

BE
MY
BEST



THE DAMASCUS DIFFERENCE





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Acknowledgement of Country

In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's spiritual and cultural connection to country, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land from which we all gather today, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin nation among the First Nations of Australia.

We pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge that this land was taken from them without consent, without

compensation, without treaty, but not without a resistance.

We acknowledge their care of the land and waterways of this country for more than 60,000 years. They hold the memories, traditions, culture and hope of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We pray that the work of truth-telling and reconciliation will finally carry the day in Australia. May we walk gently, respectfully and sustainably upon the land.





PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

Welcome to Damascus College. A community with a rich history of providing Catholic education in the Ballarat community for more than 140 years. Damascus College is founded on the values and commitment of the Sisters of Mercy and the Diocese of Ballarat.

We are a Catholic community that has responded to the needs of our diverse learners, constantly seeking new ideas, challenging our thinking, and promoting best practices.

Damascus College is a Christ-centred co-educational Catholic secondary school, where all within the college strive to build a common purpose giving witness to our faith and responsibility as global citizens.

At Damascus, we are proud of our young people. We celebrate their gifts, their skills, and their individuality. Our college is a place of energy, passion, and positive, respectful relationships where young people can be their best, explore their passions and take meaningful risks. At the heart of our work is relationships. It is through relationships that we can tailor a learning program that meets the needs of the students. We guide, challenge, and promote flexible and creative thinking.

In exploring a Damascus education, it is important for us to create an environment where the school operates in partnership with our families to enable young people to thrive. As parent(s)/guardian(s), you know your child, and we work with you, for their benefit. Our Strategic Plan informs and guides our work, below are the five pillars that underpin the strategic plan:

- Faith and Catholic Identity
- Learning and Leading
- Wellbeing in Action
- Community Connection
- Future and Stewardship

Quality teaching and learning, delivered by a dynamic staff cohort, coupled with student voice and agency, along with targeted resourcing, provides the

contemporary learning environment for which Damascus has become known.

Underpinning the Damascus educational experience is the Teacher Advisor program, which strives to build rapport between the school, the student, and the family, when secondary education is often a time when this partnership can diminish. Our intent is to provide the needed support to enable young people to be their best and to grow into early adulthood in a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment.

Educational research based on evidence informs our practices. It is recognised that when students build connections with their school, peers, and family, they feel more engaged and empowered and can work through challenges. At Damascus, we pride ourselves on providing an engaging learning experience, along with a diverse range of learning and extra-curricular activities. We aim to find points of connection for students to strengthen their love of learning and to know themselves. We offer a broad range of opportunities and experiences that caters to all learners.

Damascus College is situated in a magnificent bush setting, with a team of committed, faith-based educators and paraprofessionals - all committed to the best learning outcomes for young people. We are honoured to offer the opportunity for brothers and sisters to be educated together in a Catholic secondary setting. I encourage you to learn more about Damascus College as a school that enables young people to be their best!

Steven Mifsud
Principal, Damascus College



VISION AND VALUES

College Vision

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 Motto

To Live by The Light of Christ.

College Values

The values at Damascus College are:

- Our founding traditions and Mercy heritage
- Quality learning environments enabling student success and wellbeing
- Collaborative leadership
- A community of compassion, justice, pastoral care, and responsible stewardship of our environment
- Quality resources
- Partnerships—the wider Catholic community, the local Ballarat area, and other education providers

College Attributes

The Damascus College experience impacts all members of the community. These attributes describe the broader purpose of a Damascus College education. For students leaving the college, the following are the lived expression of their education for life beyond Damascus College.

GOSPEL FOCUS IN THE MERCY TRADITION

Students develop a sense of joy and wonder as a gift in their life and the world. Students make informed choices showing commitment to human dignity, the common good, sustainability, justice and peace, creative and constructive acceptance of hardship in the spirit of Christian freedom and hope.

SELF-AWARENESS AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Students are self-aware, reflective, and respectful of the uniqueness of each individual and human diversity; students are flexible and resilient and have the capacity to accept and give constructive feedback; students act with integrity, foster inclusiveness, demonstrate empathy, and take responsibility for their actions.

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Students have the knowledge and skills to apply their learning reflectively, creatively, critically, and practically in various contexts. Students are well prepared for ethical living, working autonomously and in collaborative teams responding to future challenges.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Students understand, respect, and embrace the cultures and traditions of First Nations people and multicultural Australia.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Students recognise their place and responsibility in the wider world and take an active role in their community, working with others to make our planet more peaceful, sustainable, and just.





COLLEGE HISTORY

CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
of
BALLARAT



INSTITUTE OF
SISTERS of MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA



1881

Sacred Heart
College



1948

St Pauls
Technical College



1995

Damascus
College



Sacred Heart College Ballarat East Recreation Area, 1926

Damascus College was established in 1995 when the foundation schools of Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College, and St Martin's in the Pines amalgamated. This long and proud tradition of providing Catholic education in the Ballarat region dates back to 1881 when Sacred Heart College was founded by the Sisters of Mercy, providing education in Ballarat East for students from preparatory to Year 12.

St Paul's Technical College was founded in 1948 by the Bishop of Ballarat and was administered by the Christian Brothers. St Paul's emphasised the development of technical skills within a comprehensive curriculum for boys in Year 7 to 10.

St Martin's in the Pines was established in 1967 by the Sisters of Mercy. It formed the Sacred Heart Senior College for Years 11 and 12 girls, and in 1988 became co-educational, with boys mainly from St Paul's Technical College.

Damascus College commenced operation on two campuses, the Victoria Street campus, and the Mt Clear campus. The Victoria Street campus was closed in December 2010, and the college operated as one campus for the first time at Mt Clear in 2011. The Mt Clear site provides an inspirational natural environment in a rapidly developing area of Ballarat. It is an ideal site for a modern and integrated Year 7–12 campus.

Today, Damascus College is governed by the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL). The Mercy charism remains the underpinning ethos that gives life to all that is actioned and achieved at the college.

Damascus College continues in the tradition of the founding colleges that went before it and continues to forge its own strong and vibrant future.

THE DAMASCUS DIFFERENCE

Damascus College is a Catholic co-educational secondary college offering innovative and progressive education in a contemporary bush setting.

Below are the points of difference you will experience at Damascus.

CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC CO-EDUCATION

Damascus College offers a contemporary Catholic co-educational setting that prepares students for life beyond school. The context of co-education provides families with one destination, one set of teachers to know, and one community to become involved in.

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.

By learning together in co-education, students collaborate in ways that enable them to embrace and celebrate their differences as well as their similarities. Students develop confidence, empathy, understanding, and leadership as they navigate the challenges of social and emotional growth, while encouraging success in one another.

PASTORAL CARE AND WELLBEING

Damascus College has created a pastoral care and wellbeing program which allows each student and their parents

or guardians to feel well-supported throughout their time at the college. The House structure, Teacher Advisors, and a team of counsellors and psychologists support the Damascus staff in providing the best care and support for each young person and their family.

All members of the Damascus College community are encouraged to work together to build an effective climate for pastoral care, which pervades every area of school life.

TEACHER ADVISOR (TA) PROGRAM

The TA Program is the cornerstone of the college's pastoral care and wellbeing approach. It offers a vertical structure creating the opportunity for strong relationships between students from years 7 - 12 and their Teacher Advisor. It also reinforces the critical educational partnership between the school and the home throughout secondary schooling.

The TA programs intent is to provide the needed support to enable young people to be their best and grow into early adulthood in a safe and supportive environment, so no student 'falls through the cracks'.

HOLISTIC EDUCATION, CATERING TO STUDENTS OF ALL NEEDS

Damascus College has a diverse curriculum that develops the whole person, catering to various post-secondary pathways, which provides young people with a solid foundation on which to build their lives.

Understanding that each student has individual learning needs, the college

aims to provide classroom activities that differentiate the abilities and learning styles of students.

The goal is for students to reach their full academic, emotional, spiritual, and social potential by providing them with the necessary tools and support to achieve this outcome.

As part of a well-rounded and holistic education, students are encouraged to participate in all activities available at the college, regardless of their skill level, as it provides young people with the skills to be their best.

The Student Growth and Engagement Team supports students with a range of needs, including those with a diagnosed disability, a learning difficulty, or social and emotional needs, plus those highlighted as gifted and talented.

Students graduate from Damascus College with a strong sense of their own identity and worth, and an appreciation of Christianity in the Catholic tradition.

LOCATION AND FACILITIES

Damascus College offers students a contemporary learning environment in an inspiring 20-hectare bush setting only 7km from the Ballarat CBD.

Students and staff enjoy access to innovative technology, flexible and modern classrooms, and many open spaces and bushland, for young people to enjoy and develop a strong appreciation and commitment to the natural environment in which we live.



STRATEGIC ASPIRATION

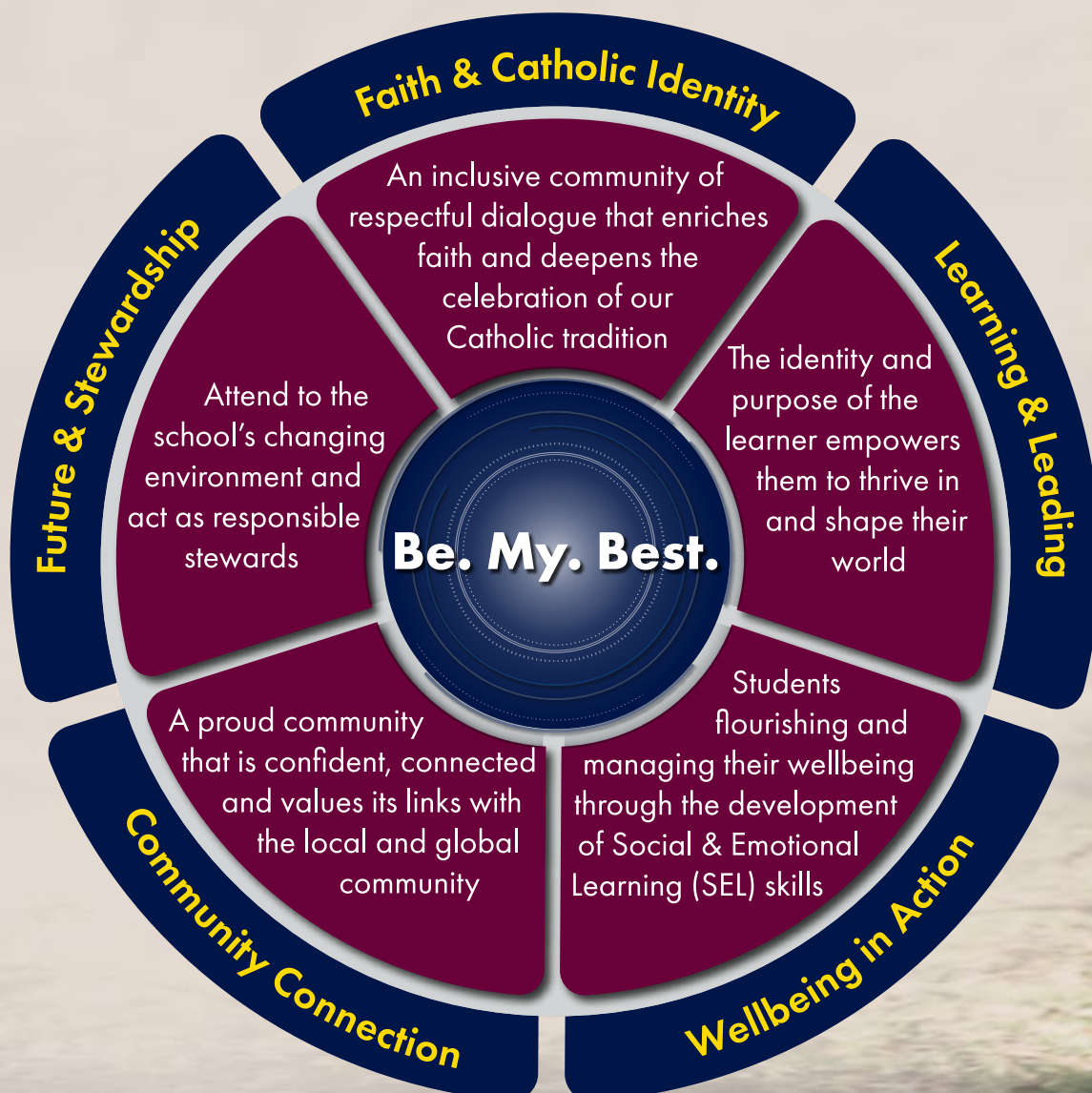
Damascus College aspires for all members of the Damascus community to be the best version of themselves.

Be. My. Best. will be woven into the institutional fabric of Damascus College and will be recognised as a means of enabling every student, every staff member, and every family member or community partner to become agents of their own futures. With open pathways of self-determination relevant today, tomorrow, and forever, Be. My. Best. will be expressed in the self-growth, wisdom, endeavour, and compassion of all within the Damascus community.

Be. My. Best. Be. Your. Best. Be. Our. Best.

A Damascus education develops the social and emotional skills of all students, by developing their confidence, resilience, organisation, persistence and engagement.

Below are the five school improvement pillars of Damascus and their aspiration statement.





FAITH AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Damascus College is an inclusive community that values respectful dialogue that enriches faith and deepens the celebration of the Catholic tradition.

At Damascus College, the faith journey is a joyful exploration and recontextualisation of the encounters that lead to deeper relationships and missions. The college remains committed to life-giving relationships, ecology and sustainability, multiculturalism, justice for First Nations peoples, and standing in solidarity with the poor of the earth.

Religious Education underpins and informs all aspects of learning and teaching and is a compulsory part of the curriculum across all year levels.

The Religious Education program allows students to explore their own spirituality and identity within the rich context of the Catholic faith tradition and simultaneously provides the opportunity to learn about other world religions and ethical and global responsibility.

The Youth Ministry in schools program is an evolving, connecting, and hopeful approach to an integrated religious education experience at Damascus College and invites all to be leaders in faith.

The Religious Education curriculum and the Youth Ministry program feed into the college's social justice profile and mission. Social justice is an integral aspect of the college's Catholic heritage, and the community actively participates in awareness and fundraising activities, making a difference in the world, and promoting peace.

The college's Justice Action Group (JAG) supports several annual activities and appeals with St Vincent de Paul, Project Compassion, Catholic Mission, and raises awareness of

social justice within the college. The restorative justice approach of the college is a clear expression of the desire to bring about life-giving relationships at school and beyond. The college's Reconciliation Action Plan offers hope for the truth-telling needed in relationships with the First Nations peoples. Damascus fosters a long-term friendship with Santa Maria College in Ainaro in Timor-Leste, which is a clear expression of global concern within the parameters of Catholic social teaching and the United Nations sustainability goals.

Prayer is an integral component of college life, offering opportunities to express the joy and wonder of knowing that life is a gift. The college holds inclusive whole-school liturgies, Masses and prayers. Year Level Masses, and regular daily prayer in Teacher Advisor groups illustrate that time itself is sacred.

The Youth Ministry program informs the approach to retreats and reflection days at each year level. This program provides students with an opportunity for personal reflection in a setting beyond the confines of day-to-day college life.

In Year 10 students are introduced to the Christian Personal Development Award (CPDA). This program brings together the many personal development opportunities available to students and reinforces the need to be proactive about personal development in the senior years of college life. Students achieve this award based on four categories: Action for Mercy and Justice/Community Service, Physical Pursuits, Spiritual Development, and Cultural Personal Development activities.





WELLBEING AND PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral care and student wellbeing program at Damascus College is integral in supporting students to reach their full potential.

The college provides structures whereby students feel supported, guided, and empowered, so that they can move through their education at Damascus with enhanced Social and Emotional Learning skills.

A sound pastoral care framework is the foundation of student achievement, ensuring that all students are adequately monitored, mentored, encouraged, and assisted. The Damascus pastoral care program ensures each student, and their parents or guardians feel well-supported throughout their time at the college.

The House structure at Damascus is the foundation of the college's pastoral care program. The college is divided into four Houses, with each House's name reflecting essential facets of the school's history, McAuley (gold), Rice (red), St Martin (green), and Xavier (blue). All students and staff members belong to a House, with siblings belonging to the same House.

Each House has staff members appointed as leaders who promote the House team spirit and coordinate student participation in inter-House sporting competitions, and they also play a crucial role in student wellbeing. House Leaders work with students, parents, and other staff members when matters relating to academic progress, pastoral care, or discipline arise.

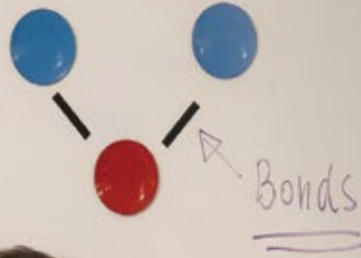
Within each House, there are sixteen Teacher Advisor (TA) groups of approximately eighteen students from Years 7 to 12. Students remain in the same TA group for their six years at Damascus, and where possible, the Teacher Advisor will remain the same. This structure creates the opportunity for strong relationships to form between students, their peers in other year levels, and their TA. The TA is also the main point of contact between parents and the college. Parents are asked to meet with TA's throughout the year to discuss their student's academic progress, to set learning goals and address any areas of concern.

At Damascus College, restorative practice is the foundation of the disciplinary approach aimed at reinforcing respectful relationships and modelling restorative behaviour. Restorative practice emphasises repairing the harm caused by one's behaviour, which is generally accomplished through a cooperative process. Restorative practice allows young people to reflect on their behaviour and learn from their mistakes constructively.

College counsellors are available to students and provide confidential support to students and families as required and they also run a series of wellbeing programs as a proactive approach to mental health and wellbeing. Damascus College will refer a student for external professional support as required.



Atoms



Molecular
Compounds

Covalent
Ionic



LEARNING AND TEACHING

Damascus College strives to work with students to be their best, and to develop a culture of learning where the identity and purpose of the learner empowers them to thrive in and shape their current and future world.

Damascus College recognises that each student has individual learning needs, and the college aims to provide classroom activities that cater to varying student abilities and learning styles. Damascus teaches students how to become flexible, creative, analytical thinkers.

Damascus aims to strengthen students' academic, social, and emotional learning potential, by providing them with the tools, support and feedback needed to achieve their potential. Students maximise their ability to achieve the Damascus Attributes (listed on page 6) which describe the broader purpose of a Damascus College education.

Damascus offers a diverse curriculum that prepares students for various post-secondary pathways, providing them with a solid foundation on which to build their lives. The college achieves this by providing a high-quality, well-rounded education that focuses on the development of the whole person. Commencing in Year 7, the academic program includes core subjects of Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Humanities, Health and Physical Education, Science, and Languages (French or Indonesian) for the entire school year.

The Year 8 ESTEEM program provides a challenging learning environment that covers the essential components of scientific, mathematical, and technological knowledge. It provides context for students to apply their skills in several project-based learning activities. These contexts are critical to the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills, problem-solving, creative and critical thinking skills, effective communication and collaboration which are critical requirements for VCE and 21st-century careers.

In the junior years, students will also undertake a breadth of subject matters with a semester in each year of Food Technology, Textiles, Wood, Metal, Art, Visual Communication, Drama, and Music. Damascus offers enrichment and recovery programs in English and Mathematics, and an after-school tutoring program, for those students that require academic extension or support.

In Years 9 and 10, students continue to follow the core subjects of Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Humanities, Science, and Health and Physical Education (with elective options in Semester 2 in Year 10). Students are also offered a range of pathway choices that contribute to the holistic development of each learner, these choices can vary from year to year, but generally include specialised Physical Education or Science courses, Food Technology, Textiles, Wood, Metal, Electronics, Art, Visual Communication, Drama, Music, Horticulture, and Languages (French or Indonesian). In addition, students can enrol in vocational courses that link to and enhance employment opportunities.

In Year 10, through a selection process, students can undertake accelerated study in VCE or VET subjects or participate in the Hands-on Learning Program.

Year 11 and 12 students can choose to complete the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the Victorian Certificate Education Vocational Major (VCE VM), Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses, and school-based apprenticeships. Students can in some cases, combine these options.

Students can begin the VCE in Year 10, but it is predominantly completed in Years 11 and 12. Student performance within the VCE is the foundation of the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR), used to determine placement offers at Australian universities.

VCE VM is a hands-on course designed to develop skills in preparation for further training and employment. Students undertaking VCE VM must also undertake a VET course. VET courses can also be undertaken as part of the VCE and involve training and workplace experiences. Damascus College offers in-school VET options; Allied Health, Building and Construction, and Sports and Recreation, and is part of a VET cluster of schools, enabling students to participate in a diverse range of industry-specific programs.

Damascus College offers its students a contemporary, progressive, and innovative education where leadership, collaboration, creativity, resilience, and technological know-how are at the forefront of learning and teaching practices.



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

The Damascus College community is proud, strong, and vibrant, and values its links with the local and global community.

The college values contributions from all community members, in an inclusive and welcoming community, and genuinely nurtures respectful relationships with students, staff, parents, guardians and alumni.

Damascus College fosters confident and diverse communication, as it builds pride, creates dialogue, celebrates its points of difference, and enhances the educational experience for students, staff, and parents.

Developing meaningful engagement opportunities with the internal and external community is vital at Damascus, as the college aims to develop strong, intergenerational connections that build parent and alumni collaboration. Damascus aims to form quality partnerships with families and strives for this collaboration to assist in providing positive educational outcomes.

Damascus places great value on the relationship and connections built with past students and staff of Damascus and the three foundation colleges, dating back to 1881. These long and proud connections are achieved and nurtured through celebrating achievements, hosting reunions, events, and fundraisers that engage with the alumni community, and invite them to be part of the Damascus future.

The college is committed to building quality links to the local, national and global community with meaningful partnerships to strengthen the capacity of the college. These partnerships assist in providing quality and varied student pathways and develop the flexibility and breadth of the student experience.

At Damascus, clear and confident communication is key to developing a strong partnership with the parent community.

There are various ways to communicate with parents, including emails, the college app, the college newsletter, SMS, website, publications, social media, phone, letters, and face-to-face interactions. All members within the Damascus community have a voice and it is important to ensure all voices are heard, therefore Damascus surveys students, parents, and guardians to gather input, opinions, and insights on various issues within the college.

Parents have access to the online Parent Access Module (PAM), which is an innovative online tool for parents to feel connected and informed about their student's progress while at Damascus.

Parents are actively engaged in college life and contribute generously to the growth of the college, students, and the broader Damascus community. The college hosts numerous opportunities for parents and guardians to engage in college life, such as the Opening Mass, Awards Nights, the Academic Assembly, Fundraisers, Damascus Day, Mother's and Father's day breakfasts, Community Guest Speaker events, Morning Teas, and Information Evenings.

Parents and guardians enjoy an enriched connection to college life through supporting student activities throughout the educational journey. There is a range of extra-curricular activities where parents can volunteer including the Sustainable Racing Team, the annual drama or music production, the rowing program and other sporting carnivals and events, including after-school sports.

All members within the Damascus community have great commitment and pride in contributing to the college, as Damascus celebrates diversity and inclusion within a safe and supportive environment.

FACILITIES AND LEARNING SPACES

Located 7km from the Ballarat CBD, Damascus College students and staff are blessed with a contemporary learning environment, providing modern facilities nestled in an inspiring 20-hectare native bush setting.

ADMINISTRATION FACILITIES

The Mercy Administration Wing provides a welcoming focal point for family and student support functions, including reception, administration, college leadership, human resources, and governance.

The Damascus Events Centre is a purpose-built gathering space for connecting with our community. It provides a bright, comfortable examination centre for students and is equipped with a full commercial kitchen, which can host and cater to up to 450 guests. The lower-level houses college Archives, Uniform Shop, Business Services and the Marketing and Development team.

GENERAL LEARNING SPACES

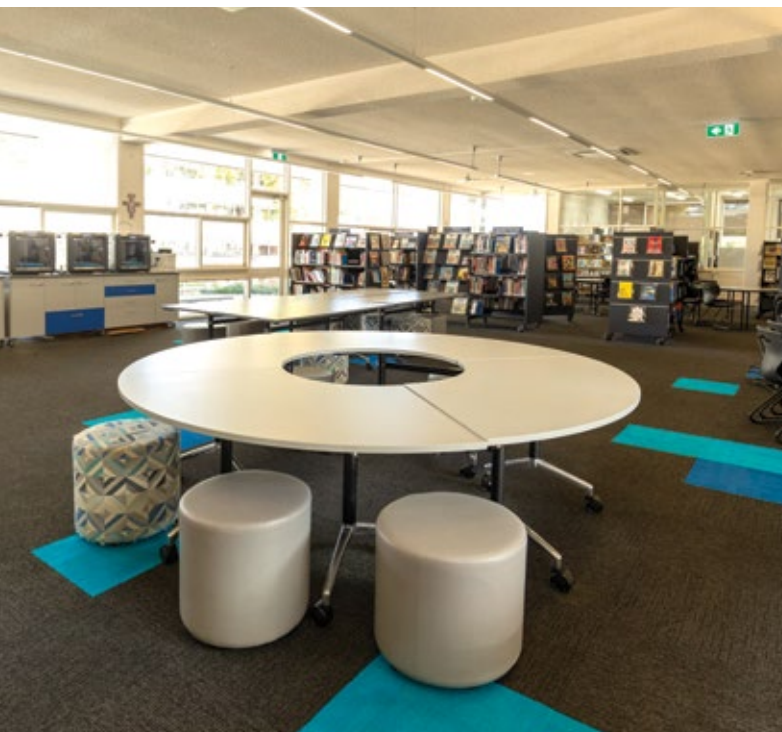
Years 7 and 8 Catherine McAuley Wing, comprises fourteen spacious, light-filled modern classrooms that also provide flexibility for larger gatherings and group learning opportunities.

Years 9 and 10 Wing, a warm and welcoming building comprising ten contemporary classrooms with a layout aimed at stimulating collaborative and flexible learning.

Years 11 and 12 Sacred Heart Wing, a four-storey building comprising eighteen classrooms and a Year 12 common room, situated adjacent to the open bushland with an inspiring view over the western region of Ballarat.

The Lady of Mercy Chapel provides an intimate space for worship and is regularly used for Religious Education classes, liturgies, prayer, and quiet reflection.





FACILITIES AND LEARNING SPACES

SPECIALIST LEARNING SPACES

St Martin's Resource Centre, provides a collaborative learning and teaching space, easily accessible to all students before and after school or during recess and lunchtime. It comprises a range of flexible learning spaces, from open reading areas to smaller rooms for group work. Students are also supported with access to Counselling and ICT Services within the Centre.

Genevieve McDonald Science Wing is a collaborative learning and teaching space, boasting seven modern science laboratories, facilitating general, theoretical, and specialist science classes across all year levels. Its flexibility provides opportunities for both practical learning and team-teaching opportunities.

Valda Ward Auditorium, a 150-seat performing arts space, is used for drama classes, annual college productions, and other performance events. The space can also be used for lecture-style teaching. Additional drama, music ensemble, and several private tuition rooms are available for engagement in the college instrumental music program.

St Paul's Technology Wing accommodates dedicated spaces for a broad range of hands-on learning experiences, including two large food technology rooms with fully equipped kitchens, woodwork rooms, electronics and engineering, metalwork and fabrication, building and construction, arts, a dark room for photography, textiles, studio arts, and visual communications.

SPORTING FACILITIES

Sports oval, with the versatility to host athletics, cricket, AFL, soccer, and delivery of the PE program.

John Shannon Centre, an indoor gymnasium with two full-size basketball courts and provides an all-school gathering space.

An all-weather recreational space with four netball/tennis courts capable of hosting hockey, soccer, and other outdoor activities.

Outdoor gym equipment overlooking the native bushland and walking trail.

APPLIED LEARNING FACILITIES

Sustainable Racing Team facility used to design, manufacture, test, and build energy-efficient vehicles, as well as provide fully programmable training equipment.

Mudbrick Hut, built by students and staff of St Martins in the Pines and the Sisters of Mercy. This facility was a practical immersion into alternate materials, sustainability and resourcefulness and is used by the horticulture program.

Coffee Van, a commercially compliant van for barista training through applied learning.

Greenhouse and Vegetable Garden for horticulture and environmental classes.

Murnong Trail—800-metre biodiversity walking trail recognising the significance of the Murnong plant to the Wadawarrung people and utilised in science and humanities classes.

Commemorative Walk, a 240-metre bush walking trail commemorating the service of past students, staff, and sponsors of Damascus College and foundation schools, culminating in a seated communal space for sharing and reflection.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Damascus College offers an innovative and diverse extra-curricular program that compliments the curriculum.

- After-school sports—basketball, football, soccer, netball, athletics, swimming, cricket, tennis, volleyball, badminton, mountain bike riding, golf and others
- Art Club
- Book Club
- Chess Club
- College Choir
- College tour guides
- Creator Space 3D printing Group
- Debating and public speaking
- Drama Club
- Dungeons and Dragons Club
- Environment and Sustainability Group—The Green Group
- French Conversation Group
- Fundraising and social justice activities
- Instrumental music and voice
- Interschool Sporting Association (Ballarat Associated Schools)
- Koorie Club
- Leadership opportunities—SRC, Peer Mentoring Program, Digital Ambassador Program, and Wellbeing Group Music Lessons
- Music Groups - African drumming, jazz ensemble, singing, string ensemble
- Overseas language trips - French and Indonesian
- Performing Arts program—drama and music productions
- Photography
- Pride Committee
- Rowing Program
- Social justice groups—Justice Action Group (JAG)
- Sustainable Racing Team — design and build energy-efficient vehicles
- Textiles Club
- Timor-Leste Immersion Program
- Visual art exhibitions
- Volunteering
- Youth Ministry Group
- Writing Club



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Damascus College recognises the Wadawurrung people who have cared for the land and waterways of this country for more than 60,000 years. The Damascus site allows students the opportunity to engage with the rich traditions of First Nations peoples in caring for the site and integrating Indigenous culture into the curriculum.

As a Catholic college in the Mercy tradition, the Damascus community is called to hear and respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Damascus College is committed to teaching and exemplifying an integral ecology and developing a sustainable way of life at the college. Pope Francis urges everyone to view both the ecological and the human crisis through an integral approach, as a way to work together to protect the earth, our common home. (Laudato Si)

This commitment is displayed in several ways:

- Through teaching integral ecology and practical sustainability in subjects like Religious Education, Science, and Humanities and the extra-curricular program of the college's Sustainable Racing Team.
- Through the intentional choice of energy-conserving and sustainable measures in the resourcing of infrastructure and materials such as paper.
- Through the college's commitment to the ResourceSmart program, signed in 2012, which focuses on sustainable development in four key areas: waste, water, energy, and biodiversity.
- Through creating a Sustainability Committee within the college under the auspices of the Faith and Catholic Identity pillar to lead Damascus on the path of integral ecology.

- Through the college's Christian Personal Development Award (CPDA), which introduces students to volunteer work, including workshops with local Landcare groups.

Damascus College is blessed with a prominent hilltop site overlooking southern Ballarat. Students and staff enjoy the campus being set on an inspiring 20 hectares, allowing most classrooms to have a beautiful vista of the surrounding bushland.

Close to the buildings are extensive plantings of native vegetation, while beyond them, the hillsides are covered in indigenous forest. Part of this forest is an area of rich biodiversity, which is now protected under the "Land for Wildlife" program.

In 2015 the college developed the Murnong Trail, which draws attention to the richness of flora and fauna. Its name celebrates an indigenous species, the yam daisy or Murnong, a significant part of Aboriginal agriculture.

Many schools have worked hard to create areas of natural beauty within their premises—Damascus has it already, and education, preservation, and celebration of the environment are central to the future of the college.





CAMPS AND RETREATS

Camps and retreats are a crucial dimension of the learning program at Damascus College. They are designed to progressively grow students' ability to engage with their peers, staff, and faith journey in holistic and life-giving ways.

Students at Damascus College participate in college camps in Years 7, 8, and 9 and retreats in Years 10, 11, and 12.

YEAR 7 CAMP

Early in Term 1, an overnight camp is structured in house groups of approximately 50 students. The focus is on developing relationships with staff and fellow students, and extending one's skills while exploring personal values. This Year 7 camp is a great way to support student transition into Damascus College.

YEAR 8 CAMP

A two-night camp structured in core class groups that develops and strengthens friendships, aimed at building skills and confidence in outdoor education, such as water activities, pitching a tent, and preparing a pack.

YEAR 9 CAMP

A four-night outdoor education experience involving camping, trekking, bike riding, and canoeing. The focus is teamwork, facing challenges outside one's comfort zone, and building resilience. This camp is a challenging but rewarding experience, allowing students to build confidence and develop practical bush survival skills in the company of friends and supportive, qualified staff.

YEAR 10 TO 12 RETREATS

An overnight experience that enhances students' Christian understandings and allows them to further explore the themes of social justice, Mercy, and Christian spirituality.

REFLECTION DAYS

Students in Years 7 to 9 take time out for personal reflection in a setting beyond the confines of day-to-day college life. Each reflection day explores a different theme relating to the Catholic faith tradition.

The following opportunities are optional experiences outside the college fee structure:

SKI TRIP

Organised over an extended weekend and available to Years 9 to 12 students. This provides a wonderful opportunity for students to experience the snow and try a new sport.

OVERSEAS TRIPS

There are three opportunities available. Students who study French or Indonesian in their senior year levels can choose to participate in an overseas cultural and language program in France or Indonesia. These are run in alternate years.

The third opportunity offers Year 11 students a unique opportunity to participate in the Timor-Leste Immersion Program, where students visit the college's sister school in Ainaro, Timor-Leste. Students participate in fundraising throughout the year and donate to the sister school and community of Ainaro. All overseas opportunities provide students with valuable insights into other cultures and build on their foreign language skills.



TRANSITION PROGRAM

Transitioning from primary to secondary school can be daunting for many young people. At Damascus College, the aim is to make this transition as smooth as possible by offering several support structures for incoming students.

Students from all Catholic primary schools in the Ballarat Diocese are given the opportunity in Grade 5 to spend one day exploring the college and they participate in classroom activities. This opportunity is specifically designed to introduce students to the secondary school experience and, particularly, to the Damascus community.

In Term 4, the year prior to commencement (Grade 6) at the college, the Damascus Transition Coordinator conducts a visit or contacts all primary schools of incoming students (Catholic and non-Catholic). This pastoral visit and contact is designed to answer the students' questions, dispel any fears about the impending move to secondary school, and discuss the student's needs, academic or otherwise, with teaching and support staff.

A full Orientation Day is held in December, the year before commencement, which provides an opportunity for students to meet their new peers, Teachers, Teacher Advisors (TA), and House leaders and familiarise themselves with the college environment. Additional transition opportunities exist to assist students moving to Damascus from a primary school with low enrolment numbers where students may be unaccustomed to a large volume of peers.

Students attend TA meetings, to assist students with being comfortable and confident for their first day at Damascus.

The first day of school in Year 7 is attended by only Year 7 and 12 students. This provides an opportunity for peer mentoring, as senior students assist the Year 7 students in familiarising themselves with the college. It also enables the Year 7 students to settle into their environment before the remaining year levels commence the following day.

Literacy and numeracy testing is conducted for all incoming Year 7 students in the first weeks of Term 1, to gauge the overall literacy and numeracy standard of students entering Damascus. This testing assists in providing the best educational and pastoral support for all students upon entry to the college.

Students attend Year 7 Camp early in Term 1, to develop relationships with staff and students, extend skills and explore personal values.

Year 7 students and families are invited to attend the college in mid-Term 1 to allow parents to meet the teachers and friends of their student in an informal setting and gives parents a chance to share the new experience with their student.

Damascus College prides itself on its comprehensive Transition Program, which provides one-on-one support for students and their families as needed.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Together. We are
Damascus.

Damascus College, established in 1995, has a long and rich tradition of more than 140 years, with its origin in three foundation colleges. Sacred Heart College (est. 1881), St Paul's Technical College (est. 1948), and St Martin's in the Pines (est. 1967). Past students and staff of these foundation colleges and Damascus College form our alumni. Together, we celebrate our proud history and recognise and celebrate our foundation colleges.

The purpose and aim of the Damascus College Alumni group is to:

- Create ongoing links between the college and the alumni community.
- Engage alumni through the provision of activities of interest to members.
- Actively seek to involve alumni in the life and activities of the college.
- Recognise and celebrate alumni for their contributions to the broader community, the college, and its students.
- Provide a means for alumni to provide support for the college.
- Engage and celebrate alumni and inspire current students to strive to achieve.

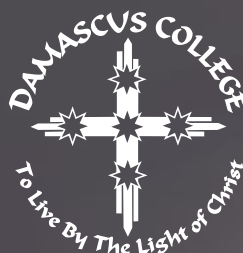
As an alumnus, you can enjoy the opportunities available to you to reconnect with the college, past students, and staff through:

- Class Reunions, Annual Specialty Group Reunions
- Alumni Facebook groups
- Invitations to special events
- The Alumni Art Prize – commissioning of past student to produce artwork exploring the college motto 'To Live By The Light of Christ.'
- The Shining Light Award – celebrates and recognises past student achievements
- Participation in college events as a guest speaker or special guest

For further information or to reconnect as a past student or staff member, please go to the Damascus website by clicking Community and then Alumni.

Join the Damascus College Ballarat Alumni Group on Facebook.

Contact Alumni staff via connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au



connecting@Damascus

SCUS EVENTS CE



Democratic Principles

The Education and Reform Act 2006 requires all education providers to operate in a manner consistent with this set of Australian democratic principles.

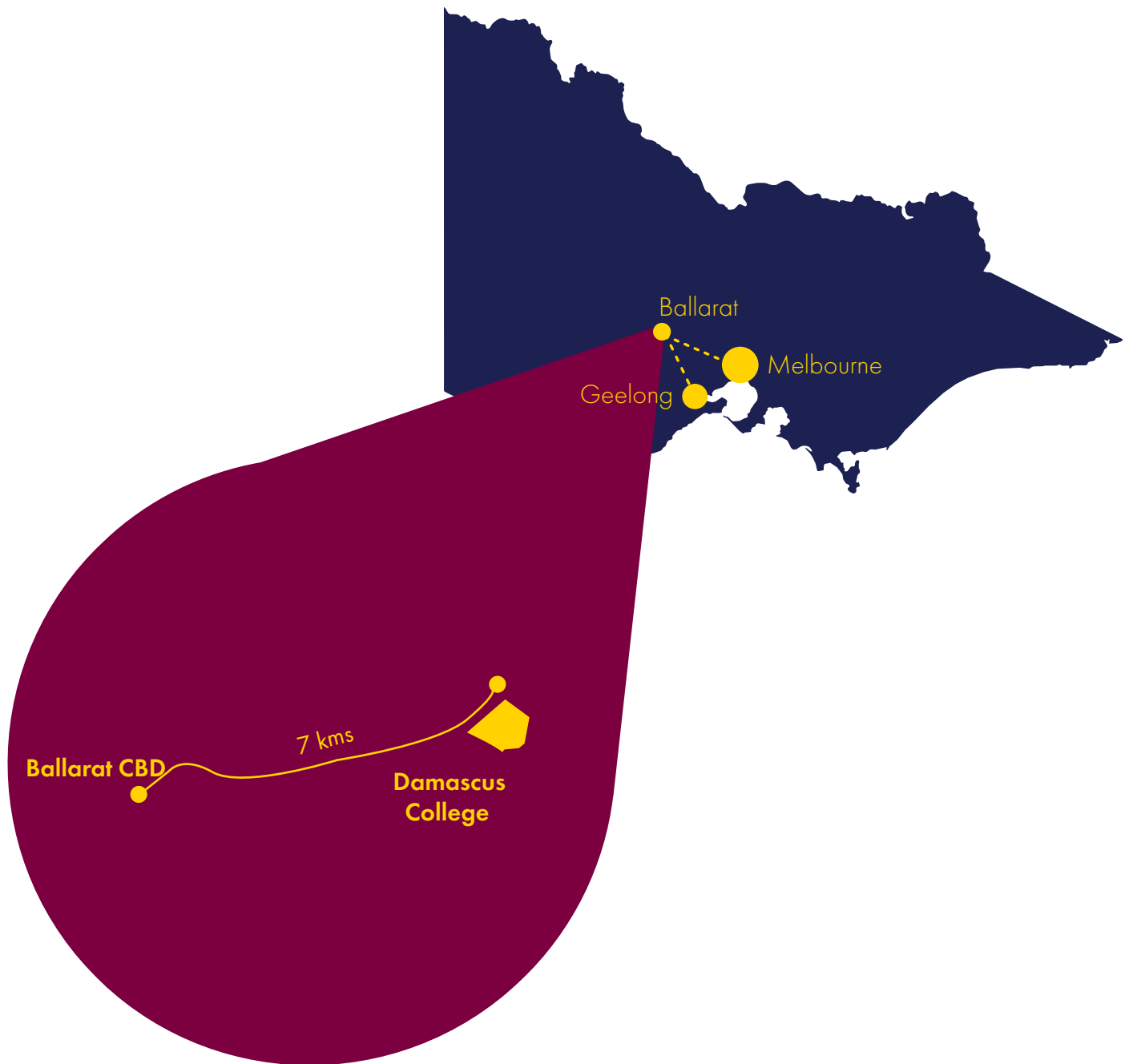
In accordance with the Act, Damascus College delivers curriculum programs and learning and teaching in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy.

This includes a commitment to:

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance

Please refer to the College Democratic Principles on the Damascus College website.





Further Information

The Damascus College website has a wealth of information that you can access anytime and anywhere.

Please visit damascus.vic.edu.au to obtain the latest information on Damascus College, including but not limited to: curriculum overview, subject selection, wellbeing program, camps, tuition fees, uniform, events, latest news, reunions, publications, and much more. Please follow Damascus College on social media to stay updated with college updates and activities, via Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Linked In. To get in contact with the College, you can email info@damascus.vic.edu.au or call 03 5337 2222.

Tour the College

Damascus College welcomes you to experience and tour the college during school hours, as it allows you to immerse yourself in the buzz of the daily college atmosphere. Student led school tours are conducted during school terms, generally on Thursdays at 9am. The length of the school tours are approximately 75 minutes. The College Registrar will meet with families on the completion of the tour for any questions. To register for a tour, visit the website and click on Visit Us, or phone the college on 03 5337 2222 for further information.

You can also experience a school tour in the comfort of your own lounge room via the virtual tour link on the college website. Please visit the Damascus website damascus.vic.edu.au, and the virtual tour link is located in the top left corner.



damascus.vic.edu.au

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