



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Broken Bay

2023

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT



Mercy Catholic College

101 Archer Street, CHATSWOOD 2067

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About this report

Mercy Catholic College (the 'College') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB). CSBB as the 'approved authority' for the diocesan registration system formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act (1990), is responsible for monitoring the compliance of member schools in the manner that has been approved by the Minister of Education.

The Annual School Report (the 'Report') demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies and CSBB. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the College community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

The Report provides parents and the wider community with fair, reliable and objective information about educational and financial performance measures as well as College and system policies. This information includes summary contextual data, an overview of student performance in state and national assessments, a description of the achievement of priorities in the previous year and areas for improvement. Detailed information about the College's improvement journey is documented at local school level and is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders.

Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the College directly or by visiting the College's website. Information can also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

Message from key groups in our community

Principal's Message

The purpose of this Annual Report is to provide past, current and prospective parents with an overview of key dimensions of Mercy Catholic College. Established in 1890 with the intention to meet perceived needs in education and to continually evolve as needs change, today the College continues to respond dynamically to the needs of students. At the heart of its mission is the purpose of providing an outstanding Catholic education for young women so that they are empowered to take their rightful place in society now and in their futures.

Parent Body Message

In 2023 the 20 member PEAG group, representing a cross section of parents from each year cohort, faculty stakeholders and Fr David Ranson; have been working towards improving student wellbeing and academic achievements by focusing on communication, engagement, and community.

Objectives

- Advocating co-responsibility with families and school
- Including families in strategic direction planning
- Creating a welcoming environment and a sense of community for students and families

Achievements

- Improved readership of the fortnightly newsletter with a newly devised format
- Enhanced engagement throughout each of the Face Book moderated groups, showing that the forum is effective and valued
- Increased interactions through parent led social events
- 55 Volunteers took on roles predominantly in sporting management, but this year were also more active across industry and commerce endeavours. This number shows substantial growth and is one we will be endeavouring to improve upon annually

Highlights

A highlight of the year was the unveiling of the new bronze bust of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, which is beautifully placed within the grounds and offers a quiet place of reflection for the students. With a quote on her wing, selected by the school community and the piece commissioned by the Mercy Sisters of North Sydney and the historical P&F, this represents a collaboration to celebrate.

The PEAG group are committed to continuing their work in 2024 to further improve the school's profile within the local Chatswood community and parish and will be assisting with the upcoming Open Day.

Student Body Message

Mercy Catholic College is a diverse community rooted in the beliefs and ideologies of the Catholic faith tradition and the exemplary actions of its foundress, Catherine McAuley, and her community, the Sisters of Mercy. Mercy's community is guided by their actions through the various initiatives held at the College such as the St Vincent De Paul Winter Sleepout and the annual Caritas Project Compassion fundraiser. Furthermore, the Mercy Action group continues the College's drive for outreach as it encourages students to think about their impact on the world and how the Mercy community can act with sustainability and global forward thinking front of mind.

Mercy's Values of Compassion, Integrity, Hospitality, Respect and Excellence underpins students' actions both academically, spiritually and physically. The extra curricular activities provided by the College allow students to reflect and implement these values. From the Duke of Edinburgh award to the CSDA Debating Competition and the Da Vinci Decathlon, students are challenged to continuously "Strive for Better Things", as the college motto presents; In Meliora Contende.

Mercy is a community which fosters lifelong friendships, an exceptional level of knowledge, and a deep understanding of the importance of stewardship and social justice in our ever changing world. Thus, Mercy Catholic College enables its students to become the future women of change and global influence.

School Features

Mercy Catholic College Chatswood is a systemic girls' school, established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1890. The Sisters of Mercy administered the College until 1989 and since then it has been part of Catholic Schools Broken Bay.

A member of the Mercy Secondary Schools of Australia Association (AMSSA), Mercy Catholic College enjoys strong links with all Mercy schools throughout Australia and internationally. The wisdom of Catherine McAuley, who founded the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin in 1831, continues to guide and inspire our young women to meet the challenge of the College motto which is to 'Strive for Better Things'.

When students enrol at Mercy Catholic College, the whole family is welcomed into the community as we work in partnership with parents and carers to provide a nurturing environment that fosters and enhances the development of the whole person. Catering for girls from Years 7-12, Mercy offers a diverse range of subjects and pathways. Our academic results are always well above State average, and the College always ranks well within the top 150 schools in NSW in the HSC.

Student development is further supported by the numerous enrichment and co-curricular opportunities offered, such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, Drama C, co-curricular dance, and various clubs and help groups including Maths Help, Homework Club, Science Club, Media Club and a Walking Club.

The College offers a bi-annual Languages and Visual Arts tour to Italy and France, and during 2023 students participating in one of the several Catholic Schools Broken Bay Cross-Campus courses offered, Japanese Culture, enjoyed a cultural immersion trip to Japan.

A variety of sports are offered through the College's competitive sports programme of the Broken Bay Secondary Schools Sports Association (BBSSSA). Students can move through local competitions to represent at Regional, State and National levels. Mercy also offers Saturday sports, with Basketball, Netball, Soccer and Rugby being the most popular.

The Mercy Action Group (MAG) is integral to the College social justice programme, and it meets weekly to plan and implement initiatives to support marginalised people and to raise awareness of the imperative for each of us to be stewards of God's earth.

There are many student leadership opportunities. In Years 7-12 portfolio leaders are selected, in Year 11 House Captains for the four College Houses are selected, and in Year 12 in addition to the Portfolio Prefects, a College Captain and Vice-Captain are selected.

Parents and carers offer strong leadership and support in many aspects of College life through membership of the Parent Engagement and Advisory Group, as moderators of each Year Group Facebook page, and as coaches and managers of our sporting teams.

Student Profile

Student Enrolment

Students attending the College come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2023. Additional information can be found on the [My School website](#).

| Girls | Boys | LBOTE* | Total Students |
|-------|------|--------|----------------|
| 740 | 0 | 235 | 740 |

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The [Enrolment Principles](#) temporarily supersede The Enrolment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools (2013) and are being followed by the School for enrolments for 2024. As inclusive and evangelising communities, we welcome every family who would like a Catholic education for their children. Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) strives to respond to the needs of all students, within the constraints of our available resources. We believe all students should have access to our schools which offer educational opportunities that nurture the Catholic faith, expand life choices, cater for the disadvantaged, and challenge all students to reach their full potential. Our schools are explicitly evangelical, catechetical and address (with the support of our parishes and agencies), the faith formation of our school communities. Copies of these principles and other policies in this Report may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for the College in 2023 was 91.10%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

| Attendance rates by Year group | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 | Year 12 |
| 93.00 | 91.10 | 89.90 | 88.40 | 90.80 | 93.40 |

Managing Student Non-Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents' legal responsibility under the NSW Education Act (1990) to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students. In doing so, the College, under the leadership of the principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters a sense of wellbeing and belonging in students
- maintains accurate records of student attendance
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise
- communicates to parents and students, the College's expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.

College attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non-attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the Principal immediately any unexplained absences, non-attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non-attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the Principal, CSBB and the relevant Department of Education officer where appropriate.

Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the College in collaboration with parents, provides resources to contribute to the student's continuum of learning where possible. CSBB monitors each College's compliance with student attendance and management of non-attendance as part of the system's Quality Assurance and Improvement processes. The College's attendance monitoring procedures are based on the Procedures for the Management of Student Attendance in the Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System.

Student Retention Rate

Of the students who completed Year 10 in 2021, 100% completed Year 12 in 2023.

Senior Secondary Outcomes

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

| Senior secondary outcomes 2023 | |
|--|-------|
| % of students undertaking vocational training or training in a trade during the senior years of schooling | 10 % |
| % of students attaining the award of Higher School Certificate or equivalent vocational education and training qualification | 100 % |

Post School Destinations

Each year the College collects destination data relating to the Year 12 student cohort.

The majority of Mercy Catholic College students proceeded to tertiary studies at university, studying across a range of disciplines. 105 students were offered places at university. Over 53 students received an early entry offer at Macquarie University; and a significant number received early entry offers at University of Western Sydney, University of Technology and the Australian Catholic University.

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2023:

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Total number of staff | 69 |
| Number of full time teaching staff | 55 |
| Number of part time teaching staff | 14 |
| Number of non-teaching staff | 11 |

Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

All teachers employed by the College are qualified to teach in NSW. Additionally, all teachers at this College who are responsible for delivering the curriculum are accredited with NESA and hold a Working with Children Check.

Teachers at this College are either accredited as conditional, provisional, proficient or highly accomplished as defined by the NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Catholic Schools Broken Bay in our 44 schools at these levels is as follows:

- Highly Accomplished: 9 teachers
- Proficient: 1322 teachers
- Provisional: 131 teachers
- Conditional: 68 teachers

Additionally, there are approximately 35 teachers who are currently actively engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation. Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the College.

Professional Learning

The ongoing professional learning (PL) of each staff member is highly valued. PL can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in-services, meetings and conferences and a range of programs provided by CSBB. The College takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking staff PL. Individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing PL, which includes evaluating NESA Accredited professional

development (PD) and logging Elective PD via their NESAs account. All teachers have been involved in PL opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes. The following provides specific information relating to the focus of three of these staff development days.

Summary of professional learning at this school

The key focus of staff development during 2022 was on the development and implementation of the Diocesan Towards 2025 Strategy. Teachers engaged in the Literacy in Subject Area (LiSA) professional development programme, an evidence-based and highly successful teacher professional development course that has been implemented in all Secondary Schools in the Broken Bay Diocese to lift student writing and overall literacy achievement. The LiSA program is based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics model of language that is widely used in education. It delivers research-based strategies for teachers to use in the classroom to improve the student literacy. It is a subject-specific approach to whole school literacy improvement, helping teachers to learn about the main genres of writing in their subjects. Teachers participated in one literacy professional development session per term, embedding the learning in professional learning meetings and collaborative coaching sessions.

All staff participated in the System Staff Development Day at the end of Term 2. A Professional Development Day at the end of Term 4 focused on the NESAs priority area Student Mental Health. Centred Meditation upskilled teachers in the Drop Everything and Breath approach to improving the social, emotional and cognitive wellbeing of our students.

Teachers at Mercy College contributed to professional learning networks and associations as committee members and HSC examination writers, markers and assessors. Several Mercy staff engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation and post-graduate study to further their qualifications. Mercy College offered quality placements to 15 preservice teachers and contributed to the Diocesan partnership with the Australian Catholic University and Macquarie University through the Tertiary Supervision program.

Catholic Identity and Mission

As a Catholic community, the College shares in the mission of the local Church. The [Diocesan Mission Statement](#) is our statement of shared common purpose: "The Diocese of Broken Bay exists to evangelise, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, gathered as friends in the Lord and sent out to be missionary disciples."

In partnership with parents as the first faith educators of their children and the local parish community, the College seeks to provide authentic, professional Catholic Education, inspiring hearts and minds to know Christ, to love learning, to use their talents to be the very best they can be. Our vision, purpose and all we do is founded on faith in Jesus Christ, and informed by Christian values including faith, joy, witness, compassion, and courage.

The College's Religious Education (RE) program is based on the [Broken Bay K-12 Religious Education Curriculum](#) and aims to provide students with meaningful, engaging and challenging learning experiences that explore the rich diversity of the Catholic faith and ways in which we live it. A new Religious Education Curriculum is being developed to further enhance the learning experience for all. This was implemented into all Kindergarten and Year 1 as well as Years 7-10 classrooms in 2022/2023 and will continue to grow over the coming years. These programs include formal Religious Education as well as retreats, spirituality days and social justice opportunities in which students are invited to serve others, especially the poor and those who are marginalised.

Faith formation opportunities are provided for students, staff, parents and caregivers. Students regularly celebrate Mass and pray together. Students are invited to participate in age appropriate sacramental and missionary activities aimed at living out their mission as disciples of Jesus.

Mercy Catholic College provides the girls and staff with a multitude of opportunities to experience, explore, develop and put into action their Catholic faith. This year we utilised the 2023 Diocese of Broken Bay Lenten Program -"Jesus, Our light and our life. Becoming one in Christ." Mercy ran the program for both staff and students providing them a time of reflection and spiritual renewal. Along with our Chapel Mass and opportunities for Prayer, Rosary and Meditation, the girls have many ways in which they can encounter God and grow their faith.

The cherished connection between Mercy and the Our Lady of Dolour's Parish has continued this year. Attending mass (College Mass' and Youth Mass with St Pius X) and praying together is vital to our Catholic faith. To share the serenity and reverence of the Church, makes these times very special. Additionally, assembling as a community, sharing our achievements and learning from one another provides a wonderful opportunity for our community to grow internally but also externally within the greater Chatswood precinct. This year we had the opportunity to join the Parish in a Food Drive for the Jesuit Refugee Service.

Modelling the teachings of Jesus and the love of God makes us all important tools of good in our communities. The school leaders were privileged to attend the Parish Christmas party for young people with disabilities.

Mercy Week highlights the strength of our community and the engagement of our values. It is a key time to ask ourselves; What is Mercy? How do we show Mercy? This year during Mercy week, the unveiling of our memorial to Catherine McAuley was commemorated. The bronze bust reminds us, every day of our heritage and the values in which we must instil.

Our Mercy community has witnessed thought provoking and inspiring liturgies throughout the year. The liturgical highlight of the year was the Holy Week Liturgy that utilised words, song clips and images to portray the Stations of the Cross. The liturgy gave the girls an opportunity to understand and appreciate the importance of this most holy time of the year. Other notable liturgies included the Mother's and Father's Day liturgies, the Graduation Mass and the Advent liturgy. It is so important to gather, to appreciate the role that we all play in the holistic development of our Mercy girls.

Mercy girls have engaged in ample opportunities to develop their faith and servant leadership skills, including: The Mercy 5 Senior Leaders Advocacy Day, the Eco-retreat, the Immersion to Central Australia, the Young Mentors' Program at Chatswood library, the Ignite Festival, reflection days, retreats, street retreats, World Youth Day, St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal, the Mercy and St Pius nativity play.

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

Secondary Curriculum

The College provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses for secondary education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) of English, Mathematics, Science, Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), Creative Arts (CA), Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE), Languages and Technological and Applied Studies (TAS). In addition to this, the College implements the Diocesan Religious Education syllabus. Staff members are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the curriculum.

Mercy Catholic College provided students with varied educational experiences. Students participated in 45 subjects offered, including four online Stage 5 Cross-Campus Courses delivered by Catholic Schools Broken Bay. Over 25 Stage 6 students accessed courses offered by TAFE and external language colleges. Two students completed an SBAT in Retail Services. A wide range of excursions, in-class activities, and extracurricular engagements enhanced the overall learning experience. Creative problem-solvers were involved in the Da Vinci Decathlon, and Science and Engineering Challenge; and the Tournament of Minds team made the NSW Finals. The Year 12 Mercy team who was the Champion Debating team for 2023.

The Partnership and Pathway Program encouraged students in Years 9, 10, and 11 to explore experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting and consider potential career pathways. Activities included creating Immersive Virtual Reality film, work experience as a primary school teacher, chef skills workshops at ICMS, media podcasting, pilot experience at Sydney Flight Centre, and a dedicated Careers Expo. Year 10 participated in business management, future problem-solving and career planning activities. In particular, 62 Commerce students participated in the Enterprise in the Community program which engaged students in solving Practical and authentic challenges of local businesses. This rich learning experience culminated with being awarded First Place in the Diocesan-wide CSBB Community Final.

Mercy Catholic College prioritises ongoing professional learning for teachers, which is founded in data-driven analysis of student work samples, assessments, and external examination results. The main focus of professional learning was the participation in the Learning in Subject Areas (LiSA) program led by Trish Weekes. Teachers participated in a three-hour session each term which demonstrated the learning cycle of direct instruction required to model writing genres specific to KLA areas. All faculties engaged in fortnightly collaboration meetings, using the Continuous Cycle of Improvement (CCI) to plan and review LiSA to enhance student outcomes. This model supported the goals of the Learning Improvement program. The Teacher Librarian and Diverse Learning Coordinator continued

the development of reading skills with Year 7 in the reciprocal reading program, in conjunction with the HSIE faculty. Six staff members across Science, Mathematics and Technology faculties participated in the STEM Teacher Enrichment Academy program from November 2022 to December 2023, building build cross-curricular teaching programs to demonstrate the interconnected nature of the subjects, and developing a combined Yr 7 assessment task.

Academic growth across all year levels was reflected in strong NAPLAN results. In 2023, students' results were reported against new levels of achievement instead of the existing ten "proficiency bands". These four levels are "exceeding", "strong", "developing" and "needs additional support". Year 7 and 9 NAPLAN feedback indicated continued above state average performance by Mercy Catholic College students, although comparisons with previous cohorts was difficult. At the end of 2023 evaluative data from Linda Bendikson (consultant), indicated that NAPLAN reading results were significantly augmented by the 2022/2023 reading focus.

Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

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 teachers about the achievements of students in literacy and numeracy. The test provides a measure of the student's performance against established standards and against other students in Australia. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching with a view to improving student performance.

From 2023, NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards with 4 levels of achievement to give teachers, parents and carers clearer information on how students are performing:

- 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 percentage of student achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency standards in NAPLAN at Mercy Catholic College for 2023 is reported in the table below.

| NAPLAN RESULTS 2023 | | Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------|
| | | School | Australia |
| Year 7 | Grammar and Punctuation | 90% | 64% |
| | Reading | 95% | 69% |
| | Writing | 88% | 63% |
| | Spelling | 92% | 73% |
| | Numeracy | 91% | 67% |

| NAPLAN RESULTS 2023 | | Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------|
| | | School | Australia |
| Year 9 | Grammar and Punctuation | 77% | 59% |
| | Reading | 84% | 63% |
| | Writing | 85% | 58% |
| | Spelling | 86% | 71% |
| | Numeracy | 82% | 64% |

Higher School Certificate (HSC) Diocese

The results of the College's Higher School Certificate (HSC) candidature are reported for particular subjects. The table provided shows the percentage of students who achieved in the top two bands and shows comparison with results from previous years.

NB: A number of new syllabuses were implemented in recent years which means there was a change in either subject name and/or course number. For this reason, results from previous years may appear as 0%. Some courses no longer run and therefore will show as 0%.

The 2023 Higher School Certificate (HSC) results demonstrated continued improvement. HSC RAP data provided by NESAs and the De Courcy analysis indicated sustained and enhanced learning from Year 7-12, where 90% of subjects were above State Average, and the percentage of students achieving in the top two bands increased from 54% to 59%. Individual student successes were indicated in high ATAR results, one All Rounder and 44 students achieving 90 mentions in the Distinguished Achievers List. Ten nominations were received to the HSC Showcases. One student's Major Work was selected and displayed in the Textiles and Design HSC Showcase Textstyle. Four students were nominated for the Drama HSC Showcase OnStage: three students were nominated for the Music HSC Showcase Encore: one student was nominated for the Industrial Technology: Multimedia HSC Showcase Shape: and one student was nominated for the Dance HSC Showcase CallBack.

| Higher School Certificate | Percentage of students in the top 2 bands (Bands 5 and 6) | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| | 2021 | | 2022 | | 2023 | |
| | School | State | School | State | School | State |
| | | | | | | |

Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

Eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate 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 was 0.

Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

Pastoral Care Policy

The College's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies guidelines and procedures are informed by the [Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools](#). This policy is underpinned by the guiding principles from the National Safe Schools Framework (2013) (NSSF) that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a prerequisite for effective learning in all Catholic school settings. The Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning for the Diocese of Broken Bay Schools System (the Framework') utilises the NSSF ensuring that diocesan systemic schools meet the objectives of the NSSF at the same time as meeting the diocesan vision for pastoral care and wellbeing. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSBB website or by contacting CSBB. The policy was revised in 2019 to align with the [Australian Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#) for implementation in 2020.

Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The College's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned to the [Behaviour Support Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools](#). Policies operate within a context that all members of the school community share responsibility to foster, encourage and promote positive behaviour and respectful relationships. The policy aims to promote a safe and supportive learning environment to maximise teaching and learning time for all students. It supports the development of students' pro-social behaviour based on respectful relationships and clear behavioural expectations. The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours while ensuring the respect for the rights of all students and staff. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSBB website or by contacting CSBB. There were no significant changes made to this policy in 2023.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The College's Anti-Bullying guidelines and procedures are based on and informed by the [Anti-Bullying Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools](#) and is aligned to the Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools and other related wellbeing policies and guidelines. All students, their families and employees within Catholic education have a right to a learning and work environment that is free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. Anti-Bullying policies support school communities to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. Further

information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB. There were no changes made to this policy in 2023.

Complaints Handling Policy

The College follows the [Complaints Management and Resolution Policy](#). A distinctive feature of this policy is to ensure that complaints are addressed in a timely and confidential manner at the lowest appropriate management level in order to prevent minor problems or concerns from escalating. The expectation is that complaints will be brought forward and resolved in a respectful manner, recognising the dignity of each person concerned in the process. The policy recognises that a number of more minor or simple matters can be resolved without recourse to the formal complaint handling process but rather, quickly and simply, by discussion between the appropriate people. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB. There were changes made to this policy in 2023 to reflect new system processes.

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Mercy Catholic College school values are the bedrock of our Striving@Mercy pastoral program, which is inspired by the teaching of the Prophet Micah to 'Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God'. While the first of our values is *Respect*, each of the values embodies the concept of "acting justly":

Respect - We value ourselves; we cherish the role that our peers, teachers, parents, and our environment have in providing an atmosphere for us to flourish.

Compassion - We are empathetic and understanding of each other's needs and background.

Integrity - We communicate with honesty and act with sincerity. We are accountable for our actions.

Excellence - We endeavour to do everything to our best ability.

Hospitality - We display kindness to all and are inclusive and welcoming.

The year of 2023 was the year of Hospitality, where we endeavoured to increase our sense of shared purpose and community. Each week girls submitted a "Mercy Mantra" and the ones that best demonstrated the value of hospitality were displayed on screens around the school as a reminder to all about the importance of finding moments to show kindness.

The school leadership team are strong Mercy women who created a sense of belonging for the whole school. Throughout the year they held several important events to remind students about the integrity of every human being, and therefore the need to demonstrate respect, including International Women's Day where they spoke at a St Pius X assembly about ways

in which men and women can demonstrate respect to one-another, Harmony Day, Bullying No Way Day, and RUOK day.

Building community continued with Friday Dance, providing a sense of fun and joyfulness. Inter-house Volleyball on the courts and the Staff vs Student Netball and Basketball games enabled all our community to come together and appreciate each other.

Year 9 students from Mercy and St Pius X participated together in a *Respectful Relationships* workshop that was co-constructed by staff from the two schools, which provided the opportunity for student to explore what the characteristics of respectful relationships are.

After the success of the 2022 Mercy Tree, the Mercy Wellbeing/pastoral initiative for 2023 was the Gratitude Garden, designed to encourage students to be aware of all that they do have, and to take responsibility for their own growth. All members of our community are represented on the wall. Year 12 are the butterflies, Year 11 are the bees and ladybugs, Year 10 the sunflowers, Year 9 the tulips, Year 8 are the peonies and Year 7 are the daisies. The tools for the garden are the staff. All girls and staff wrote what they are grateful for. The Garden is a reminder to us all, that even in tough times we all have nuggets of gold in our lives. In reconciliation week, we added a native hibiscus, recognising First Nations people.

Our Mercy girls are cared for by an essential group of people in our community. The tutor group continues to be the foundation in our school community, including activities such as prayer and reflection, planning and organisation, inter-year group activities, wellbeing activities, and the weekly mantra.

As a school, we know that each year level and each cohort have their own distinctions. The advocacy, knowledge and passion of each member of the Pastoral team provides a safe and caring environment for our Mercy girls. We care for our girls as they transition into the challenges of high school, searching for balance in a new environment, always respecting and being kind to others. We dare our girls to rise to the challenge to strive for better things. We enable our girls to discover and appreciate more about their own unique talents and gifts and those of others. Our girls relish the opportunity to constructing their future by choosing subjects, participating in co-curricular activities and making solid plans for their future. Our girls study subjects that instil passion and purpose, in an environment that promotes independence and leadership. We inspire our young Mercy women to look forward with anticipation and joy for the journey ahead. Our new graduates undertake their paths away from Mercy, as women with hope, optimism and a readiness to take on the world.

Essential with the delivery of Pastoral Care and Wellbeing is the partnership between Mercy and our parents and carers. As always, the support that this partnership provides to the girls is invaluable. We must all and especially together, strive for better things for ourselves and our Mercy girls.

School Improvement

Strategic planning ensures a common purpose and agreed values are established. In Broken Bay systemic schools, this common purpose and agreed values along with goals, targets and key improvement strategies have been captured in the Towards 2025 Strategic Plan.

Key Improvements Achieved

In the area of Evangelisation and Catechesis all staff in the Religious Education Faculty continued their participation in the implementation of the new Religious Education curriculum in Years 7 to 10. These new curricula will provide the opportunity for students to engage with scripture and Catholic teachings in a more relevant and meaningful way.

All staff continued to implement explicit teaching of reading and participated in the Literacy in Subject Area professional development with academic and literacy expert, Trish Weekes.

The new Pastoral Programme was implemented, following a review during 2022. The new programme is more dynamic and contemporary, addressing the developmental needs of students in our evolving context.

The College grounds were enhanced with the installation of a bust of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Mercy order of sisters. This bust resulted from the staff formation programme and was made possible by the generous financial contribution of the North Sydney congregation of Sisters of Mercy, and the outgoing Parents and Friends Committee. The bust was blessed by the Very Reverend Father David Ranson, Parish Priest and Vicar General, at an unveiling that followed the Mercy Day Mass. The bust will make visceral to students and families significant history; while today Mercy is an integral member of the systemic schools constituting Catholic Schools Broken Bay, it retains connection to its strong Mercy heritage and charism.

During 2024 teaching staff will continue to have an additional two hours of collaborative planning time per fortnight to focus on continuous improvement of teaching and learning. During this time their attention will focus on the implementation of subject specific writing skills.

In the area of Mission, opportunities for students to access faith development activities is to be expanded in collaboration with the Parish.

Priority Key Improvements for Next Year

During 2024 teaching staff will continue to have an additional two hours of collaborative planning time per fortnight to focus on continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

During this time their attention will focus on the implementation of subject specific writing skills. They will also develop their understanding of the New South Wales Education Standards Curriculum Reform agenda, especially in the area of modern assessment, and they will develop new teaching and learning programmes to support successful implementation of new syllabuses.

In the area of Mission, opportunities for students to access faith development activities is to be expanded in collaboration with the Parish.

Community 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, a variety of processes have been used to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the College from parents, students and teachers.

Parent satisfaction

Parent satisfaction was gauged through conversations at Parent Engagement and Advisory Group meetings and through parent engagement in college activities, such as information evenings, sporting and other co-curricular events and social events such as, Open Day, which were all well attended.

Parents acknowledge the commitment teachers have in supporting students' wellbeing and learning and encouragement for students to always do their best, whether it be academic, sporting or co-curricular. Parent comments indicate a welcoming, happy, safe learning community. Parents indicated the nurturing nature and commitment to ensure the wellbeing and learning of their students is at the forefront of the college.

Parents recognise the number of opportunities for their daughter through activities, such as co-curricular, social justice, immersions, sport, and the range of opportunities available in the curriculum.

Student satisfaction

Student satisfaction was determined through several different avenues including surveys, Tutor Group discussions, Student Leaders' meetings, Year Group meetings and informal discussions. From discussions in Student Leader meetings, students felt their ideas and opinions were listened too, which led to student initiatives being implemented. They also felt they had a voice in the organisation and decisions made in school activities.

Students indicated that school spirit and a positive climate is encouraged and enhanced through activities such as carnivals, music and drama performance, fundraising activities, Mercy Week, sporting events and Inter house competitions. The student leaders have engaged with the student body through running events, such as Friday Dance, Tutor Group activities, the development of theme every year reflecting the college values and the development of a mosaic wall which reflects the connection of students and staff. Students indicated a high level of satisfaction with their relationships with each other and with their teachers.

Teacher satisfaction

Teacher discussions at staff meetings, workshops, surveys, and department meetings were used to discern staff satisfaction.

Staff expressed the Professional Learning Groups engaged positive experience allowing the building and shaping of pedagogy. The time given to reflect and practice the learning initiatives has enhanced the learning in the classroom. Teachers expressed great satisfaction in the quality of the learning culture and wellbeing of staff and students. Staff emphasised a strong importance of the wellbeing and learning being connected for students to achieve the best outcomes from their learning. They expressed pride in student achievements inside and outside the classroom and the HSC results.

They believe the vertical Tutor Groups and the Wellbeing Program helps to form positive relationships between students, as well developing positive relationships between staff and students.

Financial Statement

Consistent with the NESAs requirements, financial income and expenditure for the College in 2023 is shown below. More detailed financial data is available on the My School website.

| Recurrent and Capital Income 2023 | |
|--|---------------------|
| Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹ | \$5,758,917 |
| Government Capital Grants ² | \$0 |
| State Recurrent Grants ³ | \$1,573,389 |
| Fees and Private Income ⁴ | \$5,719,115 |
| Interest Subsidy Grants | \$41,465 |
| Other Capital Income ⁵ | \$4,717 |
| Total Income | \$13,097,605 |

| Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2023 | |
|--|---------------------|
| Capital Expenditure ⁶ | \$613,507 |
| Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷ | \$10,803,501 |
| Non-Salary Expenses ⁸ | \$4,474,048 |
| Total Expenditure | \$15,277,550 |

Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

END OF 2023 REPORT