

# Annual School Report 2023 School Year

St Mary's College, Gunnedah



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Principal  
Catherine Martin

## About this report

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

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

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

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

This report complements, and is supplementary to, school newsletters and other regular communications. It is available on both school and CSO websites by 30 June 2024 following its submission to NESA.

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

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6742 2124 or by visiting the school's [website](#).



## 1.0 Messages

### 1.1 Principal's Message

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

St Mary's College, Gunnedah is a Catholic co-educational secondary school serving the Gunnedah region in North-West NSW. With a population of 433 students and 79 staff, St Mary's provides an holistic Catholic education in an inclusive, caring, calm and welcoming environment following the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy who founded the College in 1879.

The College has a universal and unconditional positive regard for children and young people. St Mary's staff accept and promote collective responsibility for improving the conditions of faith development, teaching, learning, wellbeing, and life opportunities for all students. Our focus is Living Well and Learning Well.

This year saw the community thrive after previous years' flooding. The community came together with celebration opportunities such as the Soiree, Debutante Ball and Father's Day Golf. Gunnedah had a successful year supporting students through employment opportunities and scholarship funds. We thank all the community members who supported the prizes for awards. St Mary's College Aboriginal support teachers and staff engaged with the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and participated in cultural awareness. The local Aboriginal community were active, engaging with Aboriginal students in a weaving group.

Students at St Mary's feel connected to their school, are aware of the collective focus on their learning and wellbeing and feel valued, hopeful and safe. College classrooms are calm, consistently focusing on student-centred pedagogy and collaborative learning strategies. This is creating ever-increasing opportunities for connection, participation and recognition. The foundation of this is the shared understanding of the Catholic faith, centred on a universal ethos of care and the dignity of the human person.

The wider community is engaged in this learning community through information nights, learning conferences, P&F and the School Advisory Council. A broad range of subject choices are offered, both face-to-face and through distance education. Students are involved in VET courses and school-based traineeships. Electives range from Agriculture and Primary Industries, Extension Mathematics and English courses to Arts and Technology. Community support is seen in activities such as Riding for the Disabled, volunteering and raising funds for Catholic Missions, Caritas and St Vincent's Christmas Appeal.

Student Leadership is represented through house structures and year-level membership of the Student Representative Council. Extracurricular experiences are fully supported through diocesan sports, public speaking, chess competitions, equestrian events, music and drama. Students represented the school up to national levels in the areas of sport and primary industries, and district level in public speaking and chess.

St Mary's College is committed to Living Well, Learning Well as lifelong learners. Significant outcomes in learning growth were demonstrated through students' HSC and NAPLAN results. A focus this year on literacy across all curriculum areas increased student literacy outcomes.

Staff maintain a focused approach to improved learning and teaching through purposeful and practical Professional Learning Teams. A focus on literacy prepared staff for the initial exploration of the new curriculum for 2024 and beyond. Learning and teaching continues to develop through a system approach to achieve clarity using the 14 Parameters. A review of Middle Leadership aims to support the belief that well-being supports great learning, and all leaders are Leaders of Learning.

St Mary's College maintained staff employment to meet the demands of the student-focused timetable. The team was strengthened by additional educational assistance staff and additional members of the administration team to reduce the administrative load on teaching staff.



2023 has been a successful year for St Mary's College.

Catherine Martin  
Principal

## 1.2 A Parent Message

St Mary's College and St Xaviers School Gunnedah have a combined P & F that meet regularly for joint activities to build a sense of collegiality and community spirit across the two campuses.

This P&F Association is an important and highly valued parent body within the Catholic School community of Gunnedah. Parents and friends were engaged in volunteering to help with school social and fundraising occasions.

The P&F main purpose is to facilitate the involvement and contribution of parents/ carers and friends to support the school and the parish. The P&F achieves this by organising social and fundraising events. Funds raised by the P&F are invested in educational tools, programs, facilities and assets.

The P&F was involved in organising a variety of activities. In particular, Mother's Day and Father's Day events, the Catholic Debutante Ball and Golf Day. These events strengthened links with the strong Catholic School community in Gunnedah.

Meghan Elbourne  
President  
Combined Catholic Schools P&F

## 2.0 This Catholic College

### 2.1 The College Community

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

Last year the College celebrated 145 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Fr Abmar Dumayag MS, is involved in the life of the College.

### 2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

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

#### Liturgical

The opening school Mass was held in conjunction with St Xavier's Primary School on Ash Wednesday. The Mass brought together the staff, students and parishioners. Masses were held across the year with a focus on the staff, leaders and student masses held at the end of each term. Liturgies were held for special occasions, bringing both the parish members and the Sisters of Mercy together. Each school assembly and mentor group began with a prayer which reflected the liturgical season, major events and people.

#### Staff and Student Faith Formation

There is a focus on developing the prayer life of the school during assemblies, held on Mondays, and in PACC groups, held each morning. Prayers, readings and reflections link with the liturgical year and



are supported by background information which serves to form students' understanding of Catholic identity.

Staff and students engage in fundraising for CARITAS through Project Compassion and Catholic Missions. Students participated in reflection days facilitated by the Sydney Youth Mission Team in September and Year 12 had a three-day retreat in May at Carmel House, Varroville, also facilitated by the team.

Staff were involved in a number of faith formation opportunities over the course of the year. These included the Catholic Life induction and mandated RE day as well as two staff meetings per term devoted to faith formation topics, including Lent, Stations of the Cross, Easter, Mary, Mercy Tradition, and NAIDOC Week. Staff participated in two twilight sessions which focused on Catholic Social Teaching and Aboriginal Spirituality. The parish priest and Sr Christine Belling assisted with some of these opportunities.

### Parish Links

Strong links continue to be forged between SMC and the parish. The Principal is a member of the Parish Council and the REC is an active member of the St Joseph's Parish Liturgy Committee. The Assistant Principal is an active member of the parish at Mullaley and Tambar Springs. A number of staff are actively involved in various ministries of service, including Ministers of the Word, technology, altar cleaning and as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Staff and students provided morning teas after Mass, ran the Mother's Day barbecue and hosted Carols on the Convent Lawn.

## 2.3 College Enrolment

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

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
<b>Male</b>	45	44	40	29	17	13	188	195
<b>Female</b>	54	57	36	41	35	24	247	250
<b>Totals</b>	99	101	76	70	52	37	435	445

## 2.4 Student Attendance

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

The average student attendance rate for the College during 2023 is shown in the following table.



	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	All Years
<b>Average Student Attendance Rates</b>	87.0%	85.0%	82.0%	85.0%	88.0%	91.0%	86.3%

### Managing Student non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The College, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, College staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

College staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
- monitoring engagement of individual students in their learning and identifying strategies to enhance engagement.
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.
- intervention strategies for students with unsatisfactory attendance may include academic case management, social case management, referral to counselling and parent/\_carer involvement.
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom previous strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

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

## 2.5 Staff Profile and Teacher Standards

	Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile	Number of Teachers
1.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	4
2.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	45
3.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	22



Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile		Number of Teachers
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the College.	3
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the College.	25

## 2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

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

- St Mary's College worked towards embedding the Living Well, Learning Well Framework. The framework emphasises that *I am safe, I am valued, respected and cared for*, and I am a learner. The pillars of the framework are student-centred pedagogy, working in teams and developing teams, case management and intervention, connection participation and inclusion. These pillars maximise access and opportunity for all students and include multi-tiered systems of support for academic, positive behaviour and well-being domains. The holistic approach to student support focuses on the school as a place of wellbeing, with attention to the building of skills for resilience. The work in Living Well, Learning Well came out of targeted student voice through regular surveys with impact cycles of improvement in areas of safety, trusted adult and belonging.
- In 2022, St Mary's College partnered with the Resilience Project. The Resilience Project team gave targeted professional learning to staff on their pillars of resilience: gratitude, empathy, mindfulness. These pillars formed the project work for students to help build resilience. The program was completed during 2023.
- Students were involved in a range of outreach activities, including fortnightly visits to the local nursing home where students spent time entertaining and speaking with the elderly residents. Students and staff contribute generously to social justice appeals, including St Vincent de Paul and Caritas. Citizenship awards were presented at fortnightly whole school assemblies, while outstanding citizenship was recognised at the Annual Presentation Assembly with awards from the Lions Club and the local Member of Parliament.
- The values of respect and responsibility lie at the heart of Catholic schools and underpin all policies and procedures. Students, teachers and parents are regularly reminded of the school's commitment to these and other school values by newsletter items, assembly messages and by the nature of interpersonal relationships. The school held a special parent forum to address these and other values identified by the school community. Many of the awards presented to students throughout the year are indicative of these values. Respect and responsibility are fundamental to the school's restorative justice program.

## 2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the College used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the College from parents, students and teachers.

### Parent Satisfaction



St Mary's College gathered feedback regarding parent satisfaction through the MySchool Survey, College Advisory Board, Parent Teacher Interviews and Parents & Friends.

The MySchool Survey was conducted in July with 161 of the 466 parents completing the survey (35% completion rate is considered good). St Mary's College recorded an overall satisfaction score of 72.2%.

The feedback in the MySchool Survey indicated that 66.4% of parents agree that the school communicates clearly and has high expectations for students attendance, engagement and outcomes. Parents (69.8%) agree that the Catholic and religious identity is a high priority in the school whilst 75.2% agree that the school is a safe place for my child and, most significantly, 66.0% believe the staff take an interest in their child.

This year, a new initiative commenced to try and encourage greater community and parent involvement, starting with individual year groups. The Year 7 evening was a fabulous success with many families coming together as a new year group. Many students brought along their siblings to show them their new school. This was followed by introducing a Meet & Greet for all year groups off site, where parents could meet in a relaxed environment, getting to know other parents of students in the same cohort.

### **Student Satisfaction**

St Mary's College gathered feedback regarding student satisfaction through surveys across the students in year levels, house groups and whole school. A variety of student surveys including the MySchool Survey and The Resilience Project Survey were used.

The MySchool Survey was completed in July with 189 of the 435 students completing the survey (43% completion rate is considered very good). Strengths reported included supportive teachers, sporting opportunities, learning opportunities, community and friends, facilities and resources and canteen.

The Living Well, Learning Well Survey was completed multiple times across the year. Students agreed that they felt supported (66%), safe (79%), and cared for (71%). Supporting this data is a commitment to The Resilience Project (TRP).

### **Staff Satisfaction**

St Mary's College gathered feedback regarding staff satisfaction through surveys across the teaching staff and ancillary staff. The most significant survey tool was MySchool Survey.

The MySchool Survey was completed by 57 of the 81 staff (61% completion rate is considered excellent).

Staff identified strengths as dedicated and supportive teacher faith-driven and inclusive environment and positive learning atmosphere.

## **3.0 Teaching and Learning**

### **3.1 College Curriculum**

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

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



Students in Year 9 and 10 undertook the NESA courses of English, Mathematics, Science, Australian History, Geography and PDHPE. The College offered two elective lines. Students in Years 11 and 12 were offered a diverse range of courses. Several VET courses were available to senior students, either within the College (Primary Industries) or in conjunction with TAFE. Assessment was conducted in accordance with NESA syllabus guidelines.

Each course in Years 7 to 10 incorporated relevant aspects of Literacy, Numeracy, Indigenous Perspectives and Information & Communications Technology. In Years 7 and 8, a literacy block operates which offers all students an opportunity to improve their literacy. All courses from Year 7 to 12 incorporate the Catholic Principles and Values, through which connections between syllabus content, attitudes and skills can be related to Catholic perspectives.

Religious Education is a compulsory subject for Years 7 to 12 and includes the opportunity to study Studies of Religion or Studies in Catholic Thought in Years 11 and 12. Multicultural and environmental education are incorporated into RE, Science and HSIE courses.

The student support staff provide in-class assistance to students with diagnosed disabilities and/or literacy and numeracy difficulties. Transition programs are integral to new students, ensuring a seamless start to the curriculum. Teaching staff received professional development in writing Individual Education Plans for each funded student. An after-school homework centre operates in the school library.

Staff professional learning teams worked collaboratively to embed effective pedagogical practices to meet the demands of literacy and learning skills necessary to access the curriculum successfully. The focus for the year was literacy, informed by data and meaningful assessment of student learning.

Five members of the Instructional Leadership Team completed the Data Champions course which improved their understanding and skills in using data in a school context.

The Middle Leadership had professional development via the 'Middle Leaders Framework' by CSO, Ellie Simpson, which consisted of seven one-hour sessions.

## **3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs**

### **3.2.1 NAPLAN**

The College participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 7 and 9 tested. In Year 7, 97 students presented for the tests while in Year 9 there were 70 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data and space and geometry.

Commencing in 2023, NAPLAN test results are reported using proficiency levels.

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.

At St Mary's College, college and student performance are closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and college achievement. College staff have



participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of St Mary's College students in the top two levels compared to the State percentage.

**Year 7 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy  
Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding**

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
65.0	59.0	76.0	65.0	65.0

**Year 9 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy  
Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding**

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
59.0	48.0	52.0	49.0	52.0

### 3.2.2 Higher School Certificate

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

	<b>Higher School Certificate: Percentage of students in bands 4, 5, 6</b>					
	2021		2022		2023	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
<b>Studies of Religion 1</b>	37%	69%	100%	80%	41%	84%
<b>English Standard</b>	61%	58%	67%	56%	76%	60%
<b>English Advanced</b>	100%	93%	100%	93%	83%	95%
<b>Mathematics Standard 2</b>	45%	79%	47%	54%	21%	58%
<b>Mathematics</b>	100%	51%	57%	76%	50%	75%

Thirty-seven students completed the HSC. The overall school-to-state comparison placed St Mary's College below the state average by -0.3. The mean overall difference between achieved and typical was -0.25. French Beginners, English Standard, Earth and Environmental Science, Business Studies, Industrial Technology, PDHPE, Legal Studies were above-expected average growth. Forty percent of courses were above state mean; 43% of student results were above state mean.

Courses achieving a Band 5/6: Business Studies, Community & Family Studies, English Advanced, English Standard, Legal Studies, Mathematics Standard 2, Modern History, Music 1, Personal Dev, Health & PE, Primary Industries Exam, Society and Culture, Studies of Religion 1 and Studies of Religion 2. Two Band 6s and a notional in extension maths were awarded at the finalisation of the HSC. From the graduating cohort, 24 students qualified for an ATAR.



St Mary's College teachers completed a detailed course report using RAP and DeCourcy data. Through collaborative analysis, they highlighted and implemented appropriate support and pedagogy to enhance learning growth for future students.

In 2023 the number of students issued with a RoSA	12
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### 3.2.3 Senior Secondary College Outcomes

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

#### Senior Secondary Outcomes

<b>Senior Secondary Outcomes Year 12, 2023</b>	% of students undertaking vocational training or training in a trade during the senior years of schooling.	34%
	% of students attaining the award of Higher School Certificate or equivalent vocational education and training qualification.	100%

### 3.2.4 Post College Destinations

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

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

<b>Destination Data Year 12, 2023 Graduating Class</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>TAFE / Other institutions</b>	<b>Workforce entry</b>	<b>Destination not reported</b>
	50%	9%	32%	9%

### 3.2.5 Retention of Students from Year 10 to Year 12

The percentage of students who completed year 10 at St Mary's College and progressed to year 12 for 2023 was 54%.



## **4.0 College Policies**

### **4.1 Enrolment Policy**

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

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

### **4.2 Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale**

Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale are policies and procedures justifying a model of student support that considers learning, wellbeing, school connection, behaviour, family-school partnerships and similar domains as inseparable and interrelated elements in the lives of children and young people and in the complex community that is the contemporary school.

The development goal of Living Well, Learning Well, and related policies was, and is, to ensure contemporary research and findings in fields of pedagogy, inclusion, behaviour support, pastoral care, bullying prevention and intervention, student voice, participation and connection to school, child and adolescent psychology, student wellbeing and staff collective efficacy are reflected in all language, policy, practice and protocols of the system and schools. It supports a whole-system ecological approach to understanding and acting on the complexity of factors that interact to shape and form the lives of children and young people.

At the heart of Living Well, Learning Well is a universal and unconditional positive regard for children and young people and a high regard for the collective capacity of a school staff team to increase learning, wellbeing and life-opportunity outcomes for children and young people. The full text of the College's Living Well, Learning Well procedures may be accessed on the College [website](#).

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this College. The College does not sanction the administration of corporal punishment by college staff or non-college persons, including parents, to enforce appropriate behaviour in the College.

### **4.3 Student Protection Policies and Procedures**

The role of the Catholic school in child protection is to protect children and young people and to promote and safeguard the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. This responsibility is shared with the whole community. Every school within the Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO) system of schools works within a statutory framework of cooperation with government authorities and other relevant agencies and with families in the care and protection of children and young people.

Schools have a key role to play in today's society by assisting students and families with child protection. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of students is given the highest priority in every preventative and protective action taken.

In caring for children and young people, we must act in their best interest and take all reasonable steps to ensure their protection. This involves sincere commitment to upholding children's rights to safety and their wellbeing, and taking comprehensive steps to create a child safe school organisation



and culture, with shared responsibility requiring all Armidale CSO personnel to work together within a comprehensive framework to ensure action and accountability for child safety.

St Mary's College is committed to fulfilling its obligations and seeks to develop best practice to identify and address risk and harm, and to promote the wellbeing of all children and young people in Armidale CSO schools. The dignity of the human person is a central truth of the Gospel message of Jesus. In respecting the dignity of all human persons, Catholic school communities are called to ensure the welfare and safety of all of their members.

The protection of the students entrusted to our care is a very serious responsibility. In taking up this responsibility along with parents, who are recognised as the primary educators and carers of their children, Catholic school communities are committed to ensuring Catholic schools have at their centre the total care of the whole student.

St Mary's College follows the guideline, policies and procedures as determined by Armidale Catholic Schools Office who provides policy, procedures, forms and links to other resources relating to child protection. These resources have been developed to guide and assist staff and to inform Catholic school communities. Further details can be accessed from the College's [website](#) which includes a further [guide for parents](#).

#### 4.4 Complaints Handling Policy and Guide

The Diocese of Armidale has established a 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' which is implemented by the College. The rationale for this policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of the contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policies.

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

*The full text of the College's 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' may be accessed on the College's [website](#) or the administration office.*

#### 5.0 College Review and Improvement

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

Key Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2023	Key Goals for 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built a strong leadership team that enacts the principles of effective middle leadership to improve the learning, well-being and faith formation outcomes of students.</li> <li>• Worked in partnership with parents to promote and sustain a Living Well, Learning Well inclusive learning community that strengthens the wellbeing of students and staff</li> <li>• Delivered a purposeful, authentic, innovative and contemporary curriculum with a focus on writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To embed LWLW to strengthen our Catholic community of care.</li> <li>• Guaranteed and viable curriculum so that all young people experience five great lessons a day.</li> <li>• To improve communication within the learning community.</li> </ul>



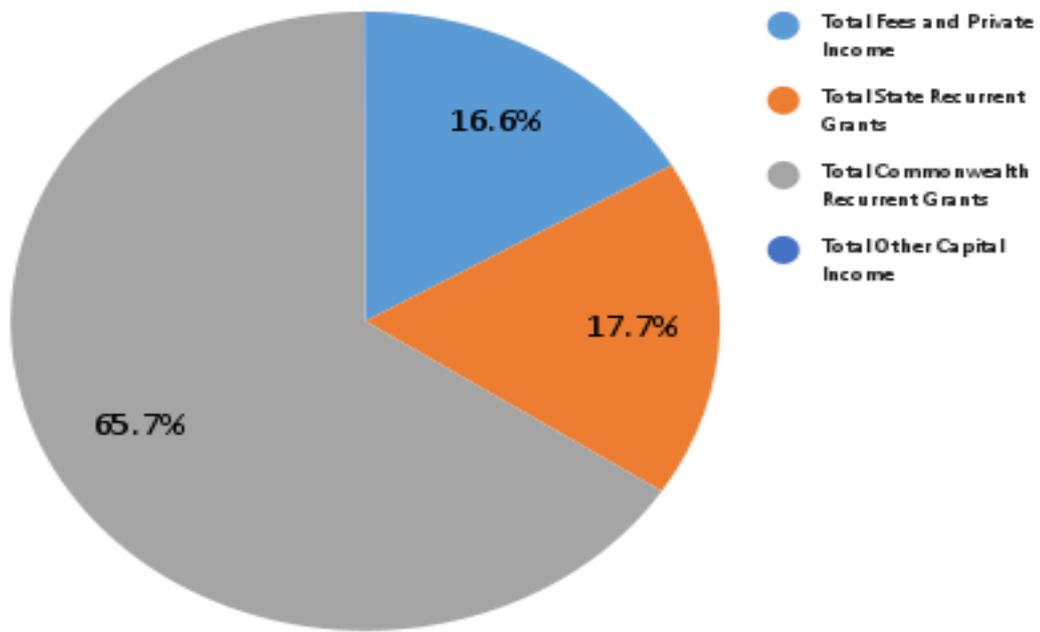
## 6.0 Financial Information

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

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2023 is presented below:



### 2023 Income - St Mary's College, Gunnedah



### 2023 Expenditure - St Mary's College, Gunnedah

