

# Damascus College Mount Clear

## 2022 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 265

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## Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Steven Mifsud, attest that Damascus 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 2022 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in both Ministerial Orders in effect in 2022:
  - Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, in Semester 1, 2022;
  - Ministerial Order No.1359 - Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises, in Semester 2, 2022.

24/03/2023

**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](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

## Governing Authority Report

The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) is now in its second year of governance of schools. In 2022 two additional schools - Damascus College and St Francis Xavier transferred their governance to DOBCEL, a total 58 schools in the Diocese are governed by DOBCEL.

Across our diocese, schools governed by DOBCEL provide distinctive Catholic education from the Murray to the Sea. This support is operationalised by Catholic Education Ballarat and is responsible for the implementation of DOBCEL strategies, policies and procedures, and overseeing the day to day running of our schools.

The role of DOBCEL is to lead, provide service to, and partner with schools to enable every student to flourish and every student, staff member and family to experience the presence of the risen Christ in our schools.

We recognise the extraordinary servant leadership of all our school staff, leaders and Principals during 2022 as they supported their school communities through a myriad of challenges that included staff shortages, covid disruption, implications of widespread flooding and Enterprise Bargaining negotiations. We recognise the commitment and focus all school staff give to the students and families in their care in the spirit of the Gospels. Their commitment has been unwavering.

We thank families for their commitment to partnership with our schools in Catholic Education again in 2022 to support all our students to flourish.

Tom Sexton

Executive Director

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited

## Vision and Mission

Damascus College is a dynamic Christ-centred learning community that values each member and is committed to inspiring and challenging students to reach their potential and contribute confidently to the global community.

## College Overview

Damascus College, established in 1995, has a long and rich tradition of more than 140 years, with its origin in three foundation Colleges, dating back to 1881: Sacred Heart College (1881) and St Martin's in the Pines (1967), which were owned and administered by the Sisters of Mercy, and St Paul's Technical College (1948) which was a diocesan school conducted by the Christian Brothers at the invitation of the Bishop.

Damascus College formed when these three schools amalgamated in 1995. Damascus College is governed by Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL). As Ballarat's only Catholic co-educational secondary college, Damascus College offers innovative and progressive learning and teaching that inspires and challenges students to be their best and to contribute confidently to the global community.

Offering a diverse curriculum that caters for various post-secondary pathways, providing young people with a solid foundation on which to build their lives, the school offers an education that focuses on the development of the whole person.

The College understands that each student has individual learning needs, with the aim to provide classroom activities that differentiate their abilities and learning styles. Students are encouraged to participate in all activities available at the College, regardless of their skill level, as we firmly believe that a well-rounded education provides young people with the agency to be their best.

A co-educational setting reflects real-world communities and workplaces, setting students up to thrive and succeed after their Damascus education. Catholic co-education cultivates mutual respect, inclusiveness, understanding and support for one another, and it grows an understanding of the human dignity of every individual. At Damascus, learning programs are designed to assist the way students think, learn, and collaborate. Students can realise and appreciate their own individual style and values, as well as those around them.

Damascus College is able to offer students a contemporary learning environment only 7km from the Ballarat CBD, with access to innovative technology, flexible and modern classrooms, and ample open space and bushland. Students graduate from Damascus College with a strong sense of their own identity and worth, and an appreciation of Christianity in the Catholic tradition.

## Principal's Report

Our College theme for 2022, 'To abide in God's love,' has been lived, celebrated and embraced by the Damascus community. We have been people of Christ – working together and challenging one another to be people who demonstrate our commitment, values and attitudes to be beacons of Christ's light. Our students have modelled a deep love for social justice, to be people who can make a difference to their world and to embrace change. At Damascus, like St Paul, we are a community who build, challenge, and support one another to grow and to be the best version of ourselves each day. Whilst we have been confronted by the pandemic and associated challenges, we have grown, matured, and learnt from our experience as a community. As reflective learners, we sought new ways to work together, to be the face of Christ and to be authentic witnesses of the word of Christ.

It has been year of transition and change at Damascus. We farewelled much loved principal Mr Matthew Byrne after thirteen years of distinguished service, as he transitioned to his new role as Deputy Executive Director at the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education. In the Interim Mr Chris Grant took the helm for the first semester. I would like to thank the following staff for their willingness to accept the challenge to lead and to lead with courage and conviction. Christopher Grant as Interim Principal, Ashwin Pillai as Interim Deputy Principal, Alysoun Smalley Interim Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching, Daniel Jans and Hannah Keating in their respective roles of Interim Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing

It has been a year of uncertainty and challenge. This has been our first full academic school year after the COVID pandemic; this is the first time in two years that we have been able to remain in the classroom for the whole twelve months. This experience has been both rewarding and fatiguing.

I am grateful for the gift of this community. A community where staff believe and are proud of our students, who promote the best learning experiences for our students and one another. I see both humble and passionate students about their friends and family. Our young people are joy-filled and engage with one another with a sense of purpose and energy. Damascus is a community – a community of learners, a place of welcome and hospitality.

We have orchestrated a plethora of opportunities for our students to find and enjoy. These opportunities enable our students to be in the groove of an activity, event, or experience, therefore, finding intrinsic happiness: to grow and to take risks. Deep learners take risks, persevere, and learn from feedback. I congratulate each student who had the tenacity to take risks.

In the past twelve months, as we have reset our learning culture, our ways of working and what it means to be at Damascus, I can recollect a number of key events that affirm who we are as a community of learners: Damascus Day, the celebration of our faith, the gathering of our community for the fete, hearing and seeing our debaters compete, being part of the Year 11 Retreat and seeing and hearing our young people engage with Chris Doyle, to view Clue, the College Production, the Year 12 Music and Drama Ensembles, the many music concerts, our Middle Year students support our Maths Games with the primary schools, the VCE Visual Arts Exhibition, College Assemblies where we heard the voices and instruments of our young people, rowing on the Yarra, young people at the Energy Breakthrough Challenge at Maryborough; all people stepping outside of themselves. There is so much to be proud and grateful for and to see the passion and love. I have witnessed young people giving their best. I have only witnessed this for six months, but I just want to affirm each student for their endeavours. It is determination that brings us success in our lives.

The Year 12 class of 2022 have been an awesome group of young men and women, and I thank them for all they have been to our College. To the Year 12's, I am sure they will take life-long friendships and an appreciation of our loving God and welcoming church from their secondary education. I thank those families who conclude their time with Damascus College for being a part of our community.

Our student leaders have acted as role models to younger students and are repeatedly called upon to be ambassadors for the College. The calibre of our student leaders is a wonderful strength of our community. It gives me immense pleasure to acknowledge these two fine young ambassadors of our college community, College Captains Lewis Clark, and Megan O'Beirne, who have made a wonderful impact on school life.

As a school community, we thank them for their contribution to student leadership.

I would like to thank our parents, families and friends of Damascus College who have worked in partnership with us. I, too like the African proverb, believe it takes a village to grow a child, it takes many people to nurture, challenge and support young people – we are grateful for their companionship.

I thank our talented and committed staff who work to bring the College vision to life. It has been a challenging year, but our staff have worked together to grow and deepen our community.



## Catholic Identity and Mission

### Goals and Intended Outcomes

In the area of Faith and Catholic Identity, the Strategic Directions of the College 2021-2025 state that:

At Damascus College, we are committed to a shared vision and values inspired by biblical and Damascus College traditions, demonstrated by -

- Be. My. Best. Requires an inclusive community of respectful dialogue that enriches faith and deepens celebration of our Catholic tradition.

The Strategic Directions for Damascus College, 2021-25 focused on Leadership-in-faith which is about the ongoing formation of our Christian faith community. Leadership-in-faith is about the joy of the Gospel, and it is our point of difference. Leadership-in-faith is about encountering Christ, growing spirituality and responding in mission. After the coronavirus pandemic experience, 2022's theme seemed most appropriate: ', to abide in God's love.' God is with us on our journey. In the Spirit and with Jesus as our guide, our Christian faith gives soul to restorative justice, to student wellbeing and to teaching and learning in an atmosphere of resilience, so we may be our best. Even so, and with great creativity in prayer and reflection, in social justice, and in faith development and sustainability, strategic plans were attended to with strength and courage.

'By 2025, we will be an inclusive community of respectful dialogue that enriches faith and deepens the celebration of our Catholic tradition'. In coming years these will be explored using the following strategic priorities:

- Extending a recontextualised and joyful exploration of the encounters that lead to, and express, faith
- Developing a merciful embrace of our global responsibilities, including sustainability, First Nations people and multiculturalism
- Building life-giving relationships of integrity, justice and peace

The data from the School Improvement Framework survey conducted in early third term 2022 among students, parents and staff showed that the College is on an upward projection in Catholic School Culture for students and staff. A fuller evaluation of that data is pending.

### Achievements

The achievement of the College are listed under the appropriate element of the strategic directions.

#### 1. Shared Vision and Values inspired by biblical and Damascus College traditions

The vision of the College and the values that underpin it, are critical to the life of the College and need to be named, proclaimed, understood and strategically worked toward.

The annual themes taken from the sacred texts of the Catholic Church are a clear expression of the biblical underpinnings of the College. In the period of this strategic directions statement, they have reflected our foundations in Christ, in mercy, in justice and in good works.

2016 God's Mercy endures forever (Psalm 136)

2017 To Live by the Light of Christ (College Motto)

2018 Never Become Tired of Being Good (2 Thess 3:13)

2019 Who do you say that I am? (Luke 9:20)

2020 Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)

2021 Be strong and courageous; for God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

2022 Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit (John 15: 5).

The themes provide focus for liturgy, study and reflection and a footing from which to move strategically to becoming an authentic Catholic school.

The College has in-house longitudinal data collection processes in the area of Catholic Vision and Mission that is in itself a strong indicator of commitment to valuing data in the expression of achievement.

Our data from the Year 7 Parent Survey continues to be positive in relation to the core values of the College. Parents are asked to rate the College on how well it fosters relationships based on respect, responsibility, honesty, truth and inclusion. These parents are able to acknowledge that Damascus College is authentic in its teaching of Catholic values.

### **Religious Education**

The Religious Education curriculum invites all students to enter into a process of encounter and dialogue with the God of the Catholic Tradition in a manner that is respectful and authentic to all who attend the College. Units of work are planned and implemented according to Diocesan expectations, the Awakenings Curriculum, and work is assessed and reported on appropriately.

## **2. Providing Leadership-In-Faith Opportunities for Students, Staff and the Broader Community**

### **Toward Youth Ministry in Schools**

In the Year of Youth 2018, the College chose to invest in research into Youth Ministry in Schools processes. In 2020-21 the Project Officer, Sally Murphy, worked tirelessly on presentations to the principal, the Religious Education Faculty and the Catholic Vision and Values Sub-committee of the Damascus College Board and the general staff. Contacts were maintained with CSYMI and Australian Catholic University's La Salle Academy for Faith Formation and Religious Education. Their program, Spiritus, was chosen as the vehicle for training Damascus College staff in readiness for the development of the launch that did eventuate in 2022. In third term a Reflection Day was conducted with Fr Rob Galea of the Sandhurst Diocese (FRG Ministries) in the Damascus Events Centre.

### **Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic Prayer experiences**

Our Lady of Mercy Chapel was blessed by Bishop Paul Bird at the conclusion of the opening Mass on Friday 14 February 2014 and since then the chapel continues to be a focus for significant liturgy and prayer experiences. This includes Staff prayer on Thursday mornings in the chapel using the Lectio Divina prayer form based on the gospel reading for the following Sunday as well as year level Masses and class prayer.

### **Christian Prayer and Leadership-in-Faith**

In 2022 the Damascus College Prayer Book continued to be made available for all staff members as a resource to support prayer in the Catholic Christian Tradition. The Prayer Book was used to

enhance staff gatherings and in TA times, even when learning was only online. At Damascus College, all meetings begin with a prayer that reflects the faith underpinnings of the College.

### **Accreditation**

Recent years have seen a significant intake of teachers new to Catholic education and the retirement of some longer-term staff members. In 2021, a change in the Accreditation Policy to a more ongoing approach to professional learning in the critical area of Catholic identity supported by the Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP) was introduced. The new policy is named, "Accreditation to Teach or Teach Religious Education or Lead in Catholic Schools in Victoria." In 2021, three staff members complete their second year of the two years of study through the Religious Education Accreditation Program (REAP) program. The longer-term efforts in staff faith development are coming to fruition.

## **3. Ensuring That the Gospel and Catholic Traditions Are Understood As Guidance and Support for Life**

### **Retreat / Reflection Day program**

We were pleased to offer Year Level Retreats for students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 and were able to use local resources and venues to deepen our students' faith experiences. Our students were able to be companioned by their classroom RE teachers to deepen their faith and to know their God in a deeper more personal manner.

### **Staff Faith Development Day**

Damascus College Staff Faith Development Day was led by Dr Robyn Horner and colleagues from ACU to unpack our Enhancing Catholic School Identity Data. The staff were presented with the data from our survey and were able to unpack key aspects of the report and to deeply understand the implications of being a Catholic school in the Mercy Tradition. In the afternoon our staff were able to participate in a number of workshops that explored the role of a Catholic school in contemporary Australia. Our seminar explored the prophetic challenge that, in the end, life is a spiritual journey in God's mercy, a journey that promises peace and hope and joy.

## **4. Personal and Community Responses to God's Call in Today's World Expressed as Social Justice**

### **College's Commitment to Social Justice and Sustainability**

The social justice processes continued Year 7 Mercy and Eucharist Program, the Year 8 Justice and Eucharist Program, The Seeds of Justice overnight programs and the Streetwise Sleepover were relaunched 2022. The student-based Justice Action Group managed to conduct appeals for Project Compassion. Catholic Mission and St Vincent de Paul Winter and Christmas Appeals.

The College continues to keep our friends at Santa Maria in Timor Leste in mind. It is unclear where the future of the relationship lies, but the College hopes to maintain this connection. The development of a Reconciliation Action Plan developed much momentum in 2022. The College was able to submit the Reconciliation Action Plan and had organised for the installation of three flagpoles symbolising our connection to Australia, Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Christian Personal Development Award**

The Christian Personal Development Award (CPDA) began at Damascus College in May 2003. The 38th Year 10 CPDA Introductory Program concluded in May 2021. The program introduces

the students to a certificate that they can aim to achieve in their final years of schooling at the College.

The Year 12 class of 2022 were the eighteenth group of graduating students to achieve the Christian Personal Development Award (CPDA). The CPDA is awarded to students who have completed 120 hours of personal development activities balanced across the four categories: Action for Social Justice/Community Service; Spiritual Development; Physical Pursuits, Other Personal Development Activities. The CPDA has become the backbone to extra-curricula experience in the senior school. The Awards were presented to all Year 12 students at Graduation.

#### VALUE ADDED

- Retreats
- Year 12 Retreat
- Reflection Days
- SEED events
- Theology Workshops for staff
- Fundraising for Timor Leste
- Winter Sleep out

## Learning and Teaching

### Goals and Intended Outcomes

This report presents an overview of the strategic directions of Be.My.Best. and outlines the priorities and action plans for the years ahead. Be.My.Best. has identified the need for a learning culture that empowers learners to thrive in and shape their current and future world. This report focuses on the strategic priorities and the learning and teaching action plan that aims to achieve this culture of learning.

**Strategic Priorities:** Be.My.Best. has identified three strategic priorities to achieve its aspiration statement. The first priority is to achieve agency for life at school and beyond through the development of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) capabilities and its contribution towards the learners' development of deeper learning competencies. The second priority is to recognise that educators are co-agents in a mutually supportive relationship that helps all learners progress towards their valued goals. The third priority is to create a culture supported by educators committed to their professional growth in the learner's best interests.

**Learning and Teaching Action Plan:** The Learning and Teaching Action Plan focuses on improving student achievement by using what the organisation already knows about its learners and supporting them to improve literacy and numerical literacy outcomes through an explicit pedagogical focus on SEL and instructional skills. This has led to the development of driving questions that aim to achieve the goals in the action plan.

### Driving Questions:

1. Why is it important to foster a learning community with a common language of instruction?
2. How can we create a common language and practice of teachers that explicitly focuses on our students' acquisition of SEL skills and implementation of High Impact Teaching Strategies as a core practice?
3. How can we differentiate the learning needs of individual teachers?
4. How will we anchor highly effective teaching practices and strategies into our learning programs?

### Intended Goals for Learning and Teaching:

1. Use of data: VCE, On Demand, SPT, and NAPLAN to drive the improvement of VCE results as well as Year level of Literacy and Numeracy growth. This will in turn support:
  - The basis of the development of the Literacy Program to be implemented in 2023.
  - Accelerated Interviews to be streamlined for efficiency in the process of selection.
  - Subject Selections processes to provide greater support for staff, students and families in choosing the best pathway forward for their students.
  - Identifying academically vulnerable students and providing the necessary support through the Tutoring Funding Program to support students post COVID.
  - Plan for Literacy and Numeracy interventions through the floater program for Years 7-9 in Mathematics and English based on PAT R and M data.
2. Introduce the ESTEEM Program review in Term 2.
3. Cross-Curricular: Sustainability Racing Team promotion post-COVID.

4. Student Literacy and Numeracy Project - Command Terms and Text Types introduced in all Learning Areas.
5. Create a consistent model for Work Programs.
6. Investing in the subject selection process to ensure students' pathways choices in the senior years and career direction.
  - TA increase for 2022 (including Year 12 students)
  - 2022 VCAL Year A increase by 100%
  - Focus on Damascus highlighted pathway (Health Services) - Strengthening Allied Health
7. Careers review in Term 1 2022 with the aim of providing 1:1 interactions with student in Year 11 and 12.
8. Promoting Alternate Pathways (VCAL, HoLP, and preparing for a Vocational Major).
9. Strengthening the PLC model post COVID and conducting a review to improve staff commitment, empowerment, and accountability in relation to High Impact Teaching and SEL instruction.
10. Identified the need for a Professional Growth Plan through the introduction of MyPlan.
11. Introduce SLANP (Student Literacy and Numeracy Project)
  - Command Terms
  - Text Types
  - Collation of Exemplar Models of assessment tasks (Low, Medium and High)

## Achievements

The College Instructional Leader led the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) utilising the Timperley Model, which has successfully brought forward the importance of collaboration in the students' interest. The PLCs focused on attaining data in a particular area of literacy/numeracy and introducing intervention strategies to build capacity in those areas. The goal was to improve student learning outcomes by focusing on the needs of individual students and supporting teachers to develop targeted interventions to meet those needs.

A consistent work program was developed, to be engaged in 2023. This program provides greater consistency of practice and visibility for teaching staff. In addition, a Learning and Teaching portal was developed to improve access to documentation and resources. The portal is a one-stop-shop for staff to collaborate on work programs and resources and access the quarterly Learning and Teaching News. The portal includes professional development opportunities endorsed by the College and links to exemplars and models of student work as part of the LibGuide resources.

The Focused Pathway Program in Year 10 was reviewed in Term 2 in line with the process for subject selections in Term 3. The College HoLP program also strengthened, which has assisted fourteen students to access the Vocational Major (VM) program in 2023.

Data from multiple sources to enrich decisions about professional learning that can lead to increased results for every student. Multiple sources include quantitative and qualitative data, such as common formative and summative assessments, performance assessments (On-Demand, Tests and Exams), observations, work samples, and performance metrics (NAPLAN, Secondary Placement Testing, PAT-R and PAT-M, VCE Analysis). The use of these multiple sources of data offers a balanced and more comprehensive analysis of student, teacher, and system performance than any single type or source of data can.

In 2022, the immediate and profound impact on learning and teaching from COVID was apparent. As waves of physical distancing restrictions and public health measures constrained face-to-face teaching, Damascus College focused on returning to the new COVID normal. Unlike in 2021, staff were more confident moving into a familiar forum and bringing new learnings from remote learning experience. This involved explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy outcomes. Professional Learning Communities continued their focus on high-impact teaching strategies in a remote environment. They also considered developing strategies to engage students struggling with remote learning, which may have dipped under the radar in the previous year.

Tutoring was introduced through the legislative funding model and focused on engaging students identified as school refusers or who had prolonged absences in specific curriculum areas.

The report indicates a slight decline in the number of Year 12 VCE students at the end of 2022, with 115 students compared to 119 students at the start of the year. However, the number of VCAL students who successfully completed the program was 32. The gender breakdown of the students who sat for the exams shows that there were more females than males. Considering the implications of post COVID-19, our Year 12 students finished the year strongly. It is fantastic to see upward movement in the median ATAR again, reflective of everyone's work to support students into the best pathways, both in VCE and VCAL.

The ATAR statistics for the year indicate that the median and mean scores were higher for females than males. The highest ATAR score was achieved with a score of 99.75.

The comparison of the results over the past five years shows that Damascus College has maintained a steady median and mean ATAR score. However, the range of scores has decreased, indicating that the results have become more consistent over the years.

The NAPLAN and PAT R results analysis shows that there has been positive growth in the bottom 10th percentile, indicating the effectiveness of the support and programs provided by the Diverse Learning Team. However, the top 10th percentile growth is less than the state, highlighting the need to evaluate the current enrichment/advanced programs offered in literacy and numeracy and broadening of diverse learning.

Overall, the VCE results for Damascus College in 2022 were satisfactory, with a median ATAR score of 66.1. However, the analysis of the NAPLAN and PAT R results suggests that there is a need to focus on the top 10th percentile growth to improve the results further. The College's growth over the past five years has been consistent, and it has been ranked in the top 31% of secondary schools in Victoria based on growth.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In 2021, the scores for Reading and Numeracy remained the same as the previous year, while Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation scores improved. By 2022, there was a slight improvement in Spelling and Numeracy, while Reading, Writing, Grammar and Punctuation scores remained relatively stable.

At the national level, there was a decline in Reading and Numeracy scores from 2018 to 2021, while Spelling, Writing, Grammar and Punctuation scores remained the same. It is unclear how the national scores fared in 2022, as the data is not provided.

At the state level, there was a decline in Numeracy scores from 2018 to 2021, while Spelling, Writing, Grammar and Punctuation scores remained relatively stable. However, in 2022, there was an improvement in state-level scores for Spelling and a slight decrease in Numeracy.

At the school level, scores were declining across all subjects from 2018 to 2021, except Writing, which remained relatively stable. In 2022, there was an improvement in Spelling scores and a slight improvement in Numeracy, while Reading, Writing, and Grammar and Punctuation scores remained relatively stable.

The College PLCs will continue to focus on high-impact teaching strategies, indicating that the school is committed to providing quality education to its students. For 2023, the school has determined that targeted reading intervention will be implemented at each year level, which suggests that the school recognises the importance of literacy development in all students.

The school has also secured funding through a legislative funding model to continue tutoring for students who are identified as school refusers or those who have had prolonged absences in specific curriculum areas. This approach highlights the school's commitment to ensuring that all students receive an education tailored to their needs. The focus on building key literacy and numeracy areas for these students indicates a dedication to providing foundational skills that will enable students to succeed in all areas of their academic and personal lives.

#### MEDIAN NAPLAN RESULTS FOR YEAR 9

Year 9 Grammar and Punctuation	565.4
Year 9 Numeracy	574.6
Year 9 Reading	577.8
Year 9 Spelling	568.8
Year 9 Writing	560.2

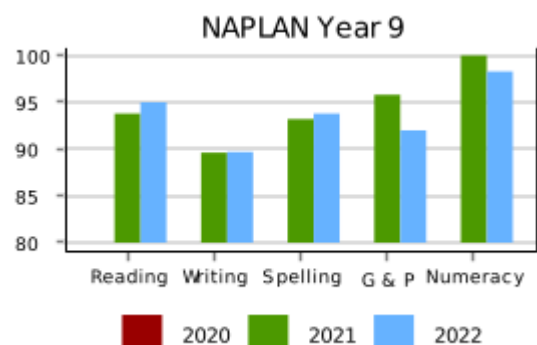
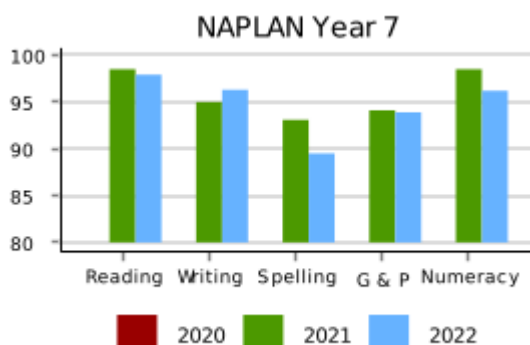


PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2020	2021	2020 – 2021 Changes	2022	2021 – 2022 Changes
	%			%	
	*		*		
YR 07 Grammar and Punctuation	-	94.1	-	93.9	-0.2
YR 07 Numeracy	-	98.5	-	96.2	-2.3
YR 07 Reading	-	98.5	-	97.9	-0.6
YR 07 Spelling	-	93.1	-	89.5	-3.6
YR 07 Writing	-	95.0	-	96.3	1.3
YR 09 Grammar and Punctuation	-	95.8	-	92.0	-3.8
YR 09 Numeracy	-	100.0	-	98.3	-1.7
YR 09 Reading	-	93.8	-	95.0	1.2
YR 09 Spelling	-	93.2	-	93.8	0.6
YR 09 Writing	-	89.6	-	89.7	0.1

\* 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.



## Student Wellbeing

### Goals and Intended Outcomes

**Goals and Intended outcomes are reflected through the Damascus College Strategic Plan 2021- 2025.**

**Pillar 3, Well-being in Action's aspiration is to *create an environment where students flourish and can manage their well-being effectively, enriched by a holistic learning and teaching program and the development of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills.***

**The aspiration is addressed by working towards the following strategic priorities.**

1. Promoting a community where SEL can help students learn the competencies and skills they need to give them agency over their lives.
2. Ensuring that everyone has access to a meaningful and purposeful curriculum that allows them to positively engage in their learning pathway.
3. Nurturing an environment where active care and compassion to others is embedded into school culture and traditions.

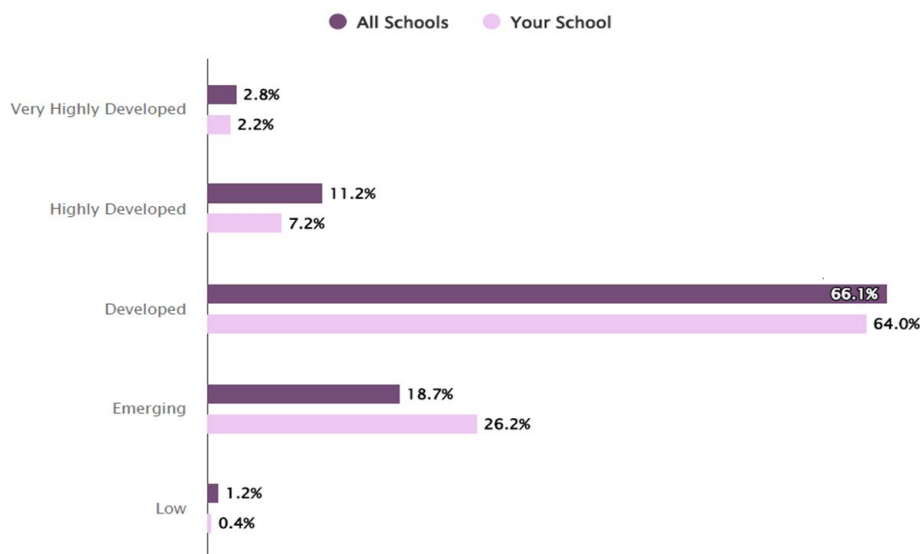
### Achievements

Achievements reflecting Strategic Priority 1.

**Promoting a community where SEL Skills can help students learn the competencies and skills they need to give them agency over their lives.**

1. In 2022 Damascus College has worked diligently in focusing on the acquisition of SEL skills in order to improve well-being and academic outcomes. This was specifically important given that a number of the social and emotional competencies acquired by students were compromised during the COVID pandemic/remote learning period. Staff observed that students were less organised, had difficulty managing their emotions, were less resilient and had loss confidence in their ability to engage in relationships with each other. Through the Teacher Advisor Program there was a shift on redeveloping these skills through practical activities; essentially relearning these. The College also introduced a success criterion for all subjects reflecting a student's level of competency on the Social and Emotional Learning Skills of resilience, confidence, organisation, perseverance and engaging in positive relationships. In addition, skills such as perseverance and team work were included in assessment tasks. Value adding Social and Emotional learning in student reports and assessment tasks will provide students with a level of skills that will carry them forward in future endeavours giving them agency of their lives.

2. In 2022 all students were surveyed through the ACER Well-being Survey. This survey was able to provide an insight into the levels of Social and Emotional skills of all students at the College in comparison to other secondary colleges throughout Australia. The graph below represents the over all Social and Emotional Well-Being for students at the College. The College has an opportunity to explore how we can shift a cohort of students from the 'emerging' to the 'developed'. It would be hoped that the emphasis on these skills in assessment criterion and end of semester reports will support growth in this area.



Achievements reflecting Strategic Priority 2.

**Ensuring that everyone has access to a meaningful and purposeful curriculum that allows them to positively engage in their learning pathway.**

1. Damascus College has been able to use student data to provide students with appropriate advice and guidance into appropriate educational pathways. In 2022 the College conducted its subject selection expo from the 19-22 of July. Held at lunchtime in the Damascus Events Centre this expo provided an opportunity for all students to meet with classroom teacher and area of Learning Leaders to conference on appropriate student pathways/subject selection. In addition, an evening presentation was held allowing parents the opportunity to hear more on the options available for students. Topics included Accelerated Learning Programs, Year 9 and 10 Electives, VCE and VM. Furthermore, data obtained through school reports and NAPLAN has been used to guide students into curriculum pathways that suits their needs and interests. I draw specific attention to the Year 10 Hands On Learning Program (HoLP) which has supported approximately 15 students in a hands-on applied learning environment. The vast majority of these students were identified through college data as applied learners who require an intimate classroom environment in order to harness their engagement in an appropriate learning program. The well-being of these students has been enhanced through a program that meets them at their point of need.

2. A 20 - 25 minute interview with the student, teacher advisory and parent/carer took place in early Term 3. This meeting was aimed at a collective understanding of the most suitable academic pathway for students to choose for the following year. Having all stakeholders involved in this meeting ensures a transparency and accountability of decisions.

Achievements Reflecting Strategic Priority 3

**Nurturing an environment where active care and compassion to others is embedded into school culture and traditions.**

The school has demonstrated their commitment to reconciliation through the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The commitment to the plan has been initiated by the students and staff of the College and was given final approval by Reconciliation Australia in December 2022. The College has reached out to the members of the local indigenous community, the Wathaurong people, in order to ensure the integrity of the plan and to give it a strong local context.

The key focus of the RAP is to ensure the Damascus College community has a visible and planned commitment to reconciliation. It will provide the framework of the College's visible and spiritual commitment to Reconciliation within the context of the local Ballarat Community. The most significant phase of this plan will see the erection of two additional flag poles allowing for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag to be raised on campus for the first time. The RAP has plans for this to take place in Term 1 2023.

#### VALUE ADDED

- Year 7 Camp: All Year 7 students experienced an overnight camp as part of their transition into Damascus College. Students attended camp in their House Groups where they were able to mix with other students in activities such as canoeing, archery, flying fox, the 'leap of faith' and 'giant swing'.
- Year 8 Camp: A two-night, three-day experience where students enjoyed a rotation of activities including surfing, canoeing, hiking and overnight camp experience.
- Inter-House Swimming Sports: a wonderful rate of participation. This inclusive event allows students to compete across the pool events, croquet, basketball and synchronised swimming.
- Inter-House Athletics Sports: a wonderful rate of participation where Houses competed in a plethora of athletic events.
- Inter-House Lap of the Lake - Houses compete in a running activity set at Lake Wendouree.
- Year 9 Camp: A five overnight experience where students enjoyed hiking through the bush.
- Year 10, 11 and 12 retreat programs allowed students to explore aspects of their faith development.
- Sustainable Racing Team (SRT) Program which supports students in Years 7-12 in the construction of sustainable racing machines and compete in a number of competitions, for example energy breakthrough in Maryborough.
- Ballarat Associated Schools (BAS) after school sports programs.
- Justice Action Group where interested students promote and support local, national and international social justice activities.
- Damascus Green Group where interested students promote and support local, national and international environmental issues. This also includes recycling initiatives at the College.
- Various House activities including speaking at assemblies, leading prayer and inter-house sports.
- Pride Group - initiated by the school counsellors this group provided an opportunity for students interested in the LGBTIQ+ community to gather and provide input on how the College can address student inclusivity.
- VCAL/VM camp as a culmination of an activity where they are required to organise and run an excursion.

**STUDENT SATISFACTION**

There were opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experience in school, community and home through the ACER Well-being survey. This survey was completed by all students in the College. The Well-Being survey is intended to provide a snapshot of responses at the time and over time provide some longitudinal data exploring opportunities and successes.

**Well-being of our students is captured in year 7-12 below.**

	Year 7 (%)	Year 8 (%)	Year 9 (%)	Year 10 (%)	Year 11 (%)	Year 12 (%)
Very Highly Developed	5.7	2.3	1.3	0.6	0.7	2.6
Highly Developed	11.9	7.3	6.6	4.8	6.0	5.2
Developed	65.9	62.7	59.9	67.7	61.1	67.0
Emerging	16.5	26.0	32.2	26.9	32.2	24.3
Low	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9

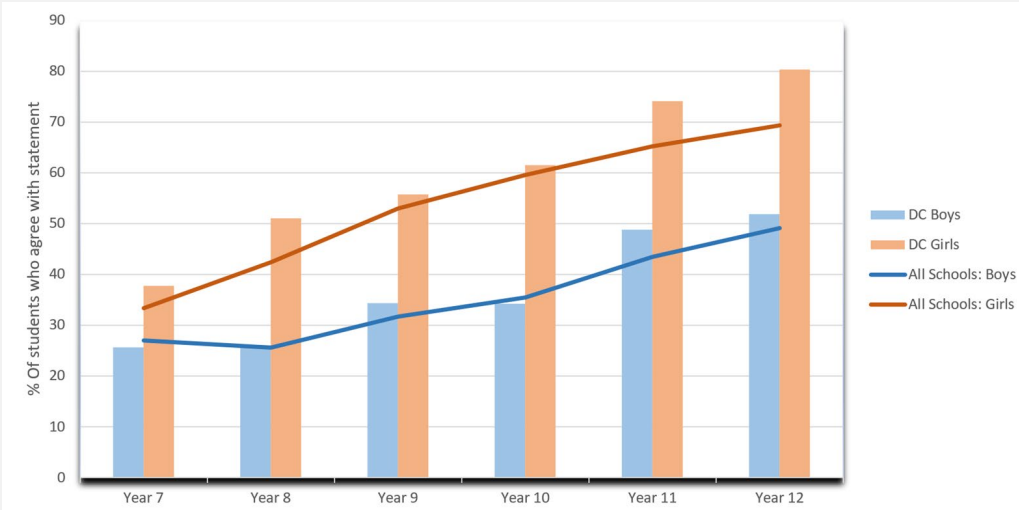
**Observations**

Year 7 students identified as having the highest levels of well-being. The conclusion that these students are yet to be influenced by societal expectations/social media/peer influences.

In contrast, students in 9-10 are experiencing the pressures of adhering to peer expectations. Their own identity is often subject to the scrutiny of social media/ peer influences/ perceived societal expectations.

**Identification of Stress**

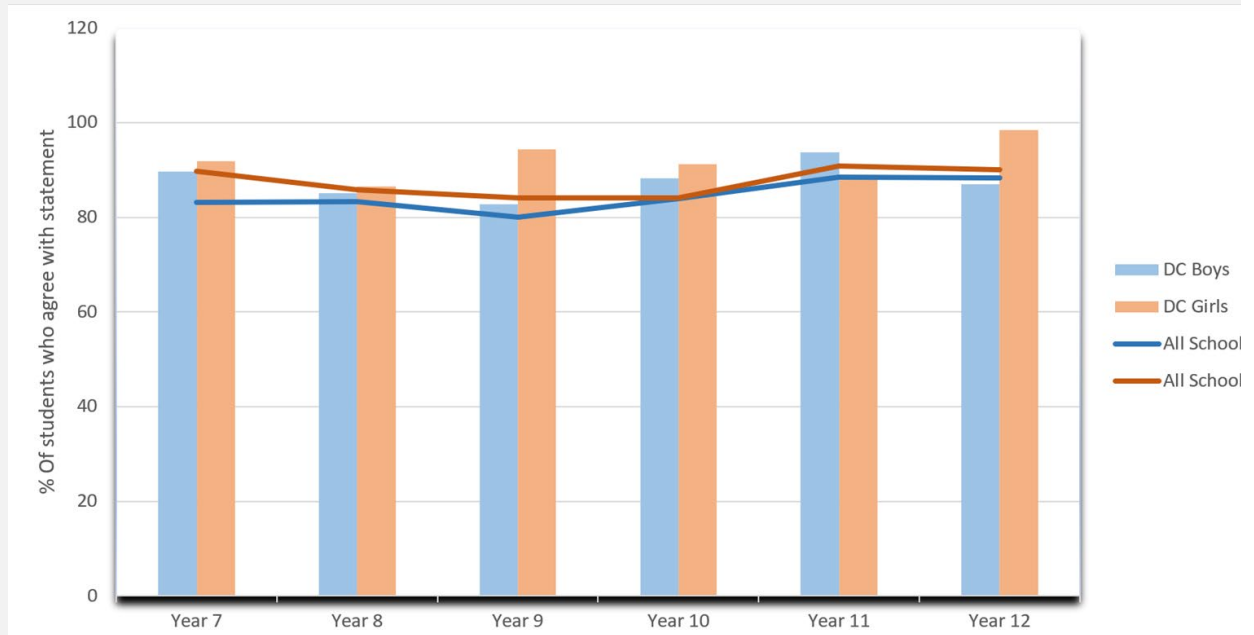
The chart below indicates students self-assessment of their levels of stress



### Observations

In line with all other schools, Damascus College girls are demonstrating a higher level of stress than boys. Of particular concern was the above average level of stress levels amongst our Year 11 and 12 female students. This data has indicated a need for intervention in the areas of stress management. In 2023 the TA program will aim to introduce strategies and techniques to support students.

### I get along with my Teachers



### Observations

This data indicates there our students and staff have positive relationships with their teachers. Note that almost 100% of females indicated that they get along with their teachers.

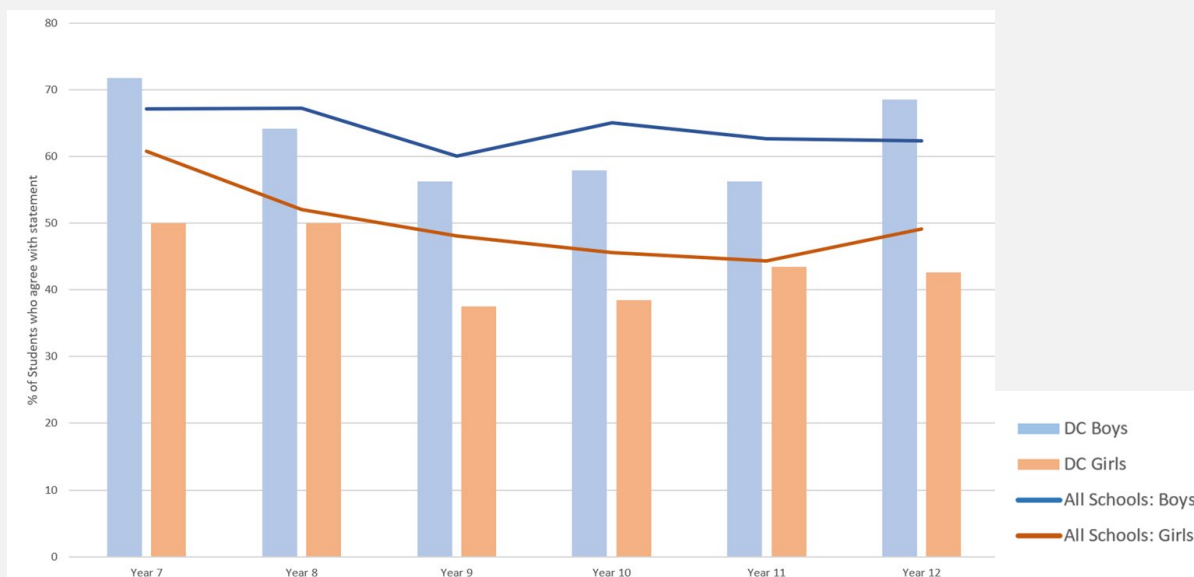
### Emotional skills: When I get stressed out about things, I find someone to talk with to calm down



### Observations

This data clearly suggests that there is work to do in supporting students with the many services that are available in and out of the College. Despite students indicating that they get along with their teachers, this evidence reflects that additional guidance is required for students to work through someone to calm themselves down when feeling stressed. Given the data provided earlier about high stress levels this is an area of focus that the College needs to work on.

### I am confident doing difficult school work



### Observations

This data highlights the importance in developing the confidence levels amongst our female students. Unpacking this data is a priority of the team moving forward to address the barriers that are impacting female students' confidence levels in attempting to do difficult work. While the confidence levels of boys is identified as being higher is pleasing, this should not be at the expense of female students.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### Students Attendance at Damascus College

The administration of student attendance at Damascus College is maintained through 'Student Reception'. Daily reports are provided to each House Leader and Teacher Advisor to ensure appropriate explanations are provided for absences. This is specifically important for unexplained absences. All unexplained absences are required to be followed up by the College using this process. All parents/carers receive an SMS reporting an unexplained absence after the first official role is marked.

Student movement off campus throughout the day is monitored and recorded through student reception. All students are required to have written permission/ parent/carer contact that allows students to leave the campus throughout the day.

Damascus College records student attendance in every class. To meet the duty of care responsibilities, the school attendance records indicate whether the student was physically present in a classroom or not present or attending a school-approved activity. In the latter situation, the teacher or staff member in charge of the activity records attendance and ensures parents are notified of any absences in the same manner as for regular absences from school.

There are two reportable roles that occur throughout the day. The first is during period 1, the second occurs immediately after the school lunch break. Roll marking is completed in order to:

- Meet legislative requirements
- Discharge the school's duty of care for all students
- Assist calculation of the school's funding
- Enable the school governing body (school council in government schools) to report on student attendance annually
- Meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements (for VCE students).

Damascus College records:

- Each enrolled student's attendance at least twice per day in the school's attendance register, including any reason given or apparent for a student's absence
- Whether the reason for the absence is a reasonable excuse for non-attendance within the context of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- On the student's file, information about the student's unsatisfactory attendance at school or classes
- An absence is unexplained if no excuse has been given, and change the attendance record once an excuse is provided or established

### **Year Level Attendance Rates for 2022**

Year 7 Students-On average classroom attendance for each student was: 85.9

Year 8 Students-On average classroom attendance for each student was: 85.3

Year 9 Students-On average classroom attendance for each student was: 83.6

Year 10 Students-On average classroom attendance for each student was: 82.7

Year 11 Students-On average classroom attendance for each student was: 84.9

Year 12 Students-On average classroom attendance for each student was: 88.94



### YEARS 9 – 12 STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Years 9 to 12 Student Retention Rate	72.9%
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### AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y07	85.9%
Y08	85.3%
Y09	83.6%
Y10	82.7%
Overall average attendance	84.4%

### SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES

VCE Median Score	28.0
VCE Completion Rate	98.0%
VCAL Completion Rate	95.0%

### POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS AS AT 2022

Tertiary Study	36.0%
TAFE / VET	17.0%
Apprenticeship / Traineeship	10.0%
Deferred	12.0%
Employment	21.0%
Other – The category of Other includes both students Looking for Work and those classed as Other	5.0%

## Child Safe Standards

### Goals and Intended Outcomes

All children and young people have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children and young people in the care of Damascus College will always be the first priority with a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. Damascus College aims to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children and young people are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for the student's own safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and young people, children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children and young people with a disability.

### Achievements

The College ensures that Child Safety is a standing item within the Principal's reporting and the Board's agenda.

The College has a designated Child Safe Officer and supporting policies and processes.

All employees, volunteers and contractors are inducted into child safe practices, and in particular from 1 July 2022, the new 11 Child Safe Standards in response to Ministerial Order 1359. Staff and leaders are familiar with the PROTECT document and the procedure involved in responding and reporting incidents of abuse.

Damascus College has a pastoral care structure that has been designed to build relationships between students, families and staff. Our Teacher Advisor (TA) program has structured daily catch-ups between students and staff members and four annual meetings between Teacher Advisors and families. These structures are designed to make sure no young person falls through the gaps throughout secondary school.

The structures have also supported a number of students to come forward with information that has resulted in reporting or performance management across the College. It has been an important mechanism to strengthen the student voice.

The College has continued to develop wellbeing structures to ensure the voices of young people are heard. These structures have supported students to speak up when an incident has occurred and then subsequently mandatory reports were made where suspected abuse has taken place. We continue to refine our practices to be alert to the possibility of abuse and seek to engage appropriate professional support and learning for staff and the wellbeing team.

Student safety concerns are recorded and investigated with six incidents raised and responded to the relevant authorities in the reporting period.

Creating a Child Safe Environment is a key part of the 'On-Boarding' and induction of all staff, contractors and volunteers to the College. Child safety principles underpin the College Code of Conduct and this is a key component of induction. All staff, contractors and volunteers including clergy, religious and laity are required to undertake this on-boarding.

The Damascus College School Advisory Council (SAC) members and staff continue to maintain an absolute focus on child safety, reiterating the importance of strong employment practices, ensuring students are empowered to speak up and continue to keep a focus on restorative practices as a means of respecting the inherent dignity of each person within this community. Staff complete training in mandatory reporting, anaphylaxis, first aid, and bullying and harassment.

Damascus College supports the CECV commitment to providing a safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Victorian Catholic schools through:

- Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- Empowering families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns;
- Implementing rigorous risk-management and employment practices.

The Damascus College Child Safety policy is readily available to the broader community through the College website.

Central to the mission of Damascus College is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. This Standard has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Damascus College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

It is the responsibility of all members of the Damascus community to work together to ensure the safety of all children and that the requirements of the Child Safe policy are followed.

All staff of Damascus College are required to undertake the Mandatory Reporting eLearning module and assessment and under the mandatory reporting obligations are required to ensure all allegations, and suspected cases of child abuse are reported immediately or as soon as possible to the appropriate authorities. It is compulsory that all reported concerns are to be documented and reported to the Child Protection Officer (CPO).

All allegations are to be treated seriously and followed up as per the obligations of mandatory reporting (attachment 3) and that of the CPO role. Each case is to be treated with a sensitivity to the diversity characteristics of the school community, concerning all involved and the wider community. Outside of obligatory requirements, these are to be treated confidentially and in compliance with the privacy of those involved.

The College Child Safe policy is publicly available for all members of the school community. The process and policy details are available for all staff and students.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and SAC/subcommittee members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- being aware of, and following, all relevant policies, guidelines and instructions about the safety of children and young people – in particular, mandatory reporting obligations
- adhering to the school's child-safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to the safety of children and young people in the strategic directions 2016-2020
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect (modelling positive, restorative and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment)
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or others have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of others

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries around their behaviour towards children and young people
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- holding a current police check, professional registration and/or Working With Children Check (WWCC) card in accordance with applicable legislation;
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);
- reporting to the Principal or Board Chair inappropriate conduct or conduct which might reasonably be considered to be a breach of this Code or a breach of criminal law;
- reporting to the Police any conduct or concerns which might reasonably be considered to be illegal - such reporting would ideally be in conjunction with the Principal or Child Safe Officer or Board Chair, but this is not a requirement of this Code;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership or child safety officer;
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer; and if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren)/young person/young people are safe.

To minimise the risk of any Child Safety incidents occurring and in regard to the recruitment, selection and management of staff, Damascus College:

- has developed clear statements around job requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety
- ensures that all applicants for jobs involving child connected work are informed about the College's child safety procedures
- keeps records of Working with Children Checks or similar, proof of personal identity, history of work involving children and references regarding the suitability of employment
- ensures that all new staff are inducted into the Colleges policies, roles, practices and procedures for ensuring child safety; and monitor and assess staff on an ongoing basis regarding their suitability for employment

Damascus College is committed to proactively identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our school environments and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor, and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

At Damascus College, the Deputy Principal with support of the Compliance Officer, undertakes risk management assessments for camps, excursions and international trips. The Compliance Officer develops strategies for the risk register and works with the Principal and Deputy to ensure

that staff are informed of strategies to mitigate risks as well as policy, procedures and practices to support child safety. All staff are responsible to consider risk management and child safety measures.

As a member of a local school-based sporting organisation Ballarat Associated Schools (BAS), we have been working with all organisations outside the College to ensure that the Child Safety standards required at Damascus College are replicated within the sporting association. We have increased the scrutiny of all employees, volunteers and contractors within this association and ensured that the operational practices and policies reflect the standards of our institution.

# Leadership

## Goals and Intended Outcomes

At Damascus College, leadership and the stewardship of resources are integral to the strategic delivery of:

- Catholic School Culture
- Community Engagement
- Learning and Teaching and
- Student Wellbeing

Leadership and stewardship are addressed within specific portfolios identified above.

## Achievements

In 2022 the College employed the Strategic Plan to review and implement a new leadership structure for 2023 - 2025. To support our growing school we have introduced some new senior positions of Leadership: Leader of Student Growth and Engagement, Leader of Curriculum and Assessment and Leader of Student Wellbeing. These roles have been developed to enhance the work of our Assistant Principals and to support middle leaders in embedding change initiatives. Furthermore, the College, has assigned the construction of the timetables and other logistical work in a large organisation to an Administrative Officer. As a College, we believe that teachers 'can be their best,' when they can construct on building positive relationships with young people and effectively plan learning experiences for our students.

To enhance the Leadership of the College the newly appointed middle leaders were provided with a professional learning afternoon designed to facilitate personal and professional growth and engagement in new roles and to provide context for leadership of a contemporary learning organisation. Our focus moving into 2023 is growing of middle leaders to be our best.

Review of Learning Diversity Team: The College undertook an external review of our Learning Diversity Team and the processes used to support our most diverse learners. The review was undertaken by One Red Apple. The College has received a comprehensive report and will use 2023 - 2025 to implement the recommendations working with our Learning Support Officers, Leaders, College Counsellors and Behaviour Support Staff.

### EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

#### Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2022

- Professional Practice Days
- First Aid and Anaphylaxis Training
- Learning area specific training
- Compliance and Mandatory Training
- Mental Health First Aid
- Professional Supervision

Professional Development workshops and short courses

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2022	94
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$2924

**TEACHER SATISFACTION**

Throughout the first semester, the College has worked through a process of reviewing the Position of Leadership structure in readiness for a new POL three-year cycle. Extensive consideration and consultation was completed and a revised structure presented and adopted. The Staff review process "My Plan" was again a focus in 2022.

Staff Voice has continued to provide a forum of collaboration for staff on matters of improvement. These sessions have been well attended by staff at all levels of the College, providing valuable feedback and action items to improve various aspects across the College.

The Principal, Mr Steven Mifsud met with all staff in small groups to gain feedback on their experiences at the school and areas for individual and collective growth and improvement.

Consultative Committee meetings have supported the review and implementation of the Position of leadership cycle and the planning for the 2023 anticipated Multi Enterprise Agreement.

**TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE**

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	88.8%
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**ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE**

Staff Retention Rate	86.8%
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<b>TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS</b>	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	18.8%
Graduate	46.5%
Graduate Certificate	5.9%
Bachelor Degree	81.2%
Advanced Diploma	15.8%
No Qualifications Listed	5.9%

<b>STAFF COMPOSITION</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	114.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	99.0
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	67.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	58.6
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1.0



## Community Engagement

### Goals and Intended Outcomes

In the area of Community, the Strategic Directions of the college for 2021-2025 state that we are a community where the contribution of all to the College and broader society is optimised, demonstrated by:

1. Confident and diverse communication that builds pride, creates dialogue, celebrates our points of difference and enhances our position as a college of first choice.
2. Strong intergenerational connections that build parent and alumni collaboration.
3. Quality links to the local, national and global community with partnerships that strengthen capacity, student pathways and experience.

### Achievements

1. ***Confident and diverse communication that builds pride, creates dialogue, celebrates our points of difference and enhances our position as a college of first choice***

#### **Be. My. Best. campaign**

Throughout 2022 a new campaign for the Be. My. Best. strategy was developed and implemented. This campaign included the five key messages from years prior, in order to be consistent and consolidate this messaging within the community. New video footage and photos were taken which will be used in 2022 and the next few years to further promote the Damascus offerings, under the Be My Best banner. The campaign was rolled out in various mediums including TV advertisements, newspaper, magazines, social media, website, road sign and online ads. In 2022 we also extended promotions to include the back of a bus ad, for a 12-month duration.

The Be. My. Best. messaging was aligned with the Social and Emotional Learning messages throughout 2021, which was continued to be worked on and launched to our staff community throughout 2022. This was later embedded with students and parents, to ensure the messaging is meaningful, consistent, and clear.

#### **Media and Social Media**

To build the profile of Damascus within the community, it is a strategy to build relationships with the local media, to regularly position Damascus, and celebrate student and staff achievements in the community. In 2022 we enjoyed increased levels of normality after two years of COVID interruptions and were able to develop ten media releases that were sent throughout the year.

The College's strategy to build a community using social media continues to go from strength to strength. Engaging the College in numerous social media platforms is a strategy to stay connected with the community, celebrate student and staff achievement and to remain competitive in the market. The College continues to build engagement with Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn and the number of followers continues to increase every year. The Damascus Facebook page has increased to 4,524 followers which is a 9.4% increase when compared to 2021. Instagram is growing rapidly, with 2,243 followers, which is an increase of 15% from 2021.

YouTube is a new platform for Damascus, which we have been working hard on throughout 2022 and now have 202 subscribers with 136 videos.

LinkedIn is another new platform for Damascus that was introduced in 2021, the strategy to build a LinkedIn presence is to position Damascus as an employer of choice with the professional community, as LinkedIn is a professional networking platform, it has allowed the College to develop targeted professional posts to engage with the community on a different level. As a team we developed a strategy for specific posts on LinkedIn to raise the profile of the College as a great place to work, which also included advertising employment opportunities for the College, thus reinforcing our position as an employer of choice. The LinkedIn page was created in 2021 and at the end of 2021 we had approximately 250 followers and at the end of 2022 we had an additional 254 followers, a healthy increase. The LinkedIn total followers sit at 572 total followers at the end of 2022.

The annual marketing strategy includes advertising for key student recruitment events and some community events, on Facebook and Instagram, which has proven to be a cost-effective medium, as it reaches a wide audience.

### **140-year anniversary Gala**

In 2022 the 140-year anniversary gala event was held on Saturday 26 March 2022 at the Damascus Events Centre, as it was postponed twice from 2021 due to COVID pandemic restrictions.

This gala celebration was the culmination of 12 months of promotions and events to celebrate this milestone in the college's history. It was a wonderful event that was well attended by staff, students, past students and community members. The gala also celebrated the significant contributions of outgoing Principal, Mr Matthew Byrne.

A special 140-year publication was developed and release in 2022, which is a great resource that tells the history of our College, dating back to 1881. This is available on the College website and hard copies were printed for distribution.

### **New Strategic Plan launched**

In early 2022, the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan was launched to staff and the community. These promotional pieces included a brochure, a video, mouse pads and signage around campus that will be placed in every classroom and staff office. The Strategic Plan video was finalised in early 2022 which showcased students engaging in various College life activities, aligning with the plan. This video was used to launch the plan and has been placed on the college website for future use.

### **Style Guide**

Revised templates for the Style Guide were launched to staff in early 2022 in line with the new governance of Damascus, as all collateral needed to be updated to reflect the new ABN. The use of this style guide is growing with staff, as they recognise the value in maintaining a consistent and professional presence in all templates that are used that engage and communicate with the external community.

### **College Newsletter**

The College newsletter was reviewed in 2022 and will change frequency and get a fresh design and content update to increase content and readership within the parent community. The newsletter will move from a weekly to a fortnightly distribution, including additional reports from

staff in positions of leadership, including Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals, House Leaders and Learning Area Leaders. The revised newsletter will launch in Term 1, 2023.

### **College App**

The College app was under review in 2022 where various new suppliers were researched to deliver an enhanced customer experience for parents. A working party was formed involving Business Manager, Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching, IT Manager, Office Manager and Leader of Marketing and Development, to drive this project forward. The aim is for the app to become the main source of communication to parents, reducing the high reliance on emails and SMS. The new app will be rolled out in 2023.

## ***2. Strong inter-generational connections that build parent and alumni collaboration***

### **College events**

2022 was a welcome return to events on campus due to COVID restrictions easing, which involved parents, students, and the general community.

The Mother's Day and Father's Day Liturgies and breakfasts returned and were full to capacity with a total of 248 attendees. The 2022 Awards and Achievement evening celebrating 2022 student achievement returned to the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts and had fantastic attendance at 507 attendees, which is the largest since 2017. The Academic Assembly celebrating 2021 VCE scores returned to the Damascus Events Centre in February 2022 and was celebrated amongst the award recipients and their families.

Information Evenings to prospective families returned to being held in person, and the total attendance to both events was 175 attendees (Sep – 89, Oct – 86), which was a great result, compared to the drop in attendees due to COVID online events in 2020 and 2021. Open Mornings also had fantastic attendance with a total of 118 families attending the three events (Sep – 39, Oct – 39, Feb – 40).

Student attendance at College events is extremely important. In 2022 attendance at the Swimming Carnival was 724, yet in 2021 the number was 856, a decrease of 15%. The Athletics Carnival also saw a decrease of 6% with 829 in attendance (882 in 2021). Damascus Day was held in 2022 after a two-year hiatus due to COVID, with attendance at 790, an 8% decrease from 2019 (858). The Lap of the Lake wasn't held in 2022.

It is a challenge to reduce the number of absences at these key events, but we continually communicate the importance of these events to parents.

### **Parent Access Module (PAM) analysis**

Throughout 2022, a PAM survey was developed to assess parent usage of the platform, to see how Damascus can better support parents in this space. A working party was formed to continue to enhance the services provided to parents to access the wealth of information contained in PAM. Key findings from the survey were:

- Ensure accurate information in Learning Areas. This may involve educating staff, particularly with showing a parents view and keeping information up to date.
- Ideally PAM should be the College intranet and main communication vehicle to parents, so all docs etc could be housed on PAM rather than always emailed out, which would drive more usage. Or is this the best method of communication? Is the APP a better option?

- Set up regular reminders e.g. two weeks/once a month.
- Reminders need to be short and to the point.
- Make accessing PAM as easy as possible.
- Investigate if notifications can be sent when Learning Areas is updated.

It is the aim that the working party meets once a term to discuss issues relating to PAM, so that it continues to be a platform that benefits parent communication.

### **Archives Gallery**

A new Archives Gallery was developed on campus throughout 2022 to celebrate the history of the College and to educate staff and students on the 140-year history they are a part of, to create a sense of pride in being a part of the story. This gallery is situated in the lower level of the Damascus Events Centre, and it physically and electronically showcases pieces of memorabilia for students and staff to enjoy and learn about the long history. The aim is for this gallery to become part of the alumni reunions where past students tour the gallery as part of the campus tour, with the hope of past students donating items as appropriate to build on the collection. In addition, it is aimed that Damascus staff will educate current students on the history of the college and take students on tours through the gallery during class time, as part of the Religious Education (RE) curriculum.

### **Parent Communication**

The annual Year 8 parent survey asked families to reflect on their Year 7 experience, was sent out with mixed results and some consistent feedback was the need for subject interviews, communication issues and the issue of vaping amongst students.

The mediums used to communicate to parents in 2022 included the College Facebook page, Instagram, YouTube page, LinkedIn, College newsletter, website, letters by mail, email, the College app and SMS messages. SMS and emails remain the most common form of communication to parents, with the front office and Office Manager coordinating these for most staff to ensure consistency.

The College app was under review in 2022 where various new suppliers were researched to deliver an enhanced customer experience for parents. The aim is for the app to become the main source of communication to parents, reducing the high reliance on emails and SMS.

Parent Access Module (PAM) and TA interviews are other events and forms of communication to parents about student progress and College engagement. There are four opportunities for parents to attend a TA interview throughout the year, and for 2022 the hybrid model was introduced, allowing parents to choose to attend face to face or via Microsoft Teams. Attendance at TA when compared to 2021 has slightly decreased each Term, with Term 2 TA interviews not being held.

### **Alumni**

In 2022, Damascus College was privileged to host ten "Class of Reunions." A mammoth undertaking indeed, but extremely satisfying to be able to celebrate with Damascus alumni after having to reschedule many events due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns.

This year Damascus welcomed the Class of 1971, 1981, 1982, 1991, 1992, 2001, 2002, 2011, and 2012 with over 450 past students and staff welcomed back to Damascus College for their reunion.

2022 saw the further development of the Shining Light Award which recognises past students for their significant achievements in their career since leaving Damascus. It was revamped to become an annual award, with a revised process and new set of criteria for awards. We received a record number of 21 nominations for the new awards which culminated in five awards being chosen, where past students were invited back to an event to be celebrated in front of the whole school community. The five inductees were: Dr Yvonne Aitken, SHC Class of 1929 - STEAM Achievement Award, Professor Andrew Ooi, St Martin's Class of 1988 - STEAM Achievement and Academia/Career Excellence, Nicole Thornton nee Warke, SHC and St Martin's in the Pines Class of 1994 - STEAM Achievement, Dr Samantha Brown, Class of 2006 Damascus College - Academia/Career Excellence, and Connor Prunty, Damascus College Class of 2016 - Young Achiever Award – Service to the Community. These award recipients will be inducted during the Academic Assembly at the beginning of 2023.

The Road publication is produced twice a year, and is a key form of communication to alumni and the wider community, to celebrate past student achievements and update them on life at the college. A new intergenerational story was introduced in 2022 to the publication which focuses on stories relating to families that have multiple generations of attending Damascus and the foundation colleges. The aim is for these stories to inspire other past students to send their children, and grandchildren to Damascus College.

The Bright Futures Breakfast was held in 2022 with Sam Rizzo, Class of 2018 invited back as the guest speaker. Attendance was close to 100 attendees and we were excited to welcome some table bookings from Federation University Australia (Fed Uni) and Rotary. Total funds raised for the scholarship from raffle, donations and tickets sales was \$2,815.

The alumni database has increased by 3% from the previous year, with many of those additions related to attending a reunion or other Damascus events. The Alumni Facebook reached a new milestone, 2,000 members. It increased by 10% from 1,852 to 2,039 followers/members.

### ***3. Quality links to the local, national and global community with partnerships that strengthen capacity, student pathways and experience***

#### **Community Engagement and Fundraising**

The Bright Futures Breakfast which raises funds to extend the Bright Futures Scholarship to more than one student per year, was held again in 2022 with special guest speaker Sam Rizzo. Ticket sales, donations and the raffle raised \$2,815 for the scholarship.

Throughout 2022 research was conducted on possible projects to introduce a small-scale fundraising project to target alumni giving. The project needs to be less than \$20,000 so that alumni have an achievable target and can physically see the result of the fundraising come to fruition. Work still needs to be done on this, involving the Business Manager and Principal.

Initial meetings with Fed Uni and Buninyong Bendigo Bank were conducted towards the end of 2022, with the aim of improving relationships of mutual benefit. Discussions are to continue throughout 2023 so that we can work together to the benefit of Damascus students, their pathway opportunities and experience whilst at Damascus.

A new scholarship sponsored by Fed Uni was introduced in late 2022 and will be distributed in early 2023, to sponsor the VCAL Dux.

#### **College Community events**

The annual events that target key primary schools within the Ballarat region, were able to be conducted again in 2022. The Grade 5 transition days with Catholic primary schools, the Maths

Games Day and Performing Arts Production showcase were held on campus, which engaged all Catholic primary schools with Damascus. The aim is for the students to get a taste of what it is like to study at Damascus, to drive future enrolments.

### VALUE ADDED

The below activities were achieved in 2022:

- 140-year anniversary gala at Damascus College
- Class of Reunions for past students
- Community events – Mother's and Father's Day Breakfast, Bright Futures Breakfast, morning teas
- Be My Best campaign
- Growing parent engagement with the College
- Parent surveys
- Social media celebration of the Damascus community
- Recruitment events – Information Evening and Open Mornings
- Performing Arts Production performance for Primary Schools
- Fundraising activities
- Yearbook committee

### PARENT SATISFACTION

Has been addressed within the data collected for the various portfolios reported in other areas of this Annual report