



- **High ranking Higher School Certificate**
- **Secure, dynamic and exciting learning environment**
- **Vibrant Christian community** ● **Affordable Fees**
- **High technology learning environment**
- **High quality teaching practices** ● **Skilled and dedicated staff**

**“Guiding  
our  
Children”**

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*“To Live is Christ”*

Phillippians 1:21





# A warm welcome from the Head of College

It is a joy to invite you to seriously consider St Mark's as the College you trust for your child's education. Our children are our hope for the future and St Mark's exists to provide the best possible springboard for your child's future, and to work in partnership with you in maximising that opportunity and potential.



St Mark's is a leading co-educational K-12 independent School in this region and annually gains high Higher School Certificate Results. Year 12-2010 achieved the 47th highest ranking of all schools in NSW.

St Mark's is a vibrant Christian community based in the Coptic Orthodox tradition. It is a secure, dynamic and exciting learning environment with a strong academic focus. This encourages our students to enthusiastically pursue excellence, develop their skills and talents in all dimensions.

We believe that learning is lifelong and that students learn best in relationship with their teachers where they feel secure and valued. Hence teachers help our students to develop in all areas of life with values affirmed such as integrity, companion, self discipline, leadership skills, and multicultural understanding to enable them to serve effectively as global citizens anywhere.

St Mark's is a low fee paying, high technology College, which emphasises high quality teaching practices with a skilled and dedicated staff. I wholeheartedly encourage you to enter in partnership with St Mark's as this can only benefit your child.

**Geoff Clark JP**  
Head of College  
M.Ed., B.Ed. Adv Dip Tchg., TTC, MACE, MACEL



# History

St Mark's College was the first Coptic school to be established in Sydney and the third in Australia, following the two schools in Melbourne. After many difficulties in finding a site, "The College" began in a small, rented, unused Catholic school in Lidcombe in 1996 with 226 students from Kindergarten to Year 7. Fr Markos Tawfik was the founding Director of the College. In 1997, a new Board was established for the College under the direction of HG Bishop Paula and Fr Antonios Kaldas became Director and currently serves in that capacity. In 1999, the College moved to its present permanent site at Wattle Grove in the south west of Sydney. In 2001, the first group of 21 students graduated from the College, with the majority of them scoring well enough to go to university. Of special blessing was the result of Mena Salib, a Year 11 student who completed his Mathematics Extension course one year early and came first in the state in this subject.

2011 sees the College under the guidance of a new Principal, Mr Geoff Clark, with over 50 staff and 530 students from Kindergarten to Year 12. The College is growing rapidly, with expanding facilities scheduled to be completed by 2011 (Stage 1) and 2012

**“  
St Mark's College is not only a school  
but it's a community. I for one have been  
in the school my entire schooling life, and  
now at the end of it I look back and say that  
my time could not have been better placed,  
no finer school to learn in. The school has  
helped not only bring me up to succeed in  
later life, but also to succeed in the eyes of  
God.”**

**Daniel Rafla Year 12 2011**

**History=Past=Future**

# Junior School (K-6)

## Learning and Teaching

Enabling Students to progress and realise their full potential is at the heart of everything we do through the distinctive, sincere and continuous practice of Christian love, service and humility which provides students with the opportunity to develop and display a high moral standard. Our students are challenged to strive to achieve excellence and success in all areas of the curriculum by attaining their full potential, having confidence in who they are as Christian individuals and becoming active participants in Church and the Australian community. We encourage our students to develop skills in Coptic Orthodox studies which will make them effective and reflective lifelong learners.

The deeply integrated curriculum aims to enhance the learning experience and make it relevant for the students.

## An Enrichment Curriculum for all

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that are dear to our school. The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.

These are the main values of our school, upon which we have based our curriculum:

- ✓ We value the way in which all children are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development of each child, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- ✓ We value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our curriculum so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our community.
- ✓ We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our school for their uniqueness, and we treat all with fairness and honesty. We aim to enable each pupil to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all the children in our school.
- ✓ We value our environment, and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

St Mark's Junior School aims to meet the individual needs of the child, irrespective of age, aptitudes, abilities and interests of that child. Special attention is given to those with ESL(English as a Second Language) learning difficulties and disabilities and gifted education needs.

## ILP's (Individual Learning Plans)

Each student in the Junior School is individually assessed and catered for according to their individual needs. This is called an ILP (Individual Learning Plan). An ILP identifies the student's specific learning expectations and outlines how the school will address these expectations through appropriate accommodations, program modifications and/or alternative programs as well as specific instructional and assessment strategies. The learning program provided for the student is modified on the basis of the results obtained through

continuous assessment and evaluation. Our teachers work closely with parents and liaise with trained professionals, to maximise each child's potential.

## Parent Partnership

We aim to work in partnership with our parents to provide the highest quality education possible for all of our children. We will welcome your involvement and will encourage you to take an active role in your child's education.

You will receive regular communication about your child's progress. Parents will also be consulted and kept informed of all of the school's developments. Parents will be provided with semester reports on their child's progress. We also provide weekly opportunities for parents to speak to their class teacher at the end of the school day.

There are also structures in place for parents to have greater involvement in the school.

## Leadership and Service

Junior School students are encouraged to develop the Leadership skills and to aspire to special positions of responsibility. The Junior School captains, house leaders and School Representative Council (SRC) provide invaluable leadership and service opportunities. The students in Kindergarten who must remember to put their hat on before going outside to play; the Junior School Class Captains and SRC monitors; the Year 6 House Captains and those with responsibility in Music, Sport and Social Work, all develop the confidence to take the lead.

## Primary Sports

St Mark's College is affiliated with the following School Sporting bodies at the Primary level, thus providing a diverse range of opportunities at representation level. IPSSO is an Independent Primary Schools Sports Organisation that we compete in on a weekly basis throughout the year for Year 3-6 students. Sports in this organisation include Cricket, Basketball, Soccer, Netball, Newcombe Ball, Softball and Teeball.

Our Junior School also has annual carnivals including Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country carnivals. Students are then selected from those carnivals to compete at ASISSA (All Suburbs Independent School Sports Association) level. At ASISSA there are between 15-20 Independent schools that come to compete against one another with their elite athletes.

At St Mark's we also cater for our K-2 students and for our 3-6 students that are not involved in an IPSSO team by organising clinics such as Gymnastics, Aussie Hoops, AFL, NRL, and Cricket. We also have a swimming program that is organised for all K-6 students in Term 4.

Every student is given many opportunities to foster their sporting talents and interest.



# Secondary School (7-12)

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College is accredited with the NSW Board of Studies, enabling students to qualify for the awards of both the NSW School Certificate in Year 10 and the NSW Higher School Certificate in Year 12. Subject choices are as follows:

## Year 7

*All subjects compulsory*

- Coptic Orthodox Studies
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- History and Geography
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
- Music
- Technology
- Visual Arts

## Year 8

*All subjects compulsory*

- Coptic Orthodox Studies
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- History & Geography
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
- Japanese
- Music
- Technology
- Visual Arts

## Years 9 & 10

*Core Subjects:*

- Coptic Orthodox Studies
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Australian History and Australian Geography
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education

*2 Electives from the following list:*

- Commerce
- Coptic Studies
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- Food Technology
- Information and Software Technology
- Industrial Technology
- Japanese
- Music

- Physical Activity and Sports Studies
- Visual Arts

## Years 11 & 12

Students can qualify for the NSW Higher School Certificate by studying a minimum of 12 units in Year 11 and 10 units in Year 12, with at least two of these units being in English. Coptic Orthodox Studies is a mandatory College requirement. Other courses that students can choose from are listed below.

*2 Unit Subjects offered:*

- English – Advanced
  - English – Standard
  - Mathematics
  - General Mathematics
  - Ancient History
  - Biology
  - Business Studies
  - Chemistry
  - Design and Technology
  - Drama
  - Economics
  - Food Technology
  - Geography
  - Industrial Technology
  - Information Processes and Technology
  - Legal Studies
  - Modern History
  - Music
  - Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
  - Physics
  - Senior Science
  - Software Design & Development
  - Studies of Religion II
  - Visual Arts
- Year 11 – 1 Unit Courses offered:*
- Preliminary Extension English
  - Fundamentals of English
  - Mathematics Extension I
  - Sports, Lifestyle and Recreation Studies
  - Studies of Religion I

*Year 12 – 1 Unit Courses offered:*

- English Extension I
- Mathematics Extension I
- Mathematics Extension II
- History Extension

Opportunities are also available for students to attend external Vocational Education Courses at TAFE Colleges. NOTE: Not all subjects are necessarily offered each year.



# A Pursuit for Academic Excellence

Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox College provides students with a broad, well balanced, comprehensive and extensive education. For every student, each day is an adventure in learning, where Christ is at the centre of all activities. The curriculum is stimulating and challenging and is aimed at achieving academic excellence across all levels. Lessons are student-centred and engaging, with students taking responsibility for their learning in a supportive atmosphere. Students are provided with an environment that fosters their strengths as learners and prepares them for the increasingly complex demands of modern society, technology, tertiary study and citizenship in a global community.

## HSE excellence and depth

Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox College has an outstanding reputation as one of the leading academic non-selective schools in South Western Sydney. Saint Mark's students perform exceptionally well in the Higher School Certificate examinations, with a high percentage of students consistently achieving results in the top bands across all subjects. The academic strengths at the College are broad. Mathematics, Science and English courses all enjoy prominent and widespread success. The majority of Year 12 students gain entry to their first choice university degree.

## Academic philosophy

The academic philosophy of Saint Mark's is to encourage and support students to strive for excellence in all of their pursuits. This is achieved through an emphasis on the key learning areas of literacy and numeracy and by staff assisting students to achieve their educational goals, within a caring and safe environment.

The wide range of elective and extension courses available, coupled with differentiated instruction and tasks in the classroom, allow for the catering of individual student interests and expertise. Learning support opportunities accommodate and support students with special needs, offering both remedial and gifted and talented programmes.

The College has a highly successful Mathematics Acceleration Program in place, whereby selected students undertake the study of Mathematics at a year above their standard level. Such students go on to finish Higher School Certificate Mathematics courses in Year 11, with the majority of them achieving in the top band for this subject.

## Integration of Technology

The Integration of Technology into the teaching and learning experiences of students is an essential educational experience. Information and Communication Technology skills are incorporated across all curriculum areas and are the basis of teacher instruction and student learning at the College.

## Careers Support

Students receive careers advice, support and academic counselling on an ongoing basis. This assists students in making informed decisions about their subject selections and future tertiary studies. The College provides intensive training to Year 12 students who choose to sit for the Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admission Test (UMAT).

## Raising the bar

### (OUTDOOR EDUCATION & CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES)

St Mark's College strongly believes in providing students with challenges and experiences that will enhance the students' overall development. It is for this reason that all students from Years 3 to Year 12 participate in annual Camps and Retreats in September. These camps have been designed to provide each and every student with an experience that is positive, safe and spiritual.

Our Junior School camps focus on peer group bonding and the excitement of being introduced to the great Australian outdoors, with plenty of opportunities for dynamic learning in a natural environment. Camp experiences support classroom learning.

The programs selected and activities are age specific, with children constantly supervised by teachers and qualified instructors.

Our Senior Camp programs incorporate a range of adventure options which encourage students to move beyond their comfort zone and experience the rewards of achievement. Through challenges, at both a personal and team level, students experience enhanced self esteem and confidence, improved communication skills and a greater sense of community with peers and teachers.

The Year 7 camp occurs early in the year and acts as an orientation and friendship building activity. This allows students to settle into the demands of the Secondary College quite easily as well as setting the expectations and network of teachers.

Year 12 can be an exciting year with the prospect of going out into the wide world ahead but the final HSC examinations must first be completed. It is for this reason that a special retreat is set up to work with our senior students on their feelings, ambitions and study commitments. It is also a wonderful opportunity to reach out to our Lord to ask for help in the future.

## Public Speaking/Debating

The College participates in Mock trial, public speaking and debating competitions each year.





## Literacy

The Spalding Method is a total phonetic based language arts approach providing explicit, sequential, multisensory instruction in handwriting, spelling, writing, listening, reading decoding and comprehension, punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary. Starting in Infant School, it develops critical thinking skills applicable across the curriculum, and it enables teachers to plan lessons based on continuous assessment of individual needs.

***“The Spalding Method is taught at St Mark’s College from Kindergarten to Year 6”***

**The Spalding Method consists of four elements**

1. Spelling

This is taught by teaching the sounds of English language (phonograms), together with spelling and language rules and concepts. The use of a spelling notebook enables your child to progressively develop vocabulary, reading and writing skills simultaneously.

2. Writing

Students are taught using the rules of English to write sentences and paragraphs of quality in all subject areas. They will learn analytical skills and develop a capacity to analyse their own writing.

3. Comprehension

These skills are an essential basis for a love of reading. Students learn to appreciate the characteristics of quality literature and writing together with an understanding of how passages are organised.

4. Philosophy

The Spalding Method emphasises the importance of the child as a learner now and for life by integrating all subject areas and developing the child’s listening, speaking, reading and writing skills through a multi-sensory approach. It develops higher level thinking processes and expectations in students.

**Further Information**

- Acting on the research finding that the core deficiency of pupils with specific learning difficulties is the inability to hear all the 45 sounds of English, Spalding builds phonemic awareness by implementing the recommendations of the most up-to-date cognitive studies of early childhood.

## Numeracy

Teaching approaches and practices in Mathematics include open-ended activities, practical activities and games discussion of mathematical understandings. There is a focus on students sharing their thought processes, targeting the understanding of individual children and the use of mental computation.





## Testimony

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College is a school unlike any other. I spent the best part of 9 years at the College, growing up in a caring environment and an atmosphere that allowed me to find my feet for the challenges that I would face after school.

As a student at the College, I was blessed with numerous opportunities which enhanced my overall development. Some of my fondest recollections are those spent not only inside the classroom, but those memories which occurred during extra-curricular activities.

During my time, I felt that the College understood the importance of a well-rounded education. Some of the activities which I had the pleasure of partaking in included the Mock Trial competition as well as being part of the team which won the school's first ever SWISSA championship, just to name a few.

This is not to say though that the time in the classroom was not one that was also treasured. The dedication, support and focus on academic development which the staff at the school showed, enlightened me to also want to become a teacher myself one day. There are endless examples which I can recall where staff were more than willing to give up their time to help their students. This is where I feel that one of the greatest advantages for the college lies; where other schools are much larger, it is the smaller class sizes in the senior years which allows teacher to gauge a more personal interest in the learning of their students.

The College also showed an important emphasis on the spiritual upbringing of students. I always felt comfortable in the fact that there was always a church father around who I could talk to if I needed advice and that a liturgy would never be far away. This was no more important than in my senior years at the school.

I was also privileged to become School Captain in Year 12. This position allowed me to take on leadership roles that I would later use while also giving me, I believe, an advantage in early employment opportunities.

My time at the College also put me in good stead for university life. While there may be those which argue that the school shelters students from interacting with people from other cultures, nothing could be further from the truth. My experiences at the College through a variety of subjects, excursions and camps allowed me to keep an open mind while ensuring that I did not interact with negative associates during my tertiary studies.

I have almost come full circle, not only as a student but also as a teacher at the school. My decision to come back and teach here was not one where I saw this as a profession but rather as a service. This was an opportunity to give back and to show that same care, love and dedication which my teachers showed to me. This seed of helping others has been planted so deep within me, that as a teacher, I have also managed to spend time in Africa, teaching some of the most disadvantaged children in the world.

It is remarkable to see just how far the school has come in the last 15 years. I am proud to call myself a product of St. Mark's and excited to see where the huge potential which the college has will take it over the next 15 years to come.

**Robert Bishay, former student and current teacher**



**“As a primary school captain of 2011, I have seen a lot of improvements in the school over the years. I really enjoy how all the students are friendly and treated equally from the teachers. The teachers of St Mark's are very helpful, caring and dedicated to help the students.”**

**Trevina Williams – Year 6 Primary School Captain 2011**

# Sports

St Mark's is a College growing in sporting success. Our emphasis is based on providing maximum opportunity for success at all levels of sport and physical activity participation.

## OPPORTUNITY presents itself at St Mark's

ALL students at St Mark's are given the opportunity to participate in sport. From Kindergarten to Year 12, students are exposed to sporting and physical activity pursuits at a variety of levels.

From Year 3 onwards, all students are given the chance to represent the College in competitive sport. Early exposure allows students to develop interactive and bonding skills within the College community as well as enhancing the ability to interrelate with students from other schools, backgrounds and cultures.

## Building a TRADITION of Achievement and Excellence

St Mark's has quickly developed a strong and competitive reputation in sports such as Oz Tag, Basketball, Cross Country and Athletics, with students achieving high levels of success at district, regional and state level competition. Venues across NSW such as The International Regatta Centre at Penrith, The Olympic Athletics Centre at Homebush, & the International Triathlon Circuit in Sydney are just a few of the many venues students at St Mark's have the opportunity to compete at and be involved in.

## Great & exciting PROSPECTS at your fingertips

The Multipurpose Centre enables students to enjoy a diverse range of sporting & physical activity pursuits. Surrounded by a Performing Arts and Hospitality hub, the site provides a wonderful training, competition, recreation and participation on-campus facility. Physical Education lessons and Outdoor Education students will be able to make great use of this state of the art facility.

The multi-purpose area provides a perfect arena for Futsal, Netball, Basketball, Tennis and Volleyball teams to further enhance their skills at all levels of competition.

Not only can students compete and participate in an array of sporting endeavours, but opportunities to progress into coaching and refereeing ranks are available within the College.

## Participate, Apply, Achieve...

All students at St Mark's are encouraged to participate in the College Interhouse carnivals which include Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country. This ensures that the College is able to field strong and competitive representative teams to contest at Zone/District level (S.W.I.S.S.A – South West Independent School Sports Association and I.P.S.S.O – Independent Primary Schools Sports Organisation), Regional level (A.I.C.E.S – Association of Independent Co-Educational Schools and A.S.I.S.S.A – All Suburbs Independent Schools Sports Association) and State level (N.S.W.C.I.S – New South Wales Combined Independent Schools).

St Mark's continues to expand and flourish not only in the Independent

sector of competition, but also at the All Schools level of competition. The College competes in a range of sports which include basketball, touch football, Softball, volleyball, cricket, football (soccer), netball, oz tag, rugby league, futsal, tennis, table tennis, middle and long distance running and triathlon. With such a vast array of sports, the opportunities are countless within the College to pursue excellence at all levels.

Over the last few years St Mark's has created strong partnerships with groups such as the Australian Rugby League (ARL) and Football NSW (FNSW), which has created a huge range of competitive opportunities including the Andrew Ryan Shield and the NSW Regional Futsal Championships. This has further provided pathways of success for students to represent at a state and national level.

The St Mark's running program has recently been introduced into the College. This gives our students the opportunity to compete in events such as the Sun Herald City to Surf, The Blackmores Sydney Running Festival, and the Olympic Park Run for Fun.

**“ I enjoy St Mark's College because it gives you the opportunity to learn and be educated extremely hard. It also gives you the privilege to participate in many sporting activities. Last but not least St Mark's has an exceptional music program for all students. ”**

**Monica Wilson – Year 5 2011**





ARTIST IMPRESSION

# Our new building under construction



ARTIST IM



## Vision Statement

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College is a school that works in partnership with parents to create an atmosphere where Christian values and Coptic Orthodox tradition are the foundation of the school's practices and where students and staff feel secure and supported by all members of the school community.

The distinctive, sincere and continuous practice of Christian love, service and humility provides students with the opportunity to develop and display a high moral standard.

Our students are challenged to strive to achieve excellence and success in all areas of the curriculum by attaining their full potential, having confidence in who they are as Christian individuals and becoming active participants in Church and the Australian community.

## How do you find us?

St Mark's College is located in the quiet South Western suburb of Wattle Grove in NSW Australia. Close to major traffic routes it makes for easy access to the College from anywhere in Sydney. For more finite details you can go to Google Maps, or you can purchase a Gregory's and or a UBD street directory.



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