sup> Fees relate to Diocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income from parents/carers

<sup>5</sup> Other refers to Other Capital Income including amounts charged for Diocesan Building Levy from parents

<sup>6</sup> Capital Expenditure refers to expenses incurred mainly for School Buildings, Furniture and Equipment

<sup>7</sup> Salaries refers to the total of all Salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation, workers compensation and leave

<sup>8</sup> Non-Salary refers to all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenses