

Mercy Regional College

Camperdown & Noorat

2020

Annual Report to the School Community



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Contact Details

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Sharon Gillett, attest that Mercy Regional College is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2020 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School.

09/06/2021

NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Our College Vision & Mission

Vision Statement

Mercy Regional College serves a wide rural community which values growth and diversity in Catholic Education in the Mercy tradition.

Mission Statement

In the Spirit of the Gospels we commit ourselves to the core values of community, inclusiveness, learning, care, justice and mercy, excellence and achievement.

College Overview

Background and Governance

Mercy Regional College is a Catholic, regional, co-educational secondary school, serving the parishes of Camperdown, Mortlake, Terang and Timboon. It is a dual campus school of 410 students with the senior campus - McAuley, hosting Years 9 -12 and situated in Camperdown. The Junior campus - O'Keeffe, hosts Years 7 and 8 and is situated at Noorat, some 25 kilometres away from Camperdown.

Mercy Regional College is a proud school community with rich history, strong traditions, and a deep sense of community and welcome. Our Catholic identity is best exemplified through our approach to and program of holistic and personalised education that encourages students and staff to live out the Gospel by pursuing our core values of learning, excellence and achievement, community, inclusiveness, care and justice & mercy.

The College was originally governed by the body of Parish Priests (then Governors of the College) under the supervision of the Bishop of Ballarat and was acknowledged as Catholic by his authority. Governance of the College transferred to the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) on 1 January 2021. The Principal is supported by the Mercy Regional College School Advisory Council.

History

Mercy Regional College has a rich and unique regional community history. The College was established in 1973, when the closure of the secondary component of local Catholic primary schools - St Patrick's Camperdown, St Colman's School, Mortlake and St Thomas' School, Terang was imminent. The parishes took the initiative in developing a new concept of Catholic Education - a Regional Secondary College serving local parishes, managed by a Board of Management and administered by a Lay Principal. In 1975 the College was a three campus educational institution with campuses located in Camperdown, Mortlake and Noorat. In 1983, the Mortlake and Noorat campuses were consolidated at Noorat. In 2008, the College consolidated its educational program across its two campuses with all students undertaking Years 7 & 8 at the O'Keeffe Campus in Noorat and then Years 9 - 12 at McAuley Campus in Camperdown. The McAuley campus is co - located with St Patrick's Primary School.

Students

Mercy is the largest provider of senior secondary education in the district. Our students reside predominantly rurally with our enrolments coming from a wide regional area inclusive of Woorndoo in the north to Port Campbell in the south and Pomborneit in the east to Framlingham in the west.

Principal's Report

2020 was certainly been one of the most unusual and, dare I say it, unprecedented years to reflect on; whether that be as an individual or as the Principal of Mercy Regional College. We were challenged and tested in so many ways and for a lengthy period of time. I am so very proud of the positive way in which Mercy students, staff, parents, and the wider Mercy community drew together as partners in learning and in life.

Our College theme for 2020, chosen by our College Student Leadership Team, was 'We are the light'. It was underpinned by the scriptural reference John 8:12: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness'. This theme, together with my favourite and aspirational quote from Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, 'We should be like shining lamps giving light to all around us', have been words to draw strength, courage and direction from across this challenging year. Seeking light is innate and enables us to survive and thrive, just as our Mercy community has exemplified.

We can all readily recall the difficulties we have faced this year: isolation, fear, vulnerability, hopelessness, uncertainty, disadvantage; but at Mercy, we chose to look upon the many silver linings that emerged from a community, state, country, and world in crisis.

Of most significance, is how we authentically expressed our Mercy Core Value of Community. Collectively, we approached this experience with hope, faith, courage, and determination. Authentic partnerships and a sense of unity ensured that our young people had continuity of learning and that we maintained connection. The opportunity to focus on maintaining positive relationships with family and friends as well as between students and teachers was something we embraced, even when our means to do this in many instances became virtual. Our community connections were enhanced through the generosity of learning support staff who cooked tirelessly for those in our community isolated or needing support. At Mercy, we really do care.

Ingenuity was a signature of our Remote Learning experience. Learning, as well as Excellence and Achievement, is valued at Mercy and this year has provided a different way to live out these values. Where once embracing learning and teaching online was something wishfully considered amplifying the learning experience of young people in rural communities, we now know this to be a most accessible and productive learning mode, particularly in developing self-direction and learning independence. Innovation and creativity brought us all to a new appreciation of technology to communicate effectively and accomplish meaningful learning. These same platforms maintained and enhanced our sense of connection by bringing people together.

Traditional expression of our Catholic Identity when unable to gather to celebrate Mass or liturgy was challenging but brought the opportunity for us to reach out to our community through our social media platforms; something we will continue into our future. Beginning with a beautiful Lenten journey focusing on The Way of the Cross through art, we also celebrated virtually together our dual Feast Days, Our Lady Help of Christians and Mercy Day, as well as other significant days such as ANZAC Day, Mother's and Father's Day, and many community awareness raising opportunities. We also banded together physically as we participated in The Push Up Challenge and The Mercy Great Australian Race.

In all, 2020 was a year that made us adopt a new way of living and being. We had to slow down and spent more time in our homes, with our family, and in our local community. We cherished time in nature and time to be creative and reflect. We reconnected with neighbours, with the elderly, and with the vulnerable. We showed gratitude for those that care for us, for health professionals, for attending school, and for the thing in life that we previously took for granted -

freedom. Whilst the year brought many disappointments in the things we couldn't do, it provided many opportunities for us to appreciate the things we have, those we cherish and those things we may not have tried before. It also brought to the forefront the importance of community, care, compassion, and kindness.

Once more, it is my great privilege and pleasure to reflect on our school year as Principal of Mercy Regional College.

God bless

Sharon Gillett

Principal

Church Authority Report

College Chaplains Report

I noticed last year's Chaplain's Report mentioned that each year is uniquely different from the ones before. The difference this year has been greater than ever!

Usually, we have lots of celebrations together to highlight the important times at school and the feast days of the Church. We were able to start the year together with our Commencement Mass and begin the Lenten season with Ash Wednesday. Since then, we have only been together online to celebrate Mercy Day, which was a great effect created by those who organised our prayer service.

However, it has been wonderful to see and feel the positive approach to the challenges that our school community, students, staff, and families, have faced this year. May you all be blessed for the way you have gone about things as we continue to pray that we all will be safe and everything will continue to improve into the future with the support of each other.

Fr Gerry Prunty and Fr Neville Stanislaus

College Chaplains

College Board Report

2020 Chairpersons Report

It is my pleasure to present a report on behalf of the Mercy Regional College Board of Management. This is my first year as Board Chair, having stepped into the position after we farewelled Rachael Johnstone in March. Rachael served Mercy as a board member for six years, four of those as Board Chair and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rachael for her fantastic leadership and commitment to our school.

This year we were fortunate to welcome four new members to our board: Xavier McKinnon, Rebecca Alexander, Olga Petrovskaya, and John Pekin. Some are ex-students, some are parents, and all four have brought great experience to our board. They joined our existing board members: Ben van de Camp, Sharee Scanlon, and Claire Walsh. I thank them all for volunteering their time and input at board meetings. The board is also well supported by Andrew Watson (Catholic Education Ballarat), Jude Murfitt (Business Manager), and Nicole Darcy (Board Secretary); we greatly value their contributions made throughout the year.

We also give thanks to our Canonical Administrators, Fr Gerry Prunty and Fr Neville Stanislaus for their continued leadership and governing support during the year. This year has seen our board learn much about school governance and they have both spent considerable time determining the best path for the future governance of our school. We appreciate the careful consideration given in making this major decision. We now look forward to the transition to governance under the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education (DOBCCEL).

2020 has certainly been a very challenging year, and one that we will never forget. COVID-19 has disrupted all of our lives in varying ways. Initially, it saw the requirement for sanitising and social distancing, and then led to the closure of our school and the commencement of remote learning for our students and remote teaching for our staff. I commend all Mercy staff, teaching and non-teaching, for their incredible efforts to ensure the continued education of our students and for the fantastic work done to support our students' wellbeing during isolation. All this while many staff were also home schooling their own children!

The seamless transition to remote schooling was due to the excellent leadership of our Principal, Sharon Gillett. In her first full year as Principal, she has guided us all very capably through this difficult time; we appreciate all of her hard work, care and dedication to support our staff, students and school community. Thanks also to our Assistant Principals, Claire Wrigley and Berni Sinnott, for the wonderful support given to Sharon and to all of our staff and students.

To our 2020 Mercy students, this has been a very difficult year, where special school events, camps and excursions have been cancelled. I'm sure plans made for this school year have not worked out how one had hoped. While it is disappointing for each of them in different ways, I congratulate them all on showing great resilience and I am impressed by how well they have all adapted.

Julie Finney

Board Chair

Catholic School Culture

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To continue to recontextualise our Catholic Identity
- To continue to support leaders and teachers entering and continuing service in Catholic education to develop the knowledge and skills that will support authentic witness in our school community.
- To lead, participate in and act for social and ecological justice, community outreach and sustainability.

Achievements

As a Catholic school, Mercy Regional College is committed to the education of the whole person - spiritually, intellectually, psychologically, socially and physically. The faith development of all in the school community is a core goal with the life and message of Jesus Christ as the exemplar model of life.

Every effort is made to bring the needs of our world and personal lives to a focus with prayer leading to action. Every effort is made to ensure that there are always prayers available for staff/student use via shared resources. We also ensure that all staff and RE staff in particular share the responsibility of providing prayers for the newsletter and on SIMON. Each classroom/homeroom also has a dedicated prayer space for this purpose.

In 2020, we held our inaugural combined half day Seminar Day/Faith Day for Year 7s and Year 12's. This was held on the first day of school. All Year 12 students were taken to O'Keeffe campus, and they listened to a First Australian and local elder guest speaker (Uncle Loccy Eccles) as well as his daughter Mel and experienced some Didarri. Our students had a shared lunch and then participated in a welcome ceremony where our Year 7 students were presented their Bibles (a way of welcoming our students into our faith community) from a Year 12 student after a short liturgy and blessing of the Bibles and students.

Our Year 12 students participated in a three-day Retreat to Norval Camp in Halls Gap. This was an opportunity for our students to develop their faith and spirituality and provide time for self-reflection and personal growth through a series of prayer, action and response activities.

Our Year 7 students were involved in a Year 7 Retreat. This was at the McAuley Camperdown campus and involved a number of guest speakers with a First Australian spirituality focus. The aim of this Retreat is to develop student's own spirituality and provide time for self-reflection and personal growth through a series of prayer, action and response activities.

Opportunities for the expression of faith are provided through Eucharist and various other liturgies to celebrate special feasts and occasions. In 2020, whilst not always able to gather as a school community, adjustments were made successfully for us to be able to celebrate online where possible.

The Religious Education program at Mercy is based upon the Religious Education P-12 Curriculum, "Awakenings" which is used throughout the Ballarat diocese. Year 11 VCE students complete VCE Unit 2 Religion and Society. Our Year 12 students complete a Post-Compulsory New Awakenings course as well as the Retreat program and Seminar Day program.

In 2020 our staff Professional Learning was offered in a new format as a result of Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time. Staff had 6 different options/sessions available to them and could

choose which ones they were most interested in. These sessions were run by a variety of internal and external guest speakers as well as via video. The Professional Learning sessions were offered either on-site or remotely making this professional learning experience accessible to all.

In 2020 new POL positions were introduced in the RE area to further support Catholic Identity and RE at our school.

During the 2020 year we had a focus on staff formation. We had three staff members apply for and gain their Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School this year. We also have a number of staff who have applied for and been accepted into the REAP program for 2021, which will enable them to complete their Accreditation to Teach RE / or Lead in a Catholic school.

A number of our staff were involved in staff formation activities and events which were run online in 2020, which was a great way to improve our knowledge and understanding. This included Faith, Life and Ministry Education (FLAME) lunchtime webinars as well Circle of Mercy events run collaboratively with Sacred Heart College, Geelong. RE teachers were also involved in Shared Christian Praxis Professional Learning (run by CEB).

In 2020 we had our inaugural Remembrance service which was held on/around All Souls' Day and gave our school and wider community the opportunity to remember and honour people in their lives who have passed in the previous 12 months.

VALUE ADDED

Prayer

We have focussed on having prayer opportunities available to our students. All homerooms now have a dedicated prayer/focus space. Every effort has been made to ensure that there is always a prayer on SIMON for our students and staff to use - RE classes (with their teacher) have responsibility for choosing and putting these on the briefing sheet.

Retreats

Retreats are always an important time of learning and reflection at our school. Our Year 12s were involved in a three-day Retreat to Norval Camp in Halls Gap. Our Year 7 students also had a Retreat in Term 4. This involved students having a number of guest speakers with a First Australian spirituality focus.

LITURGIES/MASSES

Commencement Mass

Our Commencement Mass was held in the school stadium and was a very fitting way to welcome the school community back together. New staff were commissioned and the Year 7s were welcomed into our faith community. Year 12s were introduced to the school community as well.

Our Lady of Mercy Mass

Celebrated in September, our annual Mercy Day Mass reflected on the Feast Day of Our Lady of Mercy and the influence of the Sisters of Mercy on our district and local Catholic Education. In 2020 this was during a time of remote learning. This mass was completed online and live-streamed to our students (at the same time). An invitation was also sent out to our community

inviting them to view this and a recording of the mass was also available for community members.

The Mission Team worked hard to send out to all of our families a 'Mercy Pack' which included a Catherine McAuley bookmark with quotes and some tea and coffee sachets. Our Mass was 'live-streamed' to all in our community with all of our students watching the Mass at the same time on this day.

Social Justice

Lent saw the continued tradition of Mercy Regional College's commitment to supporting Caritas - Project Compassion in our school. An increased focus this year was on informing the students of the story of those the Caritas team have recognised. Information was shared with the students in Religion and Mercy classes. Financial donations were made by the staff and student community to the Project Compassion boxes located in the classrooms as well as supporting the icy pole sales at the Junior Campus.

Winter Sleep Out

In 2020, we run the St Vinnies Winter Sleepout - but this was done a little differently due to COVID and it was completed at home. All participants were involved in an online Google Meet which explained the purpose of the sleepout and some of the St Vinnies projects. Monetary donations were also raised and donated to this cause.

Christmas Appeal

As in past Advent seasons, the staff and students of Mercy Regional College supplied gifts for disadvantaged families in the area. In 2020, we donated gifts to both the Camperdown and Terang conferences of St Vincent De Paul. In 2020, we focused on donating vouchers (rather than piles of gifts) which was very well received by SVDP and is something we will continue going forward.

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

That parent engagement will grow and deepen, by

- Building the partnership with parents around the language and practice of schooling
- Promotion of access to PAM (understanding students' learning).
- Enhancement of the Mercy Parents Consultative Group.
- Improved communication with parents around learning activities.

Continued growth of the Hampden Catholic Schools Network.

Positive promotion of MRC in the wider community.

Achievements

Mercy Regional College has continued to strengthen the essential partnership with parents around the language and practice of schooling. The use of the Parent Access Module (PAM) has been enhanced and is now used as the primary source of information to parents. All student medical information is updated and stored within this module as well as facilitation of approvals for camps, excursions and events, parent teacher interview bookings, student summative assessment and reporting. This has improved efficiencies in administration and providing a benefit to the environment through reduced paper usage.

The Hampden Catholic School Network has continued to grow in effectiveness. A structured system of Grade 5 and Grade 6 networks days were planned to be held at our O'Keeffe Junior campus across the year with educational activities inclusive of STEAM, Science, PE, Art and Technology, Humanities and French. These days not only provide a wonderful opportunity for the students to experience elements of secondary education. In 2020 our planned program was reduced to just two days due to COVID19 restrictions. Staff in Leadership continue to meet regularly with the HCSN staff to collaboratively develop consistency in Catholic identity education programs, child safety and administration processes. The HCSN schools also unite annually in professional development days, although Covid-19 made this difficult in 2020.

Opportunities for parents to be involved in consultative decision-making and bring suggestions for improvement continued to be made available through the Mercy Parents Consultative Group with parent forums being held once each term. A regular small group of parents attended or participated in these sessions. These meetings were moved to a virtual platform when required in 2020.

The "Week Ahead" at the O'Keeffe campus has proved very successful, informative and a well-received communication tool for the Junior School. This means of communication ensures that parents and students are informed of what is to happen in the Junior school in the week to come and provides a source of involvement and dialogue between parents and their children as well as between parents and the Junior school staff. This will be extended to Middle and Senior school families in the future.

Social media platforms inclusive of the College facebook page has continued to develop as both an informative and promotional instrument for the school. The page has seen sustained growth in followers promoting the activities of the school and also facilitating a quasi-alumni forum, utilising old school photographs as a medium for connection.

VALUE ADDED

Curricular and extra-curricular activities:

- Year 11 Melbourne tertiary opportunities exploration
- Year 12 Retreat
- Year 12 Seminar Days
- Year 7 Faith Days
- Year 7 Camp and "My Place" week.
- Year 8 Camp Day activities
- Year 11 "In Conversation" excursion.
- Sport4Life
- Textiles field trip
- Year 7 S.T.E.A.M. excursion
- HSSSD and School Sport Victoria Sports
- Year 11 Presentation Ball
- Year 10 "You the Man" performance
- VCE Outdoor Education Surf and Bush Walk experiences
- Christine Outreach COVID style
- ELEVATE education
- "We Know Your Name But Not Your Story" virtual workshops
- Cyber Bullying and the Law - Virtual
- Year 7 and 8 Legal Aid
- Love the Game , Not the Odds presentation - virtual
- Year 10 Teen Mental Health Course
- Year 9 Street Art
- Junior Spelling Bee
- Year 9 - Sex Young People and the Law Presentation - virtual
- Year 9 Wellways Mental Health Webinar
- Year 11 - 'Steer Right' Road Safety Webinar
- Year 11 - Education & Information Webinar w/ DARE & Headspace
- Mercy Arts and Technology Exhibition 2020 - Virtual
- NAIDOC Week

- Rural Youth Ambassador Program - virtual
- Instrumental Music program

PARENT SATISFACTION

Results from our School Improvement Parent Survey as follows:

Scale for Survey is 1 - Not at All to 7 - All the Time

- Average response for 'The academic standards at this school provide adequate challenge for my child' was 5.5
- Average response for 'My child's homework helps them with their learning' was 4.1
- Average response for 'My child enjoys the learning they do at school' was 4.5
- Average response for 'My child looks forward to going to school' was 4.8
- Average response for 'My child is developing good social skills' was 5.8
- Average response for 'My child gets on well with other students at school' was 6.2
- Average response for 'My child has been teased recently at school' was 2
- Average response for 'There is good two-way communication between the staff and parents at my child's school' was 5.2
- Average response for 'I have an opportunity to get involved in planning and deciding things at this school if I want to' was 4.9
- Average response for 'My child's school reports are very helpful' was 4.1
- Average response for 'Overall, I am satisfied with the education my child receives from their school' was 5.6
- Average response for 'The teachers at my child's school manage student behaviour fairly' was 4.8
- Average response for 'The teachers at my child's school are very good at making learning fun' was 4.1
- Average response for 'The teachers at my child's school are extremely dedicated' was 5.1
- Average response for 'The behaviour of other students interrupts my child's learning' was 3.7
- Average response for 'The staff in this school collaborate effectively with parents to optimise the learning of students' was 5.1
- Average response for 'My child is well prepared for the next stage of their education' was 5.2
- Average response for 'My child attending a Catholic school is very important to me' was 3.3
- Average response for 'Staff at this school are always fair to others' was 3.6

- Average response for 'Students at this school always care about others' was 3.3
- Average response for 'My child has the opportunity to participate in social justice activities' was 4.2

Leadership & Stewardship

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Leadership in a Catholic school is a significant ministry in the mission of the Catholic Church. The school cooperates with the Governing Authority to ensure the leadership and stewardship policies and strategies are aligned to school improvement and support sound management and effective governance of the school. The school and its governing authority ensure that governance responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined, distributed, managed and monitored across the school.

It facilitates a positive climate amongst staff and community and promotes a clear sense of purpose and direction. Resources are effectively utilised to improve student learning outcomes and teacher development. Procedures are implemented which meet the accountability requirements of the System and Federal and State Governments.

That organisational climate will be further strengthened by:

- Continuing to grow a climate in learning and teaching that enacts strong and shared leadership at all levels in the College
- Strengthening middle leadership level capacity

Actions taken to achieve this goal include:

- Increasing face to face professional interaction among staff, between leaders and staff and across leadership
- Preparation and implementation of a Leadership Development Plan.
- Establishment of appropriate mechanisms and opportunities for staff to provide feedback to each other and to leadership.
- Strengthen middle leadership level capabilities

Achievements

Leadership and Stewardship

To create the culture and environment conducive to achieving optimal learning outcomes for all students, we:

- Conducted a consultative review of our Positions of Leadership in order to create the positions needed to lead our staff, students and community to achievement of our school improvement goals across the next three-year POL cycle. A new POL structure was devised with new and renewed positions of leadership and a rigorous appointment process followed.
- Enhanced role clarification within the College for Positions of Leadership with the writing and publication of new position descriptions for all POLs.
- Planned for the implementation of a model of enhanced teacher collaboration through the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
- Enhanced the opportunities for staff voice and collaboration in decision-making through increased opportunities for consultation with a particular focus on Positions of Leadership.
- Encouragement and support for staff to increase their capabilities to teach and lead through participation in professional development inclusive of formal post graduate study:

- REAP - Daniel Lee and Chamon Vogels
- MBAE - Sharon Gillett
- Master of RE - Melanie Bouchier
- Graduate Certificate in Careers Education and Development - Kym Penry
- Improved support for beginning teachers and for teachers new to the school through the development of a documented Staff Induction program and training VIT mentors.
- Provision of quality facilities that enhance engagement and optimise learning and wellbeing outcomes for students and staff.

The College Advisory Board of Management instigated an in-depth consultative process to determine the most appropriate future governing body in preparation for mandated changes to Catholic school governance brought about as a result of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Victorian Government Betrayal of Trust Inquiry. The College consulted with both Mercy Education Limited and the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL). A decision was made by the canonical administrators, Frs Gerry Prunty and Neville Stanislaus, in consultation with the MRC Advisory Board of Management for Mercy Regional College to be governed from 1 January 2021 by DOBCEL.

Mercy Regional College is committed to the provision of quality facilities that enhance engagement and optimise learning and wellbeing outcomes for students and staff. This is achieved through an ongoing program of scheduled building, upgrading and/or replacement as well as regular programmed maintenance. A focus on improving the education facilities at the O'Keeffe campus continued in 2020 planning for the construction of an all weather cover for an outdoor court, court resurfacing and subsequent installation of a water harvesting system to be used for a watering system on the grassed oval space in 2021.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

A range of professional learning took place in 2020. With the restrictions in place many were conducted online. Some examples of professional learning as follows:

- Steve Munby Webinar - Leading in a time of Crisis
- Mercy in the Christian Scriptures Webinar
- Aboriginal Perspectives in The Arts in a Secondary Setting Webinar
- Games Analysis and Fitness Components used in sport - Online
- Maths Pathway - The importance of effective feedback - Online

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2020

32

Average expenditure per teacher for PL

\$154

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Results from our School Improvement Teacher Survey as follows:

Scale for Survey is 1 - Not at All to 7 - All the Time

- Average response for Teachers feeling positive at school was 5.1
- Average response for Teachers feeling stressed at School was 3.5
- Average response for Teachers feeling depressed at School was 2.2

Scale for Survey is 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree

- Average response to 'There is good communication between staff and leaders in this school' was 3.5
- Average response to 'The leaders in this school can be relied upon when things get tough' was 4.1
- Average response to 'The school's leaders have a good understanding of the challenges which occur at my school' was 3.6
- Average response to 'I am always clear about what others in this school expect of me' was 3.5
- Average response to 'I am clear about my professional responsibilities' was 4.2
- Average response to 'There is good teamwork in this school' was 3.7
- Average response to 'Staff frequently discuss and share teaching methods and strategies with each other' was 3.8
- Average response to 'The staff are committed to the school's goals and values' was 3.8
- Average response to 'I am encouraged in my work by praise, thanks or other recognition' was 3.6
- Average response to 'I receive regular feedback from a range of sources about my performance in this school' was 2.7
- Average response to 'There are opportunities in this school for developing new skills' was 3.7
- Average response to 'Staff in this school experience a lot of stress' was 3
- Average response to 'The rules and sanctions relating to discipline in this school are well understood by staff and students' was 3.7
- Average response to 'Students are treated with respect in this school' was 4.4
- Average response to 'Students are generally well-behaved in this school' was 4.1
- Average response to 'Students in this school are always focused on school improvement' was 3.6
- Average response to 'Students at this school are really motivated to learn' was 2.7
- Average response to 'Teaching practice in this school engages students in their learning' was 3.3

- Average response to 'The staff in this school collaborate effectively with parents to optimise the learning of students' was 3.2
- Average response to 'The curriculum in this school is well planned' was 3.4
- Average response to 'Teaching at a Catholic school is very important to me' was 3.9
- Average response to 'This school provides opportunities for me to show compassion to others' was 4.5

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	91.6%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	88.2%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	15.9%
Graduate	43.2%
Graduate Certificate	6.8%
Bachelor Degree	84.1%
Advanced Diploma	13.6%
No Qualifications Listed	9.1%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	4.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	47.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	35.3
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	35.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	27.0
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To continue work on explicitly targeting literacy as a foundation to learning across all Domain areas

- Focus of a whole school PD during the course of the year. Direct towards practical tools to assist students with the breadth of literacy challenges within a unit or task.
- Support for pre-existing and new initiatives E.g. Emphasising reading in English, Exploration of what is working at 'like schools', Modelling of the best practise, literacy a significant consideration.
- Further exploration of opportunities for resourcing literacy across domains and throughout school.

Achievements

Remote Learning

When COVID-19 forced a move to remote schooling, teachers, parents and students were presented with many challenges, not least of which was to adjust in a very short timeframe. This is one of the most significant, abrupt changes to education we have ever seen. As a staff we reflected on the impact of Remote Learning on student learning and on teaching - what does or should it look like now?

It is important to acknowledge that the experiences of Remote Learning and teaching have been different for us all. Just like school or life in general it is not a 'one size fits all' model. Some students thrived, whilst others found it difficult. Certainly the physical distance between teachers and learners presents challenges, but it has also brought opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in other areas. Some who might struggle in regular classes loved working from home, submitted their work on time and had great conversations with their teachers. Others missed the collaboration in class and bouncing ideas off others. Some loved asking questions via Google Meets, yet others found it tricky. Some couldn't wait to get back to school, yet others were anxious about the return, or just loved working from home. The College was responsive to feedback, and made adjustments along the way, especially regarding assessment. We certainly prioritised routine and maintaining connections through Google Classroom activities and Google Meets. We tried to offer tasks that didn't always involve screen time, and encouraged students to be active.

We encouraged students to accept the opportunity to develop their independence and skills in organisation and time management. A particular focus for the second experience of Remote Learning was to help students focus on their independent learning skills, so they became less reliant on the teacher and others for assistance (but with plenty of support should they need it). These are great life skills.

The four-stage learning cycle to learn, try, check and review gives students the opportunity to work on checking their own work to improve their understanding. Teachers still provide support with explanation, feedback and suggestions for checking progress and understanding. There is significant research and evidence on the power of self reflection to help students progress in their learning, and the teaching of these skills is something we incorporated into our lessons.

Literacy Initiatives

Term three saw many examples of excellence in the broad field of literacy at Mercy Regional College. This included the very successful "I Love Literacy week". Once again, an activity that was held remotely and with creative flare!

Google Classroom

Fortunately, we had begun to transition to the Google Suite, specifically the classroom platform during 2018. This shift in pedagogical approach to learning was fortuitous. It provided the perfect base from which to deliver our classes during Remote Learning. This was further enhanced with the introduction of Google Meets, which provided the capacity to connect virtually with our students.

Google Classroom became our main teaching platform, whereby teachers were able to organise & communicate to students, provide learning opportunities and create & deliver assessments. More importantly, Google Classroom allowed teachers to boost collaboration and foster meaningful communication. Whilst each Google Classroom set up looked different, it was the common approach that worked for our students.

For teaching staff, the beginning of the Remote Learning experience was centred around peer-to-peer professional learning, upskilling and supporting each other as they navigated the shift to online learning. It resulted in an initial increase in workload, however it provided the ability for learning continuity at a time of uncertainty. Google Classroom ensured our capacity for teachers to engage and integrate our Learning Support Officers into their classrooms. Feedback around this was overwhelmingly positive.

A review of our initial Remote Learning experience identified what worked best for our students & staff. It was short explicit instruction, with modelled examples and guided independent learning tasks. Adjustments were made. As Remote Learning continued, our Learning team developed an in-house Professional Learning platform within Google Classroom. It was a space for staff to share and support each other.

A Push for Brain Breaks and the Important role they play in learning

Certainly one of the silver linings of working from home was the opportunity for students to do different things in their day. Whilst some parents requested more work for their children, we were mindful to build in time for things other than screen time - drawing, cooking, playing with pets, physical activities and doing things with family. Research shows that breaks can provide more than rest; they can boost creativity, cognitive function, relationships, connection and social skills. Breaks are actually a key part of learning, helping students process what they've learned by consolidating memories and making connections to other ideas. Physical activity breaks, such as a short exercise break in the classroom or during recess, also reduce stress and increase blood flow and oxygenation to the brain, helping to keep students' brains sharp, healthy, and active.

Brain breaks have been trialled and incorporated into classroom lessons over the past twelve months at Mercy Regional College and remote learning feedback from students reinforces the importance of making these an integral part of our classroom practice moving forward.

Many students have noted the benefits of these breaks to help them feel happier and more connected to their learning and engagement with activities and completing tasks. Our students valued the opportunity to utilise brain breaks at home that were unique to home and their interests. There was great sharing of these experiences with peers and teachers to get to know their students' interests in a more meaningful way.

2020 VCE Results

Congratulations to all students on the very good results that Mercy Regional College achieved in last year's VCE studies. Dux of the College was Hayley Wason.

Subject Selection

Across the third term, most students from Year 8 - 11 were heavily involved with subject selection briefings and interviews ahead of 2021. This process is very important as it provides the opportunity for dialogue between students, parents and College staff on the best pathway and subject offerings for each child. A fundamental tenet of Mercy Regional College is personalised learning and this time of the year is a key part of that process.

Parent Teacher Student Interviews

Parent Teacher Interviews for 2020 were very different to any other year. With restrictions around on-site guests there was a need for creative conversations between Students, Parents and Teachers. All parties had certainly been involved in Google meets (or the likes) to some capacity and this gave MRC an opportunity to explore this style, not only for the 2020 year but for the years to come. Having some parents travel up to and over 50km, it was a well-received option.

Parent/Teacher/Student conversations are an essential means of nourishing the educational partnership that exists between the College and parents who are the first educators of their children.

Feedback from both parents and staff was that the option for on-line meets should continue to be available to families.

Vocational Education and Applied Learning

Our Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) course continues to be highly regarded and commended for its innovation and ability to engage students to learn from across the state and nationally. Leading the VCAL team in 2020 was Mrs Rose Henry, Mrs Lydia Darcy and Mr Daniel Glennen. The development of new options for students reflects their capacities to 'think outside the square' and work diligently to achieve goals.

The option of completing Vocational Education & Training (VET) courses has been offered, once again, to our Year 10 and 11 students. These VET courses provide the opportunity for students to undertake a diverse range of studies that otherwise would not be accessed via the VCE. Students are able to access VET courses through the College, South West TAFE, Corangamite Trade Training Cluster and other VET providers. Mercy facilitates a growing number of VET courses on-site inclusive this year of Furnishing, Building and Construction and Hospitality.

Oratory Competitions

The end of term 3 saw the completion of the Junior and Middle School Oratory Competitions and, like previous years, the standard of performance was simply outstanding. The quality of the speakers is a fine testament both to the students and the work they had put in as well as the important role played by their English teachers. Once again, thinking with our creative hats on, all students performed in their classrooms to their peers with no overall winners announced.

Once again a vast range of engaging topics were available for students to present on. Such topics included:

- Lockdown/The pandemic has taught us...
- Learning from your mistakes is the best education.
- Christmas is just a way for businesses to increase their sales.
- Truck drives are the backbone of the Australian Economy.

- Roll-bars should be fitted to all farm vehicles

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

MEDIAN NAPLAN RESULTS FOR YEAR 9		*
Year 9 Grammar & Punctuation		
Year 9 Numeracy		
Year 9 Reading		
Year 9 Spelling		
Year 9 Writing		

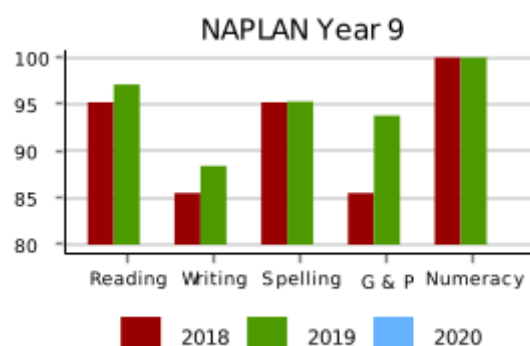
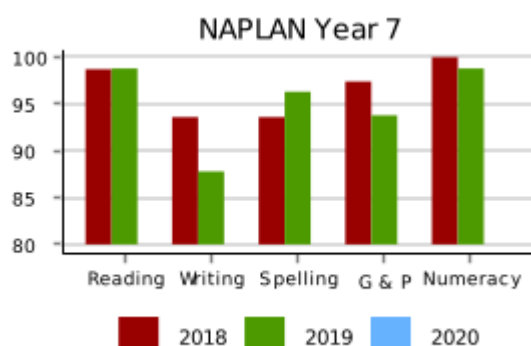
* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018 %	2019 %	2018 – 2019 Changes %	2020 %	2019 – 2020 Changes %
				*	*
YR 07 Grammar & Punctuation	97.4	93.8	-3.6		
YR 07 Numeracy	100.0	98.8	-1.2		
YR 07 Reading	98.7	98.8	0.1		
YR 07 Spelling	93.6	96.3	2.7		
YR 07 Writing	93.6	87.8	-5.8		
YR 09 Grammar & Punctuation	85.5	93.8	8.3		
YR 09 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 09 Reading	95.2	97.1	1.9		
YR 09 Spelling	95.2	95.3	0.1		
YR 09 Writing	85.5	88.4	2.9		

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Through the Mercy tradition, we commit ourselves to caring for each other.

We will endeavor to:

- Support student growth through the implementation of the Positive Behaviour management plan
- Work with students to allow a forum for students' voices to be heard.
- Look to further enhance the wellbeing program in the school (M.E.R.C.Y)
- Implementation of programs that respond to current student community issues that may arise.

Achievements

POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE (P.M.A)

This program was initiated and implemented by our senior student leaders within the college. Leaders were able to continue this program over Remote Learning. This involved raising awareness of our mental health through short clips recorded by the leaders. These clips were then shown throughout our school community via email and facebook. This not only allowed our student leaders the opportunity to address various issues around mental health however, it also created a platform for them to share important information to assist with a positive mental health among our school community.

TEEN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

The College once again hosted a Teen Mental Health First Aid course in November for all Year 10 students. The course was led by Suzi Stropin, Mental Health Australia Facilitator. The college was successful in securing a grant from South West Health to cover the cost of the course. The 3.5-hour Teen MHFA course taught our students how to provide mental health first aid to support their friends. The course has been developed in response to research indicating that young people have a preference for sharing problems with peers. Students were equipped with skills and knowledge to address mental health challenges faced by teens.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR PROGRAM

This year we moved away from lunchtime detentions to lunchtime behaviour reflection sessions. This is based around Restorative Practice and was used throughout the program to ensure personal student growth in their social/emotional behaviour. This system supported both staff and students by developing student engagement and positive relationships between all students and staff. It allowed opportunity for students to reflect on their behaviour with the support of staff.

CHILD SAFETY COMMITTEE

The continuation of this committee occurred in 2020 with representatives from St Patrick's Primary School and Mercy Regional College. We met once a term to discuss any child safety matters. It was imperative that both schools came together to form this committee as the common site is shared by both schools. The committee members are Principals, Sharon Gillett, Michael McKenzie and Assistant Principals, Claire Wrigley and Annie Judd

STUDENT ADVOCACY & AGENCY

Regular Student Voice meetings occurred throughout the year allowing students the opportunity to discuss any matter they felt important in the school. These meetings continued in remote learning via Google Meet. Students worked to make a change to the College hat, by surveying students, researching sunsmart hats and taking into consideration costs and look with the uniform. A hybrid hat was agreed upon and will be part of the school uniform in 2021.

STAFF WELLBEING

Throughout remote learning staff were supported by leadership team buddies. Contact was made with our staff to ensure a strong connection with school continued even during time away from the physical environment of school. Visits were also made to all staff during remote learning by one of the leadership team members. Staff also had the opportunity in remote learning to join in on a yoga session on R U Ok day and time to participate in an activity that they enjoy doing.

M.E.R.C.Y (Mindfulness, Empathy, Resilience, Care, You)

Throughout the year we developed and planned a MERCY pastoral care program that included programs such as Resilience Project, Respectful Relationships and Positive Education for 2021. This program has been designed with content in the current program and further developed with a focus on respectful relationships. Staff have access to a program from Year 7-12 that have varied themes to assist with the wellbeing of our students. This program will be completed with a school diary from Year 7-9 that will include lessons from the Resilience Program to complete the MERCY lessons.

VALUE ADDED

A selection of Staff Wellbeing programs offered during the year:

- Mercy Regional College staff induction programs
- Celebrating milestones within the staff as well as taking time to remember those who have passed away.
- MRC R U Ok day activities
- Workplace Mental Health First Aid course
- Various staff activities such as staff challenges, staff appreciation activities and social gatherings
- Remote learning staff support program

A selection of Parent Wellbeing programs offered during the year:

- Junior school - Welcome evening
- Access to Wellbeing information and e-safety information on the Mercy website, giving parents up to date information as well as after hour phone numbers they may need.
- Regular information on college newsletter
- Access to information via google meet and virtual presentations

A selection of Student Wellbeing programs offered during the year:

- Year 7 Camp

- Year 8 Activities day in lieu of school camp
- Year 11 Road safety presentation
- Year 10 Love the Game presentation - connection between gaming & gambling
- Year 9 Melbourne Experience Camp
- Year 11 Melbourne University/TAFE camp
- Resilience Project Lessons
- Positive Education Lessons
- Mental health presentations from Wellways
- Presentation from Legal Aid - Online laws
- Presentation for Year 11 students from Headspace and DARE
- Year 12 Retreat
- R U Ok Day
- Bullying No Way Day

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Results from our School Improvement Student Survey as follows:

Scale for Survey is 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree

- Average response for 'I feel good about being a student at this school' was 3.4
- Average response for 'My teachers provide help and support when it is needed' was 3.4
- Average response for 'My teachers put a lot of energy into teaching our class' was 3.4
- Average response for 'My teachers make learning interesting' was 3
- Average response for 'I think I am generally successful at school' was 3.2
- Average response for 'Continuing or completing my education is important to me' was 3.7
- Average response for 'I get on really well with most of my classmates' was 3.9
- Average response for 'I have been teased in an unpleasant way recently at my school' was 2
- Average response for 'The behaviour of some students in class makes it hard for me to do my work' was 2.8
- Average response for 'Being at a Catholic school is very important to me' was 2.1
- Average response for 'At this school I have the opportunity to learn about the Catholic faith' was 3.7

- Average response for 'Staff at this school always care about others' was 3.6
- Average response for 'This school provides opportunities for me to show compassion to others' was 3.4
- Average response for 'This school raises my awareness of social justice issues' was 3.2

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Attendance rolls are kept for all classes and study periods. Parents of students who are absent are required to contact the College on the day of the absence by 9.00am via phone or PAM. Extended absences must be requested in writing to the Principal. Students who arrive late are required to sign in at reception. If a student is absent from school and no reason has been provided this will necessitate a SMS message from the College. Parents are requested to respond to the SMS message with an explanation for the student's absence.

YEARS 9 – 12 STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Years 9 to 12 Student Retention Rate	72.2%
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AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y07	91.4%
Y08	93.0%
Y09	91.5%
Y10	91.0%
Overall average attendance	91.7%

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES

VCE Median Score	26.0
VCE Completion Rate	100.0%
VCAL Completion Rate	97.0%

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS AS AT 2020	
Tertiary Study	29.0%
TAFE / VET	25.0%
Apprenticeship / Traineeship	11.0%
Deferred	7.0%
Employment	25.0%
Other – The category of Other includes both students Looking for Work and those classed as Other	0.0%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

As a result of Ministerial Order No. 870, all schools (Catholic, Government and Independent) were required to respond to a number of Child Safe Standards - seven in total. The Catholic Education Office Ballarat provided all diocesan schools with significant support in this endeavour in the form of templates, workshops - in person and through videoconferencing - as well as the support of Education Consultants.

Achievements

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including effective leadership arrangements

- College website includes a statement of commitment to child safety.
- Assistant Principal -Claire Wrigley gave a presentation to all students about child safety and help seeking advice for any child abuse matters.
- Formation of the e-safety committee.
- Child Protection Officers - Claire Wrigley & Chadley Peerman
- Creation of a Child Safety Standing Committee at Leadership level in collaboration with St Patrick's PS.

Standard 2: A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety in the school

- We have adopted and accepted a child safety policy (found on the school's website).
- We have developed and adopted a child friendly version of the Child Safety Policy

Standard 3: A child safety Code of Conduct

- All staff sign the Code of Conduct annually.
- This Code is explained annually to all staff of the College.

Standard 4: School staff selection, supervision & management practices for a child safe environment

- MRC is complying with the new CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools.
- Include processes for advertising, a new teaching role description, reference checks, induction program.
- A school register for contractors, cleaner and visitors to the college
- Staff Induction program - outlining of Child Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Standard 5: Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of expected abuse.

- Processes as recommended by CEO Ballarat.
- Complaints Policy ratified.
- Staff informed of child safety procedures at a Staff Meeting in Term 1.
- Key to this is a new 'PROTECT' document developed across systems

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

- A risk management strategy has been introduced that identifies risks to children and to grade & allow action on these risks in a timely manner.
- The formation of the Child safety Committee.
- Staff complete a mandatory reporting online module annually.

Standard 7: Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

- Mercy Regional College has a range of pre-existing programs, policies and resources that already act to facilitate this standard.
- Students are invited to the opportunity to participate in the Student Voice Committee at the College