



# St Columba's Catholic College

## 2023 Annual School Report



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## Introduction

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

St Columba's Catholic College 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 2023 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. Phillip Scollard**

I am proud to present to you the 2023 Annual School Report for St Columba's Catholic College.

At St Columba's Catholic College we strive for the full human development of our students, grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ. We work with our young people so that they may take a hopeful, critical and constructive role in the service of Jesus within our society. We seek to form young people in our Catholic faith and tradition. This transmission is our core purpose, so that together we will act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God.

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**

Teacher and Parent communication is promoted and encouraged through use of the student diary, Compass Student Management System, the electronic noticeboard the College Website and College social media accounts. Parent teacher interviews were conducted by either face to face or zoom. Parents/carers also had the opportunity to attend Curriculum Information Sessions. Parents/Carers are continuously invited to enter into dialogue with the College and to provide feedback. There is an authentic focus on developing true partnership between the school, families and the wider communities.

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 feel very proud to attend such a caring and focused learning community as St Columba's Catholic College. In 2023 we were given many opportunities to participate in the academic, cultural and sporting life of the college. The students were represented formally by the Student Leadership Team that met weekly and tabled the issues raised by the student body. The Student Leadership Team organised and chaired college assemblies and other significant events. These members were actively involved in the liturgical life of the college. The leaders worked with students to promote pride in the liturgical life of the college and all sporting and cultural events. Our leaders helped all students to develop their leadership skills by actively involving them in fundraising, charitable works and social justice initiatives. The students at St Columba's Catholic College believe they are integral to the ongoing growth of our wonderful college community.

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

St Columba's Catholic College was originally built as a seminary for candidates to the priesthood in 1908. In 1979, the College was established as a Years 7 to 10 Catholic school by the Diocese of Parramatta. It was restructured as a Year 7 to 12 school in 1993. The design and architecture of our magnificent buildings reminds us daily of our links to the past but with the new design of our modern facilities, the staff and students are reminded of our expectations that they each contribute as leaders in our contemporary society.

### Location / Drawing Area

St Columba's Catholic College is a co-educational Catholic high school set in the beautiful Blue Mountains and surrounded by National Park. The College serves the parishes of St Finbar's Glenbrook, St Thomas Aquinas Springwood, Our Lady of the Nativity Lawson, Our Lady of the Way Emu Plains, St Nicholas of Myra Penrith, Mary MacKillop, Upper Blue Mountains and Sacred Heart Blackheath.

## Workforce Composition

### Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile	
Total Number of Staff	120
Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	2
Number of full time teaching staff	75
Number of part time teaching staff	12
Number of non-teaching staff	33

### 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	363
Provisional Teachers	125
Proficient Teachers and/or above	3495

Teacher status at St Columba's Catholic College 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:

- All staff completed the Mental Health First Aid for Adolescents course over two days.
- Staff explored the KU Leuven Enhancing Catholic Schools Identity Data as the College deepened our dialogic approach to Religious Education.
- Implementation of the new Stage 4 and 5 Syllabi in English and Mathematics.

# 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:

- Students work to support the Jesuit Social Services at Emerton with an annual food drive.
- Students collect goods to create Christmas Hampers for the local St Vincent De Paul Chapter.
- Students and staff volunteer at Mamma Lana's Foundation - a local community kitchen which provides meals for homeless and underprivileged people.

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:

- All staff were involved in a Spirituality day with Fr Richard Leonard sj which explored the place of the Church in contemporary Australian Society.
- All Religious Education Teachers at the College unpacked the KE Leuven Data and determined the ways it can inform the Religious Education Programs.
- The RE staff continued to develop the Sharing our Story 7-10 RE Programs to meet the needs of the students at St Columba's.



## 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 2023

Year 7	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	83%	68%
Writing	66%	63%
Spelling	74%	73%
Grammar and Punctuation	69%	64%
Numeracy	72%	67%

### NAPLAN Results Year 9 2023

Year 9	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	75%	63%
Writing	64%	58%
Spelling	76%	71%
Grammar and Punctuation	61%	56%
Numeracy	74%	64%

### 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 2023:

- The number of students issued with a RoSA in Year 10 was 0.
- The number of students issued with a RoSA in Year 11 was 3.

## 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					
	2023		2022		2021	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
English Standard	71%	59%	79%	56%	79%	58%
English Advanced	100%	95%	97%	94%	100%	93%
Studies of Religion 1	81%	84%	71%	79%	63%	69%

Total number of Year 12 students engaged in either a VET or NESAs endorsed courses: 78.

NESA endorsed courses and or VET courses undertaken by Year 12 students include: Animal Studies, Design Fundamentals, Fitness, Studies in Catholic Thought Life Skills, Studies in Catholic Thought, Visual Design, Work Studies.

### 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	
	2023	
	School	State
Legal Studies	95%	69%
Industrial Technology	94%	55%

### HSC Results Comment

The students of the Class of 2023 are to be congratulated, not only on their achievements in the HSC, but on their contribution to the life and spirit of St. Columba's Catholic College.

The Dux of SCCC for 2023 achieved an ATAR of 95.25. They achieved in the top band (6/E4) in Biology, English Advanced, English Extension 1, English Extension 2, Legal Studies, and Studies of Religion 1.

23 students from St. Columba's Catholic College were on the Distinguished Achievers List.

251 results were in the top 20% of the state (Bands 6/E4 and 5/E3).

5 students were nominated for outstanding efforts in their major works in the areas of Drama, Music and Industrial Technology - Timber.

## Student Profile

### Enrolment Policy

St Columba's Catholic College 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 2023	
Number of Boys	Number of Girls
563	502
Total Enrolments: 1067	

### Student attendance

Student attendance rates 2023			
Year	Attendance Rate	Year	Attendance Rate
7	94%	10	91%
8	91%	11	92%
9	91%	12	93%
College Average: 92%			

### 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 78%.

### **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.

<b>Post School Destination</b>	
University	85%
Technical and Further Education (TAFE)	9%
Workforce	6%
Other/Unknown	0%

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

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

<b>Student Body Characteristics</b>	
Language background other than English (LBOTE)	127
Students with disabilities (SWD)	264
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	34

## 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. St Columba's Catholic College 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:

- The College implemented and developed a whole school Wellbeing Program.
- The College commenced using the PIVOT Wellbeing tool to monitor the wellbeing and emotional health of the students.
- The College appointed a Partnerships and Pathways Coach to support students in exploring the opportunities available to them.

St Columba's Catholic College 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**

St Columba's Catholic College actively promotes respect for others and responsibility for self. During the past year, our community has engaged with the following actions and opportunities:

- The College Wellbeing Program has a clear focus on respect and responsibility for all members of the community.
- The College engaged Jarara, the indigenous Education Team at CSPD, to work with the 40 first nations students at the College.

- The College commenced an outreach program with the local aged care facilities to develop respect for the elderly and intergenerational sharing.



## Community Satisfaction

During 2023, 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:

- Parents appreciate the care the staff show for the students - in particular the Leaders of Wellbeing.
- Parents like the high standards the school holds the students to with regards to behaviour and completion of school work.
- Parents like the range of extra curricular opportunities available to students.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- The students feel connected to the community and know that there are adults they can turn to if they need assistance.
- The students appreciate the range of extra curricular activities they can participate in.
- The students recognise that the teaching staff value them and want them to achieve to their full potential.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- The staff feel supported by the College Leadership Team.
- The staff identify that they work in a collegial environment where the staff work together for a common cause.
- The staff acknowledge that the students are well behaved and committed learning.

## School Improvement and Learning

### Priorities

Current Year Priorities		
Priority 1	The development and implementation of a strategic wellbeing program for all students at the College.	Still Working Towards.
Priority 2	The Mathematics Faculty have been working with the Leading Excellence in Mathematics program to strengthen the pedagogical approach to teaching mathematics at The College.	Still Working Towards.

Projected School Priorities		
Priority 1	The staff at the College are developing their approach to explicitly teaching writing across the curriculum. In particular they are analysing the writing requirements of various subjects when students reach the HSC.	
Priority 2	The College continues to evaluate and develop the newly established Wellbeing program at the College we an ongoing focus on the analysis of PIVOT and ACER Social and Emotional Wellbeing Data to ensure that we are making a positive difference.	

## 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 2023 is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$13,961,984
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$3,728,551
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$5,201,283
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$613,472
Total Income	\$23,505,290

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$1,453,075
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$16,551,015
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$6,161,946
Total Expenditure	\$24,166,036

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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