



ST MARK'S COPTIC ORTHODOX COLLEGE



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Dear Members of the St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College Community

It is with great pride and a sense of gratitude to God that I present to you our Annual Report for the past year. As the Head of College, I have been privileged to witness the exceptional achievements and progress of our students, staff, and wider College community, which I am pleased to share with you in this report.

This year has been marked by a remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of unprecedented challenges. Our commitment to providing a holistic and nurturing educational environment, rooted in our Christian faith, has remained strong. This dedication is reflected in the solid academic results and the numerous achievements our students received this year.

Our academic programs continue to grow and mature, ensuring that we offer a comprehensive and challenging curriculum that prepares our students for the future. Our innovative teaching methods, combined with a supportive and faith-enriched learning environment, have enabled our students to excel and reach their highest potential. We are proud to highlight the success stories of our students who have achieved top rankings in their HSC and other years, demonstrating exceptional talents in various competitions and examinations.

Beyond academics, St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College has remained steadfast in its mission to develop well-rounded individuals, nurturing both their academic and spiritual life. Our extracurricular and sporting programs have flourished, with students actively participating in sports, arts, music, community service, and spiritual activities. These activities not only enhance our students' skills and talents but also instil values of teamwork, leadership, social responsibility, and faith.

Our dedicated staff members have been instrumental in the successes we celebrate today. Their passion for education and their support for our students have created a nurturing and inspiring environment. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all our teachers, administrators, and support staff for their hard work and dedication, which is always guided by our shared faith and values.

We have also made significant strides in improving our facilities and resources. The continued investment in our infrastructure ensures that our students have access to the best possible learning environment. Our modern classrooms, laboratories, canteen, gymnasium and recreational spaces provide the perfect setting for academic and personal growth within a spiritually supportive context. Community engagement remains a cornerstone of our college. We have strengthened our ties with parents, alumni, local organisations, and the Church's that support our families, fostering a collaborative spirit that enriches the educational experience for our students. The support and involvement of our community have been invaluable, and we look forward to continuing these partnerships in the years to come.

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the collective efforts that have brought us to where we are today. We remain committed to our mission of nurturing the minds and hearts of our students, guided by the values and principles that define St Mark's College. Our journey is continuously blessed by our faith and the grace of God.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our vision. Together, with God's guidance, we will continue to achieve great things and build a bright future for our students.

God Bless



Mr Anthony Deans

Head of College



Significance of St Mark's College Logo

The logo of St Mark's College holds profound meaning and symbolism, reflecting the heritage and values of our institution.

Southern Cross: Surrounding the Coptic Cross, the Southern Cross represents Australia, as it appears on the Australian national flag, highlighting our location and national identity.

Coptic Cross: At the center of the logo, the Coptic Cross signifies the Coptic roots of the college, emphasising our cultural and religious heritage.

Lotus Leaves: Encircling the Coptic Cross, the lotus leaves symbolise Egypt, connecting us to ancient Egyptian heritage and traditions.

Coptic Word "EKHOWAB": Meaning "Holy" in the ancient language of the Coptic Church, this word serves as a reminder of God's presence among us and our call to live a holy life.

Establishment Year (1996): The date signifies the year of the college's founding, marking the beginning of our journey.

Motto "To Live Is Christ": This verse encapsulates the guiding principle and aspiration of everyone at St Mark's College, inspiring us to live by Christ's teachings.

Each element of our logo weaves together to tell the story of St Mark's College, celebrating our Australian setting, Coptic heritage, and commitment to faith and education.



Introduction

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College (SMCOC) is a coeducational K-12 institution established in 1996. Initially operating from temporary facilities in Lidcombe, the College relocated to its current site in Wattle Grove in 1999. SMCOC delivers the NSW Curriculum under the guidelines of the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) and undergoes periodic reviews and audits to ensure compliance. Receiving Federal Government Recurrent Funding through the NSW State Government, the College meets all Federal requirements and responsibilities as set by the Department of Education & Training (DET). While accountable to State Government authorities for curriculum, SMCOC operates independently of the NSW Department of Education (DoE) and the Catholic Education Office.

The ethos of the Coptic Orthodox Church is deeply embedded in the College's spiritual and pastoral framework. While approximately 70% of our students come from Coptic Orthodox backgrounds, we maintain an inclusive enrolment policy that welcomes students from diverse cultures and faiths. Currently, our student body represents twenty-one religious and eighteen cultural backgrounds, drawing enrolments from across Sydney's West, North, and South.

At SMCOC, we partner with parents to cultivate an environment where Christian values and Coptic Orthodox traditions form the bedrock of our school culture. This supportive and secure atmosphere encourages a service-oriented mindset among both staff and students, contributing to their academic and personal success. Despite being a comprehensive, non-selective school, we consistently achieve high academic results, particularly in Year 12, while addressing the common challenges faced by all schools within the framework of Coptic Christian values.

Our students are encouraged to strive for excellence in all areas of the curriculum, developing their potential and gaining confidence as Christian individuals who actively participate in both Church and the broader Australian community. We believe in the inherent ability of all students to learn, advocating for pedagogies and practices that support diverse learners. Our teaching methods challenge students intellectually, connect them to the world beyond the classroom, engage with differences, and provide robust support in their learning journeys. Assessment practices at SMCOC are designed to capture a wide array of outcomes, demonstrating the richness of student achievement beyond a limited set of knowledge.

Our ongoing goal is to strengthen our learning community, ensuring that student success is supported by knowledgeable, collaborative teachers and engaged families who share our educational ethos.

About the Board

St Mark's College is governed by the NSW Coptic Education Board, which currently comprises six appointed volunteers as of June 2023. Under the guidance of His Holiness Pope Tawadros III, His Eminence Metropolitan Tadros of the Diocese of Port Said serves as the Papal Representative, alongside the Interim Trustees Board of the Coptic Orthodox Church (NSW) Property. The NSW Coptic Education Board serves as the governing body of St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College, with delegated authority and profound gratitude to His Holiness Pope Tawadros II for the privilege to serve God through our schools.

As a Board, our ongoing mission is to uphold excellence across our Colleges. We believe deeply in fostering strong and cohesive relationships among executives, teachers, support staff, and the Board itself, recognizing that these relationships are crucial to the sustained success of our schools, supported by the unwavering involvement of our community.

The primary objective of the Board is to cultivate a safe, Christian, and nurturing environment that empowers our students to excel in their education and realise their full potential. We encourage and support students to achieve their best academically, in sports, the arts, and other extracurricular pursuits, all within a Christian framework.

The 2023 NSW Coptic Education Board consisted of the following dedicated members:

Name	Profession	Position
Mr Mahrous (Ross) Nassif	Industrial Relation	Chairman
Dr Lydia Moussa	Organisational Management	Secretary
Ms Debbie Armanious	Pastoral Care	Board member
Mr Mark Girgis	Buildings and Constructions	Board Member
Dr Emad Awadalla	Finance	Board Member

Each member of the Board contributes to our collective mission with commitment and passion, striving to ensure the ongoing success and growth of St Mark's College.

A Message from the College Board

The NSW Coptic Orthodox Board of Education (the Board) extends its gratitude to our gracious and merciful God for the blessings of the 2023 school year. As we compile this annual report for St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College, it is evident that our community has experienced God's mercy and blessings, highlighted by numerous achievements and milestones.

In our commitment to continuous improvement, the Board facilitated twelve (12) workshops with over 150 participants to develop a new strategic plan guiding the College's growth and development for the next five years. Central to this strategic plan is our vision for the College:

“To enrich our children with Christian teachings founded upon the Coptic Orthodox Faith, becoming value-driven Australian citizens, connected as one body with unique gifts.”

This vision is supported by core values such as Respect, Unity, Service, Resilience, and Growth. The College has set goals addressing the critical pillars that form its foundation:

1. Students
2. Staff
3. Pastoral journey
4. Wellbeing
5. Curriculum
6. Community
7. Resources

We celebrate the outstanding success of the St Mark's Senior Debating Team. Under the mentorship and coaching of Mrs. Bestawros, the team won the 2023 Senior Division of the Heads of Independent Co-educational Schools (HICES) Debating Competition, triumphing over 274 teams from more than 50 schools. This remarkable achievement reflects the dedication and hard work of our students and staff.

The Board recognizes and appreciates the unwavering support, dedication, commitment, and prayers of the entire St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College community. Through God's grace and the collective efforts of our community, our institution has excelled in academics, co-curricular activities, and the holistic development of young women and men grounded in the Coptic Orthodox Faith.

We ask for your continued prayers for the ongoing success of the College.

The NSW Board of Education

2023 Curriculum Overview

In 2023, St Mark's College continued its commitment to the 2020-2023 Learning Goals, now in their third year of implementation. Our focus on staff professional development and targeted objectives remained steadfast.

Professional Development:

Throughout the year, St Mark's College prioritised professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing both institutional and individual growth among our staff members.

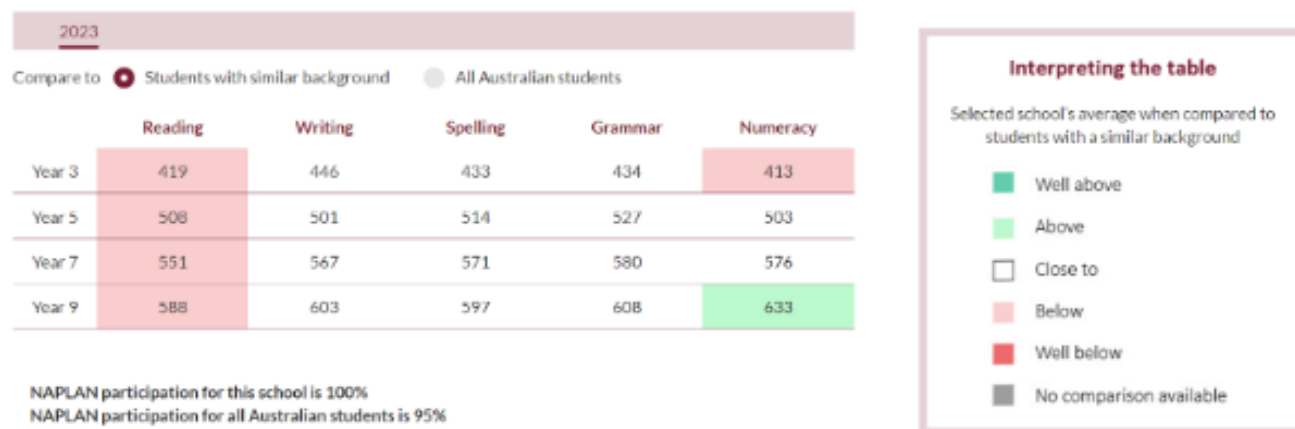
HSC Minimum Standards Testing:

The College successfully administered HSC Minimum Standards tests. Over 90% of our students achieved the minimum standard on their initial attempt, reflecting our ongoing dedication to academic excellence.

NAPLAN Summary:

In response to Naplan reading results from 2023 the College embarked on strategies to improve reading instruction and delivery that integrated the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) model. This is a Canadian based program that monitors student growth on a range of key skills. It helps teachers diagnose students and provides them with the tools to deliver a Balanced Literacy Program using the Gradual Release of Responsibility framework.

NAPLAN Results





2023 HSC Summary

HSC marks were achieved by students in the following courses:

- Arabic Continuers
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- English Advanced
- English Standard
- Food Technology
- Legal Studies
- Maths Advanced
- Maths Standard
- Modern Greek Beginners
- Modern Greek Continuers
- PDHPE
- Physics Serbian Continuers
- Studies of Religion 1
- Studies of Religion 2
- Visual Arts

HSC Band Summary

71 Students

317 HSC Band Scores

Overall Band Attainment Charts:

2 Unit Subjects Band Attainment - 282 Scores



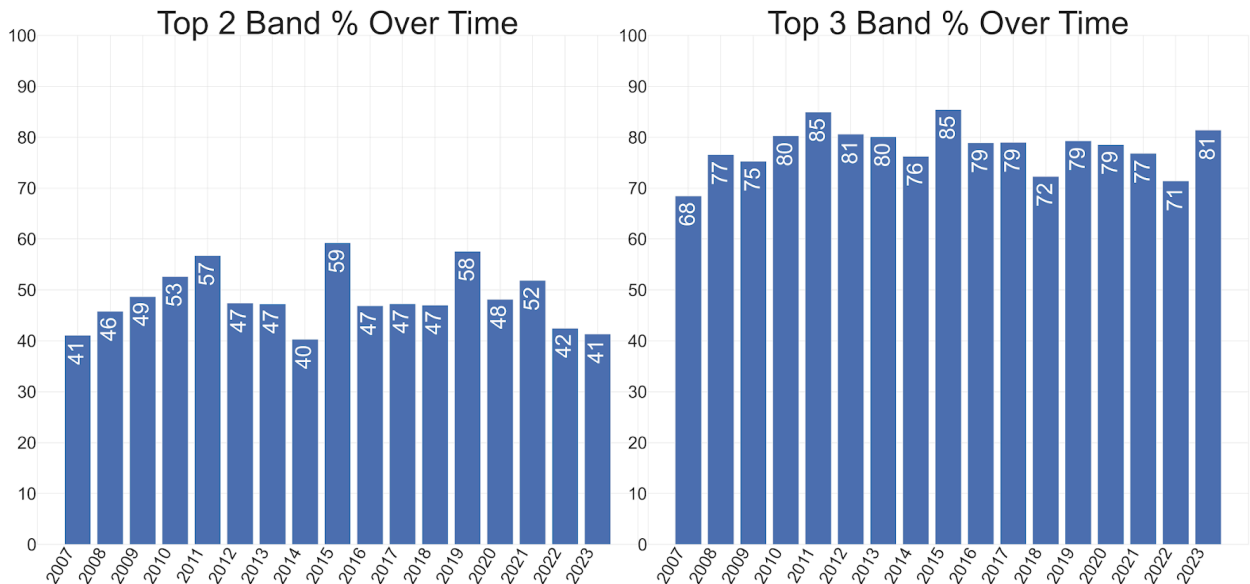
Extension Subjects Band Attainment - 35 Scores



Top Two Bands:



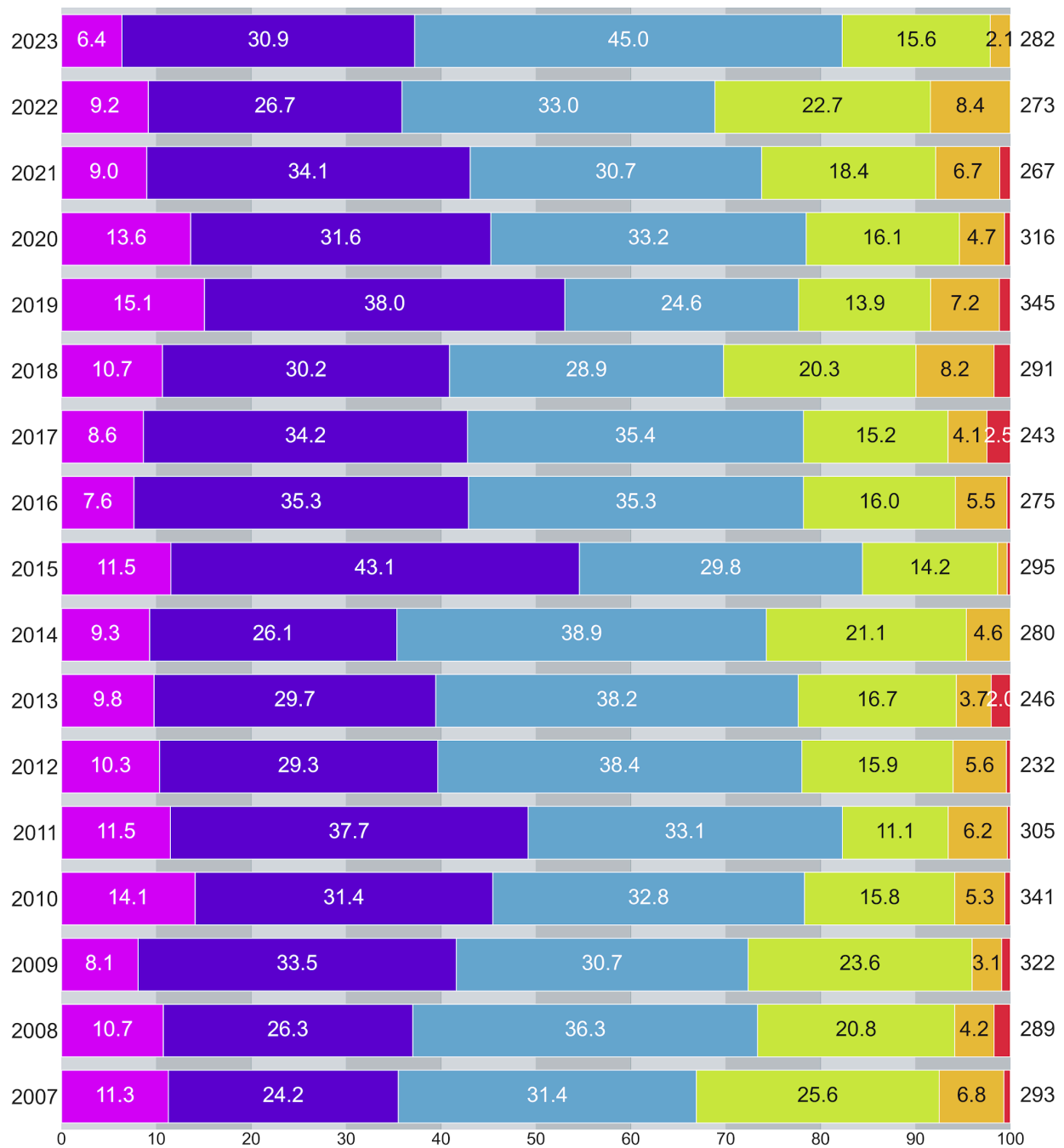
Top Three Bands:



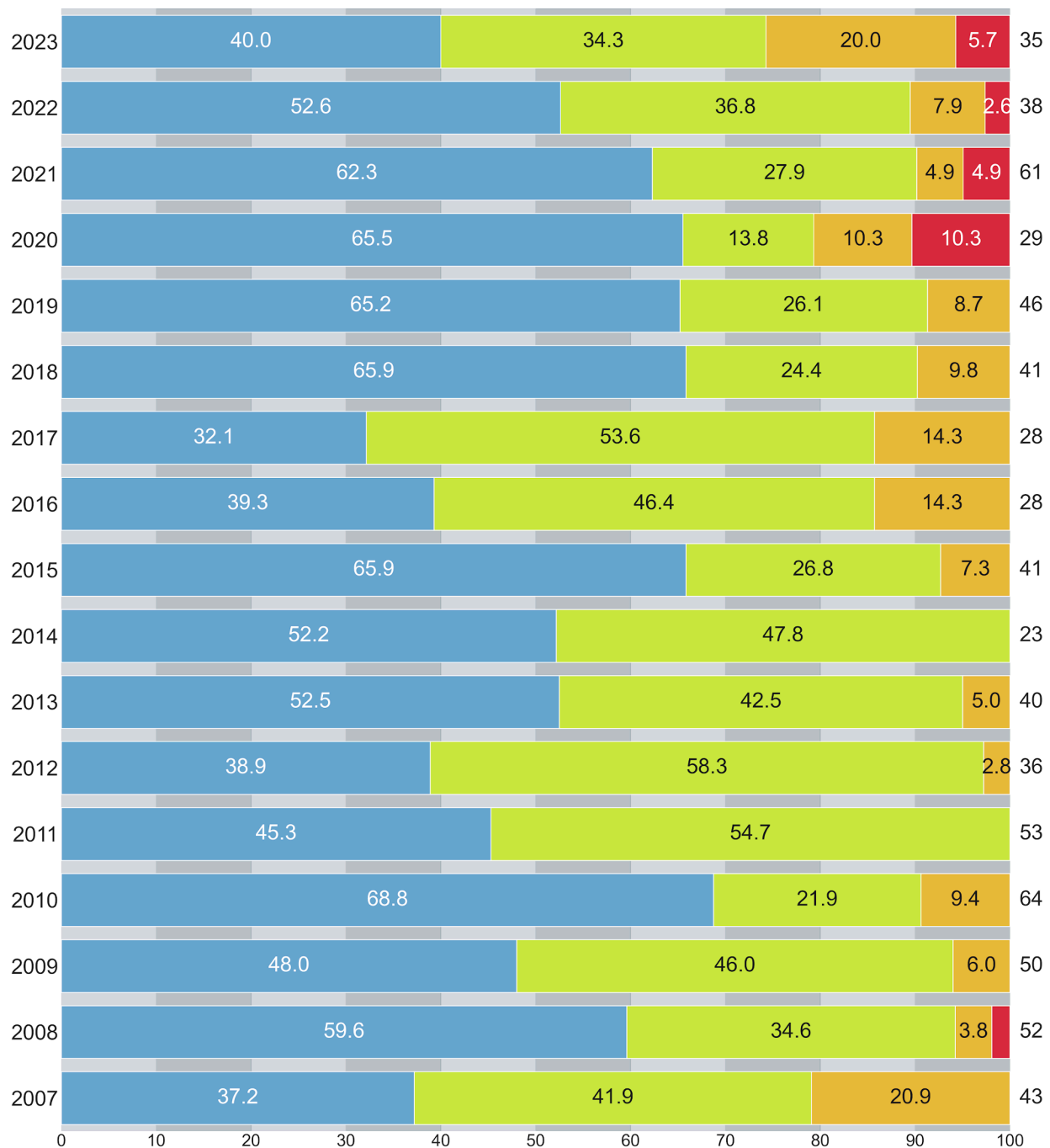
HSC Band Ranges

Subject		B6	B5	B4	B3	B2	B1
All Subjects		4.8% (18)	23.1% (87)	37.4% (141)	14.9% (56)	3.4% (13)	0.5% (2)
Arabic Continuers	(1)		100.0% (1)				
Biology	(13)		23.1% (3)	61.5% (8)	15.4% (2)		
Business Studies	(29)		27.6% (8)	51.7% (15)	17.2% (5)	3.4% (1)	
Chemistry	(27)	11.1% (3)	25.9% (7)	51.9% (14)	7.4% (2)	3.7% (1)	
Economics	(5)			80.0% (4)	20.0% (1)		
English Advanced	(36)	16.7% (6)	58.3% (21)	25.0% (9)			
English Ext 1	(4)				100.0% (4)		
English Standard	(24)		12.5% (3)	62.5% (15)	25.0% (6)		
Food Technology	(12)		25.0% (3)	66.7% (8)	8.3% (1)		
Legal Studies	(16)		25.0% (4)	37.5% (6)	37.5% (6)		
Maths Advanced	(17)	5.9% (1)	29.4% (5)	23.5% (4)	35.3% (6)	5.9% (1)	
Maths Ext 1	(20)			45.0% (9)	20.0% (4)	25.0% (5)	10.0% (2)
Maths Ext 2	(11)			45.5% (5)	36.4% (4)	18.2% (2)	
Maths Standard 2	(25)	12.0% (3)	44.0% (11)	24.0% (6)	16.0% (4)	4.0% (1)	
Modern Greek Beginners	(1)	100.0% (1)					
Modern Greek Continuers	(1)	100.0% (1)					
Orthodox Studies	(60)						
PDH&PE	(16)		25.0% (4)	50.0% (8)	25.0% (4)		
Physics	(24)	4.2% (1)	29.2% (7)	41.7% (10)	20.8% (5)	4.2% (1)	
Serbian Continuers	(2)	100.0% (2)					
Studies of Religion I	(11)		36.4% (4)	45.5% (5)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)	
Studies of Religion II	(17)		5.9% (1)	88.2% (15)	5.9% (1)		
Visual Arts	(5)		100.0% (5)				

Band Percentages - 2 Unit Subjects



Band Percentages - Extension Subjects

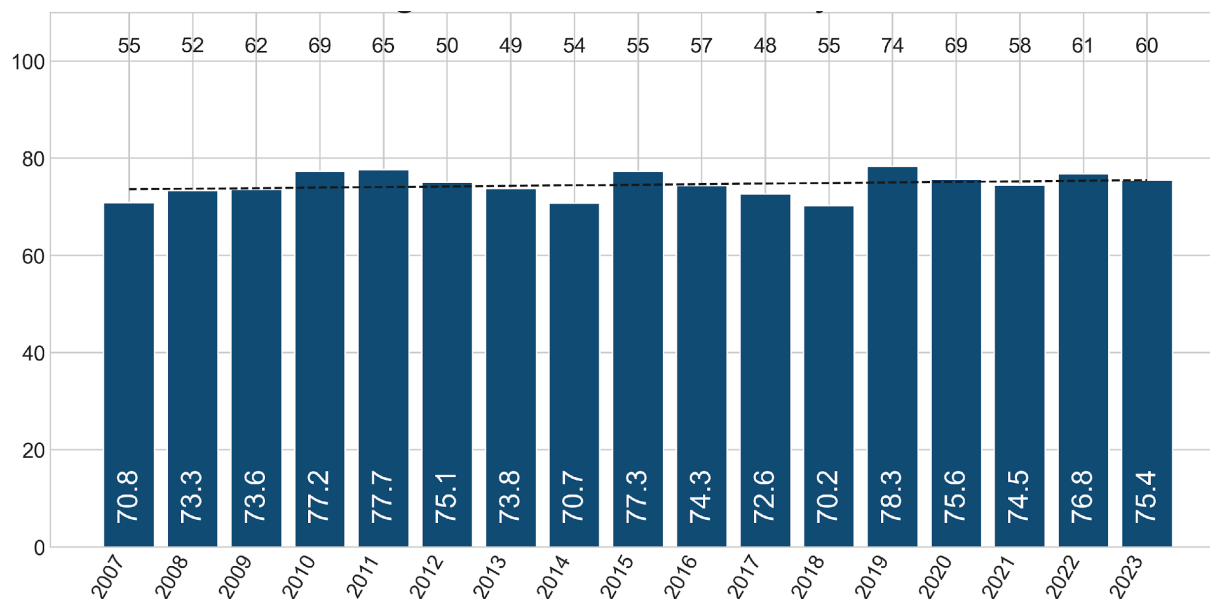


ATAR Summary

	All	Boys	Girls
Count	60 (61)	32 (34)	28 (27)
Avg ATAR	75.43 (76.77)	78.7 (74.99)	71.69 (79.01)
Med. ATAR	76.74 (78.9)	79.2 (78.74)	72.72 (82.71)
St. Dev.	14.34 (17.57)	15.38 (18.53)	12.26 (16.35)
Min ATAR	37.83 (41.74)	37.83 (43.86)	48.11 (41.74)
Max ATAR	98.85 (99.82)	98.85 (99.82)	90.1 (98.81)

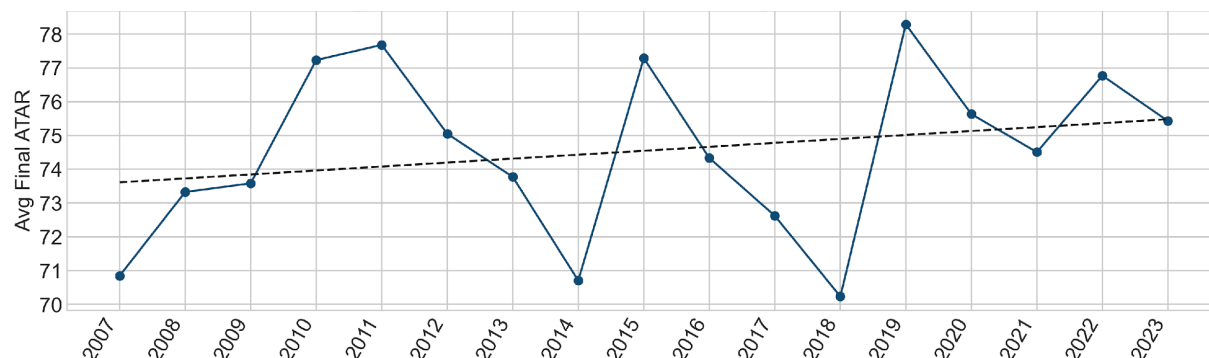
The above table shows some summary statistics of all Year 12 students who were eligible to receive an ATAR in 2023.

Avg Final ATAR Scores by Year



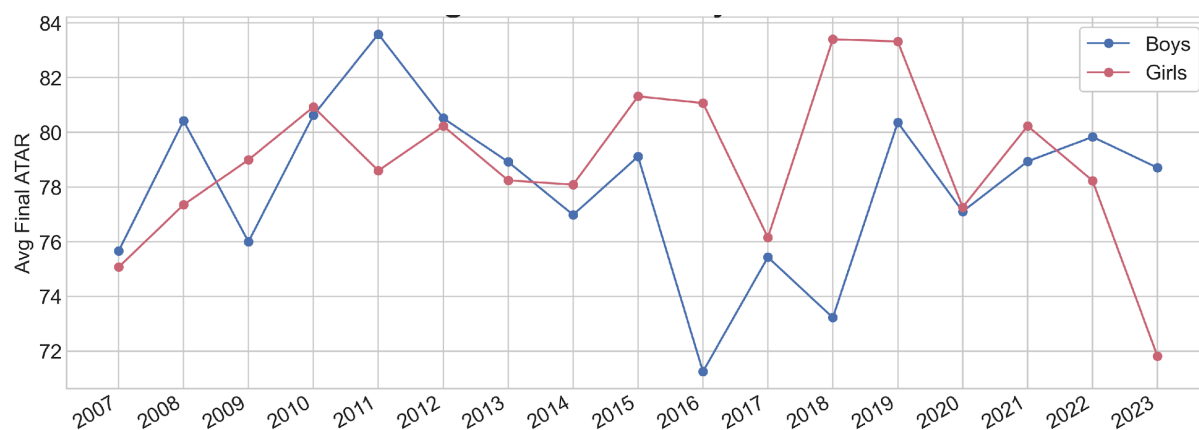
Over the last five years the trend has been one of general decrease in performance in terms of average ATAR scores with an average decrease in ATAR score achievement of -0.46 ATAR points per year.

Avg Final ATAR Scores by Year - Line



The line chart shows a zoomed in perspective of the change in average final ATAR scores achieved by students at St Marks from 2007 to 2023.

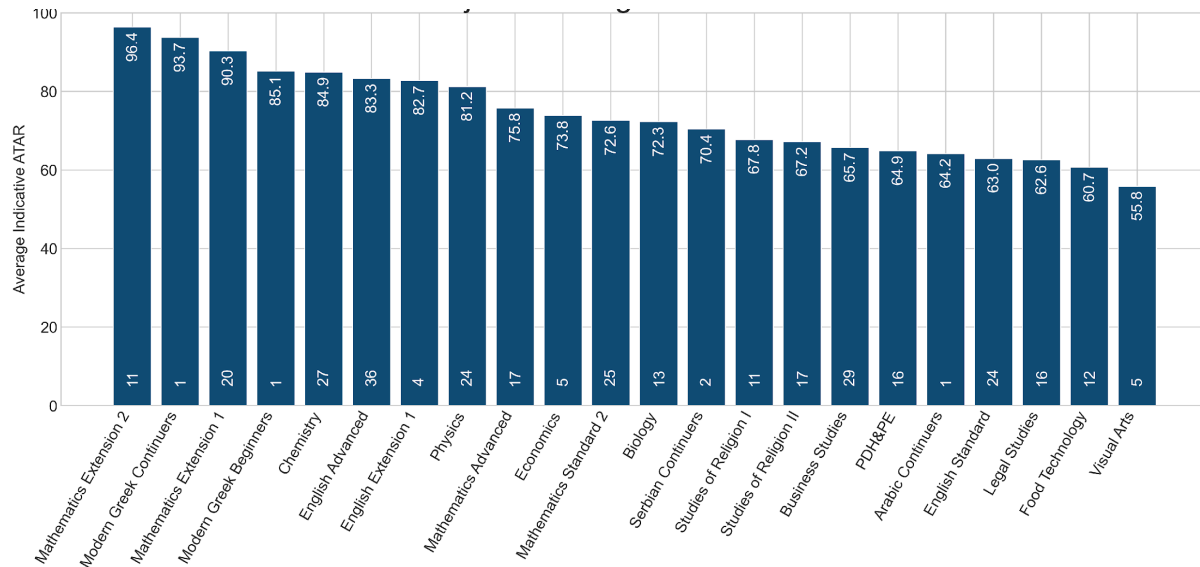
Avg Final ATAR by Gender



Indicative ATAR Ranges

Subject		90s	80s	70s	60s	50s	<50
All Subjects		20.5% (65)	19.6% (62)	19.9% (63)	19.9% (63)	13.6% (43)	6.6% (21)
Arabic Continuers	(1)				100.0% (1)		
Biology	(13)		23.1% (3)	46.2% (6)	15.4% (2)	15.4% (2)	
Business Studies	(29)	6.9% (2)	17.2% (5)	10.3% (3)	27.6% (8)	24.1% (7)	13.8% (4)
Chemistry	(27)	37.0% (10)	29.6% (8)	22.2% (6)	7.4% (2)	3.7% (1)	
Economics	(5)		20.0% (1)	60.0% (3)	20.0% (1)		
English Advanced	(36)	38.9% (14)	16.7% (6)	33.3% (12)	11.1% (4)		
English Ext 1	(4)		75.0% (3)	25.0% (1)			
English Standard	(24)		8.3% (2)	16.7% (4)	33.3% (8)	25.0% (6)	16.7% (4)
Food Technology	(12)		16.7% (2)		41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)	25.0% (3)
Legal Studies	(16)		18.8% (3)	18.8% (3)	18.8% (3)	18.8% (3)	25.0% (4)
Maths Advanced	(17)	23.5% (4)	17.6% (3)	17.6% (3)	35.3% (6)	5.9% (1)	
Maths Ext 1	(20)	65.0% (13)	20.0% (4)	5.0% (1)		10.0% (2)	
Maths Ext 2	(11)	81.8% (9)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)			
Maths Standard 2	(25)	16.0% (4)	28.0% (7)	20.0% (5)	8.0% (2)	16.0% (4)	12.0% (3)
Modern Greek Beginners	(1)		100.0% (1)				
Modern Greek Continuers	(1)	100.0% (1)					
PDH&PE	(16)		25.0% (4)	18.8% (3)	25.0% (4)	12.5% (2)	18.8% (3)
Physics	(24)	33.3% (8)	29.2% (7)	12.5% (3)	20.8% (5)	4.2% (1)	
Serbian Continuers	(2)			50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)		
Studies of Religion I	(11)		9.1% (1)	36.4% (4)	9.1% (1)	45.5% (5)	
Studies of Religion II	(17)		5.9% (1)	23.5% (4)	52.9% (9)	17.6% (3)	
Visual Arts	(5)				20.0% (1)	80.0% (4)	

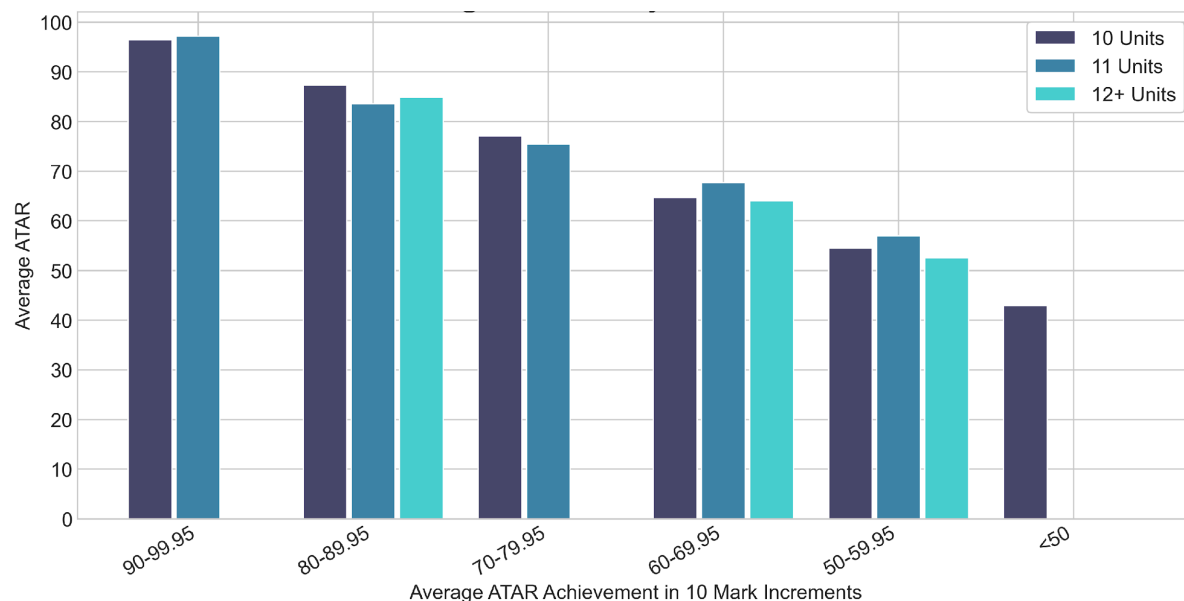
All Subjects Average Indicative ATAR Scores



This report analyses the results of 22 subjects studied at St Marks in 2023. The subject with the highest indicative ATAR was Mathematics Extension 2 with an average indicative ATAR score of 96.39. The subject with the lowest average indicative ATAR was Visual Arts with an average indicative ATAR score of 55.85.

The average Indicative ATAR for all subjects in 2023 was 74.4. This is compared to 2022 when the average indicative ATAR score for the school was 74.98.

Average ATAR by Units Studied



The above chart shows the average final ATAR achievement of students in the final ATAR increments shown, split into the number of units studied in 2020.



Summary of Results

At St Marks in 2023:

41 students studied 10 units
12 students studied 11 units and
7 students studied 12 units or more.

TARGETS:

- *Highest ever school rank*
- *Stronger conversion rate of students on 87% - 89% into Band 6*
- *75% of subjects outperforming the state in the HSC exam*



2023 Priority Areas

K - 6

1. Reading – Reading continues to be the focus.
In 2023 K-2 completed the Progressive Achievement Test and K-6 students completed the PAT-R test. PAT-R (The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading (PAT-R) are tests designed to assist teachers in their assessment of students' reading comprehension, vocabulary and spelling. It provides teachers with objective information for setting realistic learning goals and planning effective programs. We also introduced DRA which is an individually administered assessment of student reading proficiency. The DRA allows teachers to determine each student's instructional level for reading and provides a method for evaluating their individual reading growth over time.
2. Reading program: Sunshine online is used to reinforce more reading and comprehension activities at home for years 3-6.
3. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria is used in the classroom to ensure the students follow the steps needed to achieve success in the lesson by achieving their targets/goals.
4. Hands on Mathematics activities and problem solving continues to be the focus. Students' achievements will be monitored using PAT Math.
2023 K-6 completed the PAT Maths program. This evidence based assessment will assist teachers to monitor their students' growth and progress.

Enhanced Support Initiatives

In 2023, St Mark's College bolstered support services with targeted interventions using the Positive Behavior for Learning (PBL) approach. Small group sessions, one-on-one support, and specialised programs were implemented across K-6, supported by dedicated full-time staff where needed. These efforts aim to provide tailored support that nurtures student development and fosters a positive learning environment conducive to academic success.

A data wall in a primary school has been an effective tool for monitoring and enhancing students' reading growth. It visually displays each student's progress, allowing teachers to quickly identify those who are excelling and those who need additional support. By tracking reading achievements and challenges in real-time, educators can tailor interventions and strategies to meet individual needs, fostering a more personalised and effective learning environment. This approach not only helps in maintaining accountability but also encourages a collaborative effort among teachers to ensure every student reaches their reading milestones.

Primary Curriculum and Assessment

- At St Mark's College Junior School, our primary focus is on fostering a positive approach to learning, ensuring that every child feels secure, happy, and confident. Our curriculum framework is designed to achieve the following objectives:
- Promoting Security and Confidence: We create an environment where children feel safe and supported, enabling them to thrive academically and emotionally.
- Encouraging Independence and Responsibility: Students are empowered to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering independence and responsibility.
- Stimulating Learning Experiences: We provide activities that inspire and motivate students, encouraging them to explore new experiences and deepen their understanding.
- Embracing Experimentation and Discovery: Students are encouraged to experiment, take risks, and engage in hands-on learning to discover and pursue their interests.
- Developing Problem-Solving Skills: We emphasise the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills essential for lifelong learning.
- Personalised Learning: Individual learning needs are addressed through differentiated instruction, ensuring every student receives the support they need to succeed.
- Promoting Communication and Collaboration: Students engage in discussions with peers and participate in class dialogues to enhance learning and problem-solving skills.
- Parental Engagement: We maintain open communication with parents to discuss student progress, ensuring transparency and collaboration in their educational journey.
- Fostering Respect: Respect for others is actively modelled, encouraged, supported, and expected within our school community, fostering a positive and inclusive environment.
- Through these principles, St Mark's College Junior School cultivates a nurturing and supportive educational environment where every child can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Key Learning Areas and Extra Curricula:

- Literacy (SPALDING Program)
- Numeracy (Hands on activities involving real life experiences)
- Science and Technology
- Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)
- Health and Physical Education
- The Arts-Music, Visual Arts, Drama
- Coptic Orthodox Studies
- Coptic Studies
- Drama
- Debate
- Activities/clubs



Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of each curriculum area and an on-going process. It is to be a continuous process throughout a child's schooling. The information provided will assist in planning and catering for individual needs. Various modes of assessment will be used to monitor and promote learning, and these include:

- Observation/anecdotal records
- Sample of children's work
- Running Record (reading development levels)
- Teacher made tests/Weekly spelling tests
- Parent/Teacher interviews
- Diagnostic Tests
- NAPLAN
- DRA

Assessment Procedure

All types of assessments are created by teachers and approved by the head of primary and the head of teaching and learning prior to administering the assessment. Students are assessed in a variety of ways that include:

Topic tests are pen/pencil and paper testing which are conducted at the end of topics taught in each Key Learning Areas. The tests are designed to cater for students with different abilities. The first part of the test caters for students with basic abilities and it's about 60% of the value of the test. The Second part of the test caters for students who are more able to deal with challenging questions and it's about 20% of the value of the test. The final part of the test identifies the enriched students and it is about 20% of the test.

Projects and assignments are to incorporate the application of understanding and learning in areas such as HASS, Science, CAPA and may integrate other Key Learning Areas. This is clarified in the Junior School Scope and Sequence. Observing and recording students' understanding of the concepts taught in class as it occurs e.g. oral presentations, movement skills, language development, hands on tasks etc.

Assessment Recording Process

Teachers record the assessment results in their chronicle (daybook). Then after recording the results they save them on SEQTA (the college system).

Students Monitoring Process

Monitoring the students' progress and analysing their results to cater for all students in the College is vital. Therefore, the process below is followed:

- Curriculum based monitoring tests. The teachers use standardised tests that include all the material presented over the duration of the year
- Observation and interaction
- Weekly spelling tests
- Quizzes
- Topic tests
- Frequent evaluations
- Formative assessment
- Projects

Staff & Students

Professional Learning

St Mark's College continues to prioritise staff professional development in 2023. The College supports ongoing learning through various online platforms and modules, allowing staff to enhance their skills while effectively managing their work responsibilities.

Teacher Attendance & Retention

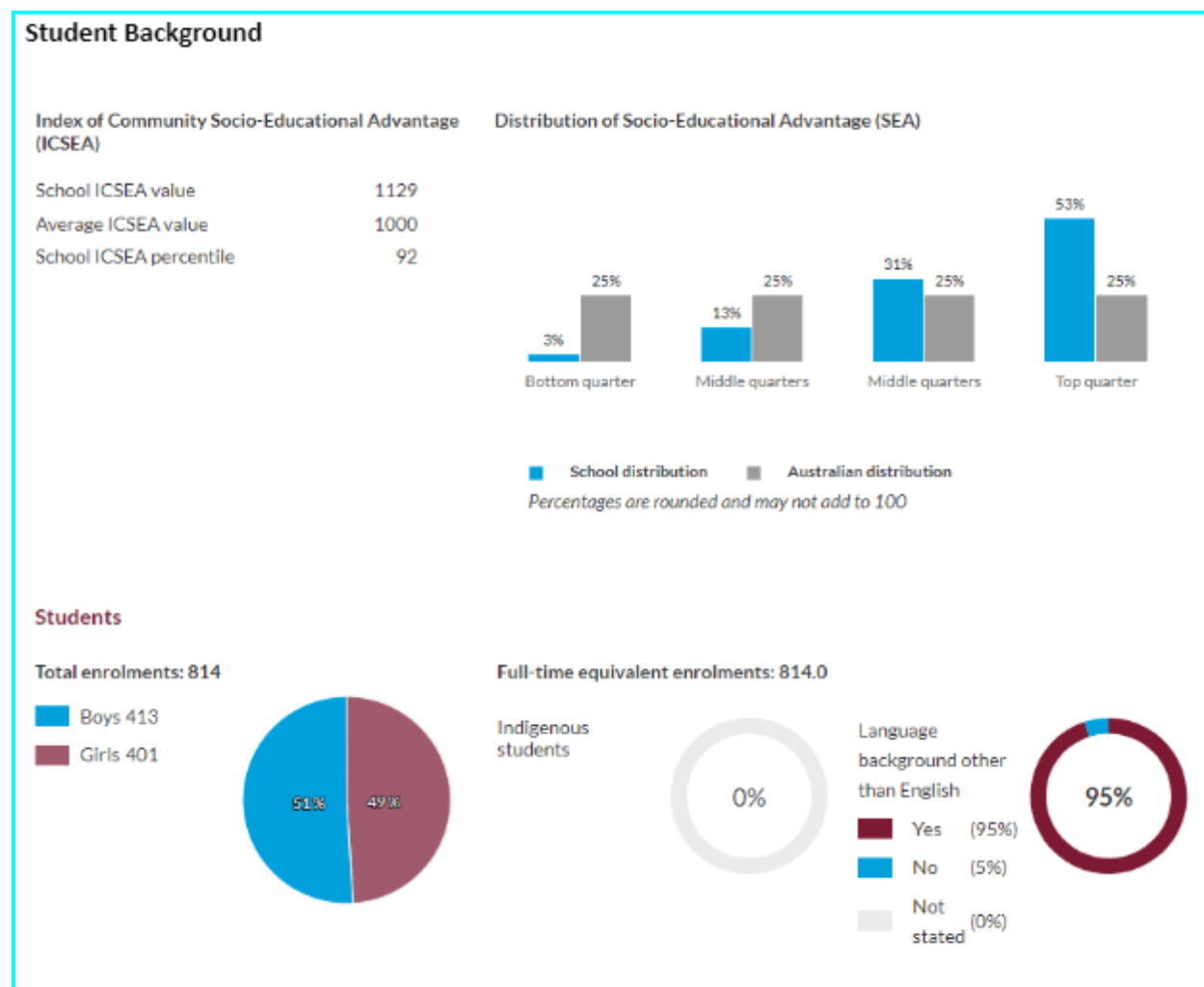
In 2023, St Mark's College maintained a strong record with a daily average teacher attendance of 90% and a retention rate of 90%. The College employs 59 full-time teachers.

Teaching Staff

Full time equivalent Teaching Staff: 29 Fte

Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff: 21 Fte

Enrolment Information



Student Attendance

Student attendance averages 91%-year average. Student Attendance refers to attendance requirements and the sanctions that flow from inadequately explained absences including on-line attendance during lessons. Duties include using rolls to record absences; contacting parents; seeking formal notes; or contacting the appropriate authorities.

Year Group	Attendance Percentage
Year 1	93%
Year 2	92%
Year 3	93%
Year 4	93%
Year 5	93%
Year 6	92%
Year 7	92%
Year 8	92%
Year 9	89%
Year 10	87%
Year 11	87%
Year 12	86%



COLLEGE POLICIES

Child Protection

1. Child protection

The safety, protection and welfare of students is the responsibility of all staff members and encompasses:

- a duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students which could reasonably have been foreseen; and
- obligations under child protection legislation

1.1 Purpose and scope

This policy sets out staff responsibilities for child protection and processes that staff must follow in relation to child protection matters. This policy applies to all staff members, which includes employees, contractors, and volunteers. Staff members who fail to adhere to this policy may be in breach of their terms of employment.

1.2 Key legislation

There are four key pieces of child protection legislation in New South Wales:

- the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (“Care and Protection Act”);
- the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (“WWC Act”);
- the Children’s Guardian Act 2022 (“Children’s Guardian Act”)
- the Crimes Act 1900 (“Crimes Act”).

1.3 Related policies

There are several other School policies that relate to child protection that staff members must be aware of and understand including (but not limited to):

- Code of Conduct - sets out information about the standards of behaviour expected of all staff members.
- Work Health and Safety Statement - identifies the obligations imposed by work health and safety legislation on the School and staff member;

- Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement - summarises obligations in relation to unlawful discrimination, harassment, and bullying.
- Complaint Handling Procedures – provides the steps taken by the School in addressing complaints; and
- SMC Student Welfare Policy
- SMC Student Code of Conduct
- SMC Student Discipline Policy and Procedures

1.4 Compliance and records

The Head of College monitors compliance with this policy and securely maintains School records relevant to this policy, which includes:

- register of staff members who have read and acknowledged that they read and understood this policy.
- working with children check clearance (WWCC clearance) verifications.
- mandatory reports to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), previously known as Family and Community Services; and
- reports of reportable conduct allegations, the outcome of reportable conduct investigations, and/or criminal convictions.

2.1 Children protection concerns

There are different forms of child abuse. These include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Neglect is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Child sexual abuse is a crime.

Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver, or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation, and female genital mutilation.

Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures, or dislocation of joints. Hitting a child around the head or neck and/or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punish a child (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.

Emotional abuse can result in serious psychological harm, where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma.

Although it is possible for 'one-off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child.

This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation, or threatening behaviour.

2.2 Child wellbeing concerns

Child wellbeing concerns are safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns for a child or young person that do not meet the mandatory reporting threshold, risk of significant harm in section 5.1.2.

2.3 Staff member responsibilities

Key legislation requires reporting of particular child protection concerns. However, as part of the school's overall commitment to child protection, all staff are required to report any child protection or child wellbeing concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person to the Head of College.

If the allegation involves the Head of College a report should be made to the General Secretary of the College Board.

3. Working with children

The WWCC Act protects children by requiring a worker to have a WWCC clearance or current application to engage in child related work. Failure to do so may result in a fine or imprisonment.

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) is responsible for determining applications for a WWCC clearance. It involves a national criminal history check and review of reported workplace misconduct findings. The result is either to:

- grant a WWCC clearance (generally valid for 5 years); or
- refuse a WWCC clearance (further applications cannot be made for 5 years).

In addition, the OGC may impose an interim bar on engaging in child related work for both applicants and WWCC clearance holders. WWCC clearance holders are subject to ongoing monitoring by the OGC.

3.1 Responsibilities for working with children checks.

3.1.1 Staff members

Staff members who engage in child-related work and eligible volunteers (including those volunteers working at overnight camps) are required to:

- hold and maintain a valid WWCC clearance;
- not engage in child-related work at any time that they are subjected to an interim bar or a bar;
- report to the Head of College if they are no longer eligible for a WWCC clearance, the status of their WWCC clearance changes or are notified by the OGC that they are subjected to a risk assessment;
- notify the OGC of any change to their personal details within 3 months of the change occurring. Failure to do so may result in a fine.

It is an offence for an employee to engage in child-related work when they do not hold a WWCC clearance or if they are subject to a bar.

All volunteers are required to:

- be aware and follow the expectations of conduct expressed in the School Staff Code of Conduct.
- Sign the Volunteer Statutory Declaration or provide Some volunteers engaged in high risk roles may be required to provide a WWCC clearance.

3.1.2 The School

The School is required to:

- verify online and record the status of each child-related worker's WWCC clearance.
- only employ or engage child-related workers or eligible volunteers who have a valid WWCC clearance; and
- advise the OCG of the findings they have made after completing a reportable conduct investigation, including whether they have made a finding of reportable conduct. A finding of reportable conduct in relation to sexual misconduct, a sexual offence or a serious physical assault must be referred to the OCG's Working with Children Check Directorate (WWCC Directorate). It is an offence for an employer to knowingly engage a child-related worker who does not hold a WWCC clearance or who has a bar.

3.2 Working with Children Check clearance.

A WWCC clearance is authorisation under the WWC Act for a person to engage in child-related work.

4. Mandatory reporting

The Care and Protection Act provides for mandatory reporting of children at risk of significant harm. A child is a person under the age of 16 years and a young person is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18, for the purposes of the Care and Protection Act.

Under the Care and Protection Act, mandatory reporting applies to persons who:

- in the course of their employment, deliver services including health care; welfare, education, children's services and residential services, to children; or
- hold a management position in an organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of services including health care, welfare, education, children's services and residential services, to children.

All teachers are mandatory reporters. Other staff members may also be mandatory reporters. Any queries about whether other staff members are mandatory reporters should be directed to the Head of College.

Anti-Bullying

Definition:

- Bullying is the deliberate intention to harm someone who does not have the power to stop it.
- Bullying, harassment, or any form of discrimination, is immoral and can be unlawful because it interferes with the right of a person to feel safe and valued as a member of a community.

Bullying takes many forms. It can include but not limited to:

- Face-to-face such as fighting, pushing, taunting, insulting, embarrassing, intimidating, and invading personal space, AND Behind-the-back such as writing threatening or offensive messages, sending distressing emails and writing anonymous notes that are hurtful.
- Done individually such as a person mocking or teasing someone, AND It can be done as a group by such means as social exclusion or hate group recruitment.
- Sexual harassment which involves behaviours such as unwanted sexual touching, inappropriate joking, exposure, making sexual advances or demeaning someone due to their sexual orientation, AND Racial harassment which involves behaviours such as social exclusion, teasing and harassment.

Rationale:

The College will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in doing so, everyone will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their College environment.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the College community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Everyone within the College community should be alert to signs, symptoms and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and cooperation at all times.

Implementation:

- Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the College's position on bullying, through the College diary, website and various letters and information evenings.
- The College will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying.

A. Primary Prevention:

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven countermeasures. This will be offered to staff throughout various staff meetings and presented by the Year Coordinators and Deputy Head of College.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the College's programs and Response.
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. – Pastoral Care lessons.
- To clarify to all staff at the start of each year the College policy on bullying. The Deputy Head of College will include this as part of the staff handbook and code of conduct information session.
- The curriculum includes anti-bullying messages and strategies e.g.: 'The Friendly Colleges' and 'No Blame'

Approach to Bullying' programs.

- Senior Student Leadership body, Student Representative Council, Peer Support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'Anti Bullying' and RESPECT.

B. Primary Prevention:

- Promote children and staff reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers and Head of College on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying.
- Invite Youth Liaison Officer Snr Constable Brendan Martin from Liverpool Local Command to speak to the students during pastoral care lessons.
- Parents are encouraged to contact College if they become aware of a problem.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.
- All students will be given access to the College counsellor two days a week.
- The College Executive will be made aware of all incidents of bullying.

C. Intervention:

- Once identified, each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the College's Student Code of Conduct.
- If staff bullying persists the Head of College will commence formal disciplinary action.

D. Post Violation:

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
 - withdrawal from class.
 - withdrawal from the yard.
 - detention.
 - College suspension.
 - withdrawal of privileges.
 - student enrolment may be withdrawn.
 - ongoing counselling from appropriate agencies for both victim and bully.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours.
- Classroom Meetings.
- Support Structures.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour.
- Consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:
 - counselling
 - a period of monitoring
 - a formal support group
 - disciplinary actions

All illegal actions including the use of a weapon, sexual assault and inappropriate content being placed or sent via technology will be reported to the School Police Liaison Officer Snr Constable Robert MacFarlane for further action/advice: macf1rob@police.nsw.gov.au.

Work, Health & Safety

Work Health and Safety refers to the relevant legislation, incident prevention and management, obligations of employer and employees, and Workers' Compensation requirements of the College and staff. The College WHS Committee consisted of Mrs Grohala (Deputy HoC), Mrs Nada (Head of Primary), Mrs Lotfi (Infants Coordinator) and Mrs Sidhom (Office Manager). An audit of maintenance requirements is conducted each semester and maintenance is completed each term day on reported matters via a Maintenance Book located in the Office and selected days throughout term breaks. The College Board is informed of WHS issues at each meeting and reviews of policy and situations take place regularly.

Risk Management

Risk Management describes how to identify and manage risks in all aspects and areas of College life. It includes a Risk Management Checklist, Risk Assessment Forms and Risk Management Procedures with sample plans. Risk Management takes place for every excursion and every outing including sports venues. Delegated authority from the Head of College is issued to pursue required checks by relevant staff responsible for each event/activity. The completed Assessment is forwarded to staff with the original filed by the Financial Manager.

Anaphylaxis K - 12 Guidelines

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction. Anaphylaxis characteristically occurs soon after exposure to a "trigger" and these reactions can be serious and even life threatening. Certain foods have common triggers, and the ones most likely to cause an allergic reaction are nuts, particularly peanuts, eggs, sesame seeds and milk productions. Other triggers may include medications, and insect venom from bees or wasps.

This policy has been developed as a result of increasing numbers of children attending St Mark's College, who may be at risk of an anaphylactic reaction. It is expected that on enrolment of a child with anaphylaxis, staff and parents will develop specific procedures that reflect the specific needs of the children involved. The College endeavours in every way to make the school NUT AWARE, and not necessarily nut-free. The full policy document is found on the College website: www.stmarks.nsw.edu.au

Policies for Emergencies & Critical Events

Policies for Emergencies and Critical Events define procedures and drills, duties, and the possible need for subsequent Counselling. The Deputy Head of College oversees, reviews and implements policy. Emergency Drills are conducted each term for the whole College Community and include Fire Drills, Lock-Out and Lock Down preparations.

Excursions

Teachers are responsible for Risk Assessment before excursions are confirmed. Preparatory activities, procedures for organising, procedures following an accident, and student/adult supervision ratios are documented.

Professional Standards

Professional Standards refers to the responsibilities of staff for students in their care during class time and at play/sport times. It explains the use of grounds and facilities, and it details security (e.g. locking all classrooms when no teacher is present). Overall responsibility for College security rests with the Head of College or their delegate.



Resolving Grievances

1. Curriculum

Primary School

Complaints and grievances are referred to, and resolved by, Classroom Teachers, Head of Primary and the Head of College. All complaints are investigated and, depending on the severity of the Complaint, any, or all, of the persons mentioned above may be involved in the resolution. Curriculum matters are governed by NESAs Requirements and College Assessment and Reporting Policies.

Senior School

Complaints and grievances are referred to, and resolved by the Classroom Teachers, Heads of Faculties, Director of Teaching and Learning, Deputy Head of College and the Head of College. All complaints are investigated and, depending on the severity of the complaint, any, or all, of the persons mentioned above may be involved in the resolution. All complaints are placed on a complaints register which is presented at each executive meeting. Curriculum matters are governed by NESAs Requirements and College Assessment and Reporting Policies.

2. Welfare

Primary School

Complaints and grievances are referred to, and resolved by, the Classroom Teachers, Head of Primary, Deputy Head of College and the Head of College. All complaints are investigated and, depending on the severity of the complaint, any, or all, of the persons mentioned above may be involved in the resolution. Welfare complaints may also involve the College Priest, College Counsellor, School Investigator or/and external bodies (e.g. DOCS).

Senior School

Complaints and grievances are referred to, and resolved by, the Classroom Teachers, House Tutor, House Patron, Deputy Head of College and the Head of College. All complaints are investigated and, depending on the severity of the complaint, any, or all, of the persons mentioned above may be involved in the resolution. Welfare complaints may also involve the College Reverend Father, College Counsellor, School Investigator or/and external bodies (e.g. DOCS or other Child Protection Authorities).

The complete Policy documents may be accessed on the school website: www.stmarks.nsw.edu.au.

3. Complaints Policy

Complaints regarding general issues such as buildings and premises are referred directly to the Head of College. The Head of College will then request that the Financial Manager or Deputy Head of College and WHS Committee investigate the issue and report back to the Head of College.

The complete Policy documents may be accessed on the school website: www.stmarks.nsw.edu.au

Resolving Grievances

Rationale:

This policy applies to all complaints made by students, parents or staff of St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College.

The College believes that the best outcomes result for our children when parents and staff work together in a spirit of cooperation and understanding, based on a shared vision for our students.

The College believes in the principles of truth in all matters, and fairness and justice for all parties concerned.

This policy does not replace the Grievance Procedures that govern how the College deals with specific cases of misconduct or poor performance by staff and are designed to comply with all relevant employment laws and precedents. This policy is provided as a guide to any person wishing to make a complaint and works in conjunction with College Grievance Procedures.

Aim:

To provide a framework based on Christian principles for efficiently and fairly resolving complaints against members with our College community.

Implementation:

- The person making the complaint against another individual shall follow the proper channels and not go outside these. These channels are summarised in the diagrams at the end of this policy.
- All parties involved must conduct themselves in a true Christian manner, with goodwill, love and courtesy. They must work together to resolve an issue, not work against each other. A positive approach is far more likely to be successful than a negative approach.
- It is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved satisfactorily by courteous discussion between the all parties involved.
- However, if such discussion does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the steps illustrated in the diagram are to be followed in the order that is shown.
- If all parties conduct themselves in a true Christian spirit, it should be very rare that a matter reaches the last stage of a formal and written complaint to the College Board.
- Complaints that cannot be resolved even at the level of the Head of College may proceed to the final avenue of appeal, which is to lodge a formal written complaint with the College Board. All complaints should be sent by email with any supporting attachments to copticeducationboard@gmail.com
- The College Board will consider the issue at its first possible meeting and seek to resolve the issue. The College Board may request further information from any of the parties involved and may delegate a mediator to try to resolve the issues.
- The College is responsible for keeping accurate records of all serious complaints, whether written or by interview, as well as any actions taken in regard to these complaints, on the College premises or College related event/activity. All complaints will be treated with respect and confidentiality.
- At no time shall the following behaviours be accepted by any St Mark's College event:
 - aggression in words, tone of voice or action, or the raising of one's voice
 - personal insults
 - threats of any kind
 - bad language
- The College reserves the right to take appropriate action against any party that displays unacceptable behaviour.

Student Welfare Policy

A Christian College - The College seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which minimises risk of harm and ensures that students feel secure. St Mark's College supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of all students. The College implements measures designed to promote the safety and well-being of students. The College exercises its professional judgement as to what is required and will include in its consideration such matters as:

- a) Appropriate levels of supervision;
- b) Security of buildings;
- c) Procedures in case of fire (Evacuation Policy);
- d) Procedures in case of intruders (Lock down Policy);
- e) Use of grounds and facilities;
- f) Travel on College related activities; and
- g) Other appropriate matters.

The implementation of these requirements and procedures will be monitored for compliance from time to time.

All employees (both teaching and non-teaching) are screened for 'Child Protection' through the working with children check (WWCC), prior to the commencement of employment at the College. Appropriate measures are taken by College Staff to seek to ensure that all students are adequately cared for and supervised while undertaking both on-site activities, bearing in mind the type of activities and the age of the students involved.

Genuine care for the students is in our hearts at all times – even when student behaviour has been frustrating. Bad behaviour must not be taken personally, but, rather, professionally. It should be dealt with firmly, but without ceasing to communicate the teacher's care for the student. The resolution and restoration of the relationship between the teacher and the student is necessary after disciplining, and is in the form of either a formal or informal restorative justice session. Follow up of students in distress is essential. "For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry. For the spirit would fail before Me and the souls which I have made" (Isaiah 7:16)

If a student feels genuine care from their teacher; they will generally be willing to accept almost anything from them. These principles are reinforced regularly in staff and faculty meetings and briefings – at every opportunity. Existing staff that go outside these principles are counselled and advised appropriately by the College Leadership Team. Only teachers who are capable of effectively implementing the Christian aspect of the College's belief statements are employed.

Professional Support

The College employs a Counsellor (Mrs Evonne Youssef 4 days per week). Teachers/Year Coordinators refer students to her, or students may approach her independently. The counsellor works in concert with staff, parents and parish to meet students' needs. Clergy who visit the College may also be used as a resource for counselling students and/or parents where appropriate. The College Counsellor will be a resource person who can refer students on to other professionals as required. The Counsellor is required to attend the Welfare Meeting each fortnight to share information with the team as well as to gather information on students who may need assistance. The Counsellor may be involved in the formal restorative justice session.

Welfare Committee

A committee made up of the Deputy Head of College (Chairperson), Head of Secondary Students, College Chaplain, Year Coordinators & College Counsellor meet fortnightly to assess the needs of individual students who are facing problems and work towards finding solutions, including rigorous review and follow-up of strategies. Mentors from among the staff are assigned to individual students by the Committee. Plans are devised and put in place for helping students. This might include the teacher asking about the student on a daily basis, encouraging, praising good efforts and behaviour, liaising with other staff, counselling, or simply being a "friend". We embrace how powerful individual relationships can be.

The House System - Building Love and Other Virtues

Staff create opportunities to mix with students informally: interaction with students when teachers are on playground duty; coaching of sporting teams; and pastoral care period. This increases the respect and love of the students for the staff and enhances the love and care of the staff for the students.

A House System is in place in the College. All students are members of one of four Houses. In the Senior School each House is composed of students from Years 7 to 12. This allows students to have the opportunity to mix with students from different Year Groups and Year 11 & 12 students are encouraged to become both good role models and a support mechanism for the Year 7 to 10 students. House Tutors also have the opportunity to play a stronger pastoral role.

The House System allows a rapport to develop and deepen and makes caring for the students easier. Pastoral Period occurs once a week for each year group. During this period House Tutors conduct Pastoral lessons with students. Topics are determined by the Head of Pastoral care, the Welfare Committee and partnership with EXODOX who help facilitate and create lessons to cater for student needs and well-being.

School Assemblies take place on a weekly basis. It is a time where, as a school, we pray together, acknowledge achievement (academic, sporting, positive behaviour) and incorporate activities that teach etiquette, courtesy and cooperation.

Years 5 to 12 students all attend Retreats each year. The programs for each retreat include time for staff and students to pray and to play together, to get to know one another and to participate in activities that develop cooperation, school spirit and quality friendships. This is especially helpful for Year 7 whose transition to a new stage of education is made easier as they feel welcomed and at ease with their new teachers.

The Student Welfare Policy and associated procedures is provided to all members of the College Community through the Staff Handbook and the Student Diary. This policy is reviewed and developed through consultation with all College Staff by the Welfare Committee on a yearly basis.

Pastoral Care Program & Rationale: *"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full."*
John 10.10

The Pastoral Care of students has always been a feature of St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College. The word 'pastoral' is derived from the Latin 'pastor' or 'shepherd' referring to Jesus, the Good Shepherd who cares for his flock. Pastoral Care refers to the total care of the student and is based upon a belief in the dignity of the person. In our College, it is expressed through:

- The establishment of an effective care network for every student, the provision of satisfying and fulfilling learning experiences within a safe, encouraging, and compassionate environment, and
- The development of quality relationships within the total school community.

Everyone in the College is involved in pastoral care. Pastoral care is not solely a responsibility for House Tutors, Year Coordinators, our Chaplain, Head of Secondary Students or other specialist staff. Every member of staff (teaching and non-teaching) has a responsibility and is accountable for the pastoral care of students. The well-being and care of students is the core of the College's teaching and learning program (curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular).

We are committed to assisting each student to mature in every area; spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. We seek to establish structures and policies which will allow young people to experience "Living life to the full" the recognition and celebration of achievement and satisfaction, while also showing perseverance and the personal power to manage difficulty.

To enable students to do this we:

- Promote the fostering of high quality interpersonal relationships between students, parents and staff as a responsibility shared by everyone.
- Foster students' self-discipline and responsibility, wherein students grow progressively in their capacity to exercise moral judgement, democratic values and a concern for the common good.
- Provide a Pastoral Care program as a specific and planned means of helping students to value themselves and to experience well-being.
- Provide a comprehensive and high quality curriculum so that students are afforded the competence, confidence and right to participate in the cultural and productive life of society.
- Provide supportive organisations such as EXODOS and administrative structures, which are responsive to the needs and well-being of students.
- Promote the relationships of trust, cooperation and partnership between the school and family members, and the maintenance by school personnel of respect for and sensitivity to diverse cultural values and family structures and issues.

We seek to achieve these principles through:

- The COS (Coptic Orthodox Studies) and Retreat program
- Promoting Interfaith and Intercultural Understanding in School Settings
- National Values Programme
- Camp programs
- Liturgies and Assemblies
- Guest speakers
- Pastoral Care program
- House structure
- Personal Development program
- Curriculum
- Extra and Co-curricular activities
- Availability of committed staff
- Daily interaction that supports a student's personal growth



Pastoral Care Structure

Effective Pastoral care is built upon a partnership between the College and parents. Parents and guardians are an essential part of the pastoral care network in the College and will be consulted on all important issues concerning their children and where possible should be included in decision-making processes. It is essential therefore that there is open and efficient communication between the College and home.

Every teacher is committed to the pastoral care and guidance of students in his/her care. The school acknowledges that parents are the main pastoral carers of their children and where concerns arise; every attempt will be made to work through these problems jointly by involving parent, student and staff. The school undertakes the following procedures where concerns arise:

- The Year Coordinator is first involved and makes every attempt to resolve the student's issue.
- Where difficulties still arise the Year Coordinators will follow up by interviewing the student.
- If concerns continue the School Counsellor and/or Head of College will be involved.

Parents may be contacted at any time throughout the above procedure.

Students are free to approach the School Counsellor, Year Coordinators, House Tutor or Dean of Students for an interview. Some students need short term individual care while a longer period of care is required for others. Confidentiality of the student is maintained.

Relations between staff and students are based on trust and a mutual respect for another. Pastoral care respects the personal rights and confidences of each individual. Staff will be informed by Year Coordinators on a "need to know" basis of information pertinent to the care of any individual student. Where it is deemed appropriate students will be referred on to those with professional expertise for help and guidance.

The pastoral care of students is woven into their daily lives at school through formal and informal contact with staff, COS Program and Retreats, Pastoral Care Program, Special Education Program, Orientation Program for Year 7, Activities Program, Camping Program for Years 5 - 10, and Sport.

Academic Care

Academic Care is a construct arising from research conducted by the Pastoral Care Network operating in the NSW independent school sector. The research showed a strong need for all teachers to better understand their pastoral role and its impact on student learning and well-being. This charter encourages continuing discourse to promote the integration of pastoral and academic domains of schools.

Academic Care: enhancing student learning, well-being and resilience through pedagogies that are sympathetic to student needs and embedded in learning experiences.

Promoting academic care through:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the strong links between learning, well-being and resilience;
2. believe that all students can succeed;
3. promote student connectedness;
4. stimulate student engagement with learning;
5. foster high intellectual endeavour;
6. engage staff and students in understanding learning;
7. promote protective processes to ensure positive developmental outcomes;
8. effectively utilise support networks and resources;
9. implement academic and organisational structures sympathetic to student needs; and
10. value respect and fairness.

Teachers that promote academic care:

1. foster the strong links between learning, well-being and resilience;
2. support individual talents and learning styles; o offer authentic learning experiences and opportunities for reflection;
3. embed assessment for learning within classroom practices;
4. develop a climate where students enjoy learning and are willing to take risks as learners;
5. have clear and consistent behaviour and learning expectations;
6. utilise pedagogy that provides a quality learning environment resulting in enhanced student resilience and connectedness; and
7. develop relationships that allow all students to feel valued, safe and supported.

Student Discipline Policy

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College is committed to maintaining a firm but fair approach to the discipline that will deal with disciplinary matters quickly and effectively to ensure that a positive and productive learning environment is maintained for all students.

The College's Discipline Policy also needs to be seen within the context of Christian beliefs and values, which is a fundamental element of the College's approach to the care of students. Underpinning this approach is the importance of discipline procedures that are based on *restorative practices*, through reconciliation and restitution, repairing and rebuilding relationships as an integral part of any consequences or penalties. The process of imposing sanctions must follow principles of *procedural fairness*, particularly for serious consequences such as suspension or expulsion.

The following policies and procedures have been formulated as part of a broad discipline policy aimed at providing support for staff, students and parents.

The Behaviour Management Policy revolves around to non negotiable principles

- Every student has the right to learn free of harassment or interference.
 - Every Teacher has the right to teach free of harassment or interference.
- Discipline is necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of all our students, teachers and staff and to provide a conducive learning environment.

This Student Discipline Policy as set out in the St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Behavioural Management flowchart for both its Junior and Senior Schools, sets the framework through which St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College manages student discipline.

Procedural Fairness

Students have a right to procedural fairness in dealings that involve their interests. This includes disciplinary decisions.

The principles of procedural fairness include the right to:

- know what the rules are, and what behaviour is expected of students;
- have decisions determined by a reasonable and unbiased person;
- know the allegations that have been made, and to respond to them;
- be heard before a decision is made; and
- impartiality in an investigation and decision making
- to have a decision reviewed (***only with the submission of additional information***).

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College is committed to ensuring procedural fairness when disciplining a student.

General Policies

All students at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College are required to abide by the College's Rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other staff with authority delegated by the College.

1.1 Where a student disregards rules, disobeys instructions or otherwise engages in conduct which causes or may cause harm, inconvenience or embarrassment to the College, staff members or other students, the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

1.2 The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the College vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence and the age of the student. Where the allegation, if proved, may result in suspension or expulsion, the student and parents will be informed of the allegations and any steps taken in dealing with the matter. In relation to all matters to be investigated, students will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

1.3 The penalties imposed vary according to the behaviour and are guided by the College Behavioural Management flowchart for Junior and Senior Schools. A student's prior record of either good or poor behaviour may be taken into account. At the lower end of the scale, a demerit or detention may be appropriate. At the upper end of the scale, the behaviour could result in suspension or expulsion. Note: as in all decisions the College reserves the right to determine the punishment in line with the Behaviour Management approach outlined in the Junior and Senior School flowcharts.

1.4 The College prohibits the use of *corporal punishment* in disciplining students attending the College.

1.5 The College does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of *corporal punishment* by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the College.

Implementation of the Discipline Policy

This policy is implemented by:

- staff induction given by the Deputy Head of College prior to the commencement of employment, the staff handbook which is handed out at the beginning of every academic year to all staff, and the SMC policies and procedures folder that is located on the College Google Drive;

- continued staff training in staff briefings/meetings. Staff meetings take place every fortnight.
- professional development opportunities in behaviour management. Staff have the opportunity to undertake professional development with external providers and during college run staff briefings/meetings;
- communicating this policy to the College community via the College Newsletter updates and on the College website: www.st-mark's.nsw.edu.au. Newsletters are issued once a month to all parents electronically and in print; and
- monitoring the effectiveness of the policy. This policy will be monitored by the College Executive as part of an annual review of all College policies;

Procedures for implementing effective discipline

Every student has the right to a learning environment that fosters social, academic, physical, emotional and spiritual growth. They also have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity.

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College has developed specific procedures that must be followed by all staff when considering an appropriate consequence or reward for student behaviour.

Strategies to Promote Good Discipline

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College seeks to develop a culture of positive discipline by setting clear expectations for students and encouraging positive behaviour. Strategies for developing this culture include:

- clearly setting behaviour expectations;
- developing specific teaching and learning programs;
- acknowledging positive behaviours in a range of ways including;
 1. Verbal praise
 2. Merits in student diary
 3. Merit certificates
 4. Year Coordinators awards
 5. Academic Awards
 6. Acknowledgment in college newsletter
 7. Awarded positions of leadership
 8. Principal awards – Presented at the annual speech night.
- Maintaining records with respect to student behaviour. All records with respect to student behaviour are kept with the Head of the Junior School for primary students and with the appropriate House Patron for senior school students

Medications Policy

Students are not permitted to keep medications on their person, in their bags or in classrooms (with the exception of Asthma Puffers).

Medications required during school hours will be stored in the office and students requiring medication at school must go to the office. Prescribed medications only may be taken at school and must be administered by a member of staff. Teachers will not 'mind' medications.

Students with asthma should carry asthma treatment with them on all school activities.

Infectious Diseases Policy

The NSW Department of Education and Training requires the following periods of exclusion from school for students with infectious diseases listed below:

- Covid 19 - Where there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 connected with a school, the school needs to assess the situation and implement formal response procedures to investigate reports, assess the risk and activate response programs as appropriate for all COVID-19 reports.
- Chicken Pox – Exclusion from school until fully recovered. Minimum exclusion – 7 days after first spots appear and all spots have crusted and formed hard scabs.
- German Measles – Exclusion from school until fully recovered. Minimum exclusion – 5 days after rash appears.
- Measles – Minimum 5 days after rash appears.
- Mumps – Exclusion from school until fully recovered. Minimum exclusion 1 week after swelling occurs.
- Whooping cough – Exclusion from school until fully recovered. Minimum exclusion is 3 weeks from onset of whoop.
- Ringworm/Scabies – Readmission to school after appropriate treatment has commenced. A medical certificate detailing treatment is required.
- Pediculosis (head lice) – A student with head lice at school will be isolated to protect other students from possible infestation. The child will need to remain away from school until the infestation is attended to per policy requirements. Re-admission when treatment has been undertaken. Hair should be free from 'nits'.



Enrolment Policy

Rationale

The College is a fully comprehensive co-educational independent school from Kindergarten to Year 12, underpinned by Christian religious values and operating within the policies of the NSW Education & Standards Authority (NESA). Parents and students are interviewed by the Head of College prior to enrolment. Parents are expected to provide all the appropriate documentation from preschool or other schools, including: academic, pastoral, administrative and medical information. The Coptic Christian ethos of the College and the pastoral policy is expected to be upheld and fully supported by the parents and the students.

Procedures

All applications are processed within the School's Enrolment Policy and guidelines.

Each applicant's educational needs are assessed and considered, through the collation and viewing of information. Strategies are identified and reviewed based on the needs of the applicant, before enrolment takes place.

The responses derived from the interview are considered regarding their willingness to be a part of the School Community and to support the School's Ethos and Welfare/Discipline Policy. Students with learning difficulties are accepted with the parents being advised the level of support available. Parents are informed formally of the outcome.

The School had an enrolment of 814 students in 2023 from Kindergarten to Year 12. Our student population comes from a vast area within and around Sydney including all socio-economic levels, language (cultural) and religious backgrounds. A number of students are ESL and some require special needs. In addition, some enrolments oftentimes include overseas students.



How to Enrol

1. Application

- Complete the Application for Enrolment and return the form together with:-
- Enrolment Application Fee (Non- refundable).
- Copy of student's birth certificate and immunisation records.
- If not an Australian citizen, proof of the passport must also be presented.
- Copy of student's last two years' school report (if applicable).
- Two written family references.

International students (FFPOS) must also provide:

- Copy of student's passport and entry visa.
- Copy of language school reports and IELTS results.

Please note that application for enrolment does not in itself constitute enrolment.

1. Application

- Complete the Application for Enrolment and return signed with:
 - (a) Enrolment Application Fee (Non-refundable. To be paid at the interview. No guarantee of enrollment. *Kindergarten cut-off date is 31 July of each year.*
 - (b) Copies of student's Birth Certificate, Baptism Certificate and Immunisation Certificate
 - (c) Evidence of Australian citizenship must be produced. If not an Australian citizen, copies of all documentation stating visa/residency status and Passport.
 - (d) Copies of most recent two school reports (other than Kindergarten application), ALL NAPLAN results (dependent on Stage completed). (All Reports to be officially translated into English if Reports are from non-English speaking countries)
 - (e) Copies of two family references (1 x character and 1 x professional) from non-related individuals
- Please Note: Completing and forwarding all the above does not constitute nor guarantee enrolment.

2. Interview

- Upon receipt of all the above and payment of the non-refundable Application Fee of \$220, applicants will be informed of an interview time with you and a member of the Executive to discuss your child's application.

3. Letter of Offer
 - Following the interview, a letter will be forwarded to you on the result of your enrolment application. If successful, you will receive a Letter of Offer outlining all Conditions & Requirements for the Application to be confirmed and processed resulting in a guarantee placement.
 - If successful, the student's position is secured upon receipt of the Acceptance Offer and all Bond and fees-in-advance payments are required within three (3) weeks of the Letter of Offer. NB: fees in advance are non-refundable unless a written withdrawal request is received by the Head of College with at least one (1) full term notice in advance. Bond is also refundable on exit with written request only.
4. Waiting List
 - Clarity for the Waiting List possibilities is as follows:
 - Student on W/L for a particular year/group is informed that position is available -

Option 1 - position is accepted and application process continues with requirement payments prior to commencement;

Option 2 - position is not accepted for varied reasons and parents do not wish to proceed for the applied-for vacancy position. Process stops here and name is withdrawn, noted with withdrawal date/notification reasons etc. Parents may reapply in future with a new application process commenced to apply for a new position when one becomes available.

In normal circumstances: W/L names are rolled over into the next year without re-application if no position has been offered by the College for the applied-for year.

5. Commencement Details
 - You will be notified of commencement dates, orientation dates if applicable, text/resource lists and uniform requirements.
 - Tuition fees must be paid and receipted prior to student commencement date. International students: 50% of annual fee is required once an offer is made, with the remaining six-month fee paid within the first six-month period in advance.
 - All fees K – 12 are paid in advance.

CONDITIONS OF ENROLMENT

1. I am aware that the Application Fee \$220 paid at the interview is non-refundable.
2. If a position is offered for my child/children, I understand that all stated fees-in-advance Plus Bond required in the Letter of Offer will be paid within the twenty-one (21) days of the Offer.
3. Any fees are non-refundable without a written request to the Head of College forward at least one (1) full term's notice of withdrawal.
4. I understand the acceptance of my child/children will be determined following the Interview process in conjunction with the availability of positions for the requested class/year.
5. I understand that the Application Form and its process does not constitute enrolment at the College. This is only confirmed after receiving a Letter of Offer.

6. Under the Privacy Act, the College is required to gain parental/guardian permission before using any audio/visual material of their child/children. This includes only approved school related websites, school promotional material, school social media pages, advertisements, film, flyers, paper or electronic format. By signing this Enrolment Application and/or accepting an Offer, you consent your permission to use the audio/visual content for the authorised purposes stated above. If you do not wish for this to occur, or withdraw your permission, you are able to do so by writing to the Head of College requesting withdrawal of audio/visual use including your child/ren.

7. I understand that before my child is granted access to using the computer system/network, they and you agree and abide by the following requirements:

- a. Maintain and respect the Ethos of the College
- b. Refrain from accessing or viewing or forwarding any private, or unsuitable material
- c. Accept all copyright and intellectual property created by others in acknowledging the source.

BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS

1. Acceptance of a position at St Mark's College is only confirmed following required payment of Enrolment fees

2. All fees including Application, Enrolment, Tuition, Activities and Levies are determined by the College Board annually and are subject to change

3. Fees are payable in advance. Initial term fees are required before students may commence.

4. International students must forward 50% of annual fee prior to commencement, followed by 50% increments semester in advance

5. The signatories on the Enrolment Application form are jointly responsible for the payment of all required fees

6. Fees are to be paid within 30 days of invoice date or by 3 set yearly instalments or by payment plan that has been pre-approved by the Business Manager (Late fees may apply for late payments).

7. If difficulties arise in meeting payment within the specified timeframe, requests for extension may be made to the Head of College followed with completion of a full and detailed Financial Questionnaire to include documentation showing all expenses, repayment schedules, bank accounts, tax returns to the Head of College. This will then be investigated through checks to determine if and what assistance may or may not be forwarded.

8. Failure to honour final notices for fee payments will prevent students from being admitted to class, receive Reports or attend school functions or events until such payments are made.

9. A prorata charge may be made for students entering the College during a term for the remainder of the term.

10. Students being withdrawn from the College during term are not eligible for a refund for the remaining weeks of that term.

11. Parents considering withdrawing their child/ren from the College MUST forward in writing to the Head of College with at least 1 full term's notice in order to qualify for any fees paid in advance and/or refund after the existing account cleared.

12. Failure to give 1 full term's written notice will result in forfeiting any refund due, and/or family bond in lieu of notice. *Full term notice = Full School term notice. Notice of withdrawal within the term or immediately preceding will result in a term's payment fee being charged to your account.*

13. The same principle applies to withdrawing from a subject/course.

14. The College premises, students and staff are fully covered via approved Insurance policies for all College and related college activities including excursions, national and international travel for school related purposes, sport. Parents are however welcome and encouraged to take out their own insurance for their child/ren as they wish.



Fees Policy and Conditions of Enrolment

Kindergarten to Year 12

To be read as an integral part of the Application for Enrolment

Parent Copy (Please retain for your records)

1 Parents are to actively encourage their children to support the College's goals and to do their utmost to realise those goals in their lives, as reflected in the College Vision & Mission Statements:

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.

2 As a branch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the College Ethos is reflected within the daily operations by all staff and students. The Ethos therefore is generally more conservative in nature, and all students will be expected to respect the teachings of the Church and to live by them at all times. For example, disrespect, obscenity, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, dancing, violent or immoral music, dating and premarital physical relations are all strongly rejected. It is the aim of the College to help young people learn to live a life of purity and holiness without fear or shame, and to be living, practical witnesses to the truths of the Bible. Morals should not be left behind at the school gates every afternoon and parents are expected to support the College in this aim at all times.

3 Students are to abide by all College rules. Students are to wear the correct College uniform/grooming and do all work set for them, including homework.

4 Parents agree to actively encourage and support their children to participate in the spiritual program set by the College, fully and with sincerity. I understand that at present, this includes the following activities.

- Morning prayers and hymns each day from the Coptic Orthodox tradition
- Classroom prayers and devotions each day from the Coptic Orthodox tradition
- School Liturgies on a regular basis
- Community Service Projects
- Christian attitudes and behaviour are to be actively encouraged in the classroom and playground.

5 Parents are to actively encourage and support their children fully in the Curriculum as set by the College. This includes the curriculum prescribed by the NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) with the addition of compulsory courses:

K – Year 12 = Coptic Orthodox Studies (Religion); Coptic Language and Hymns K – 6 (Elective as Yr 8/9/10)

6 Parents and guardians are expected to cooperate with the College in matters of discipline, attendance, completion of homework and the wearing of the Full School Uniform.

7 Parents understand that the Curriculum also includes the following compulsory activities: excursions, carnivals and other events organised by the College.

8 Parents understand that St Mark 's College has designed its Student Management Policy with the aim of using it to teach our children right from wrong and how to live according to the commandments of God. This includes encouraging and rewarding good behaviour and discouraging and punishing bad behaviour.

9 Parents agree to work in partnership with the College and fully support the College's policies relating to student management and discipline, and will at all times encourage their children to obey College rules and accept any consequences that may be given for breaking those rules by any staff member, within the College's Discipline Policy.

10 The College reserves the right to discipline, suspend or expel any student whose attitude or behaviour does not meet with the expectations of the School.

11 Fees are fixed at the lowest level possible, commensurate with costs of establishing and maintaining good educational standards and facilities.

12 Tuition fees are set by the School Board and are variable at the discretion of the Board.

Fees are charged three times per annum – posted prior to the commencement of term 1 with the Proposed College Fee letter. Fee payment dates are outlined in this letter, and are due and payable in the first week of each payment period, 1, 2 and 3.

13 Fees in advance + Bond for all new enrolments should be paid within 3 weeks from date of the Letter of Offer.

14 An Activities Levy (5-11) will include costs for camps, school diary, swimming lessons, sport costs, resources and Site Licences/IT fee, NAPLAN, sport and sport transport as applicable to your child's year group. Activity Levy also exists for K – 4 & 12 with variations as required. Accounts will also include the recommended contribution to the Building Fund. Although voluntary, the School Board encourages the support of parent contributions for the Library and Building Funds which are both Tax Deductible.

15 An administration charge will be imposed on accounts unpaid by the due date at a rate determined from by the School Board.

16 For a student to restart a new term, his or her fees must be paid up to date. Failure to honour final notices for fee payments will prevent students from being admitted to class, receive Reports or attend school functions or events until such payments are made.

17 Parents are urged to contact the Head of College if it is anticipated that temporary financial difficulty might be experienced.

18 Following initial Application accompanied by Application Fee (\$220) and Interview, an offer for enrolment may be received: parents then must complete enrolment process by forwarding all required Enrolment/Bond/Activities fees as outlined in the Letter of Offer with three (3) weeks of the date as shown in the Letter of Offer.

19 A full term's notice is required in writing to the Head of College if a student is to be withdrawn from the College. If such notice is not given then one school term's tuition fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

20 A final statement of fees, following a student's withdrawal, will be sent to those responsible for payment.

21 For each person paying fees, a 20% sibling discount is allowed on tuition fees for the 2nd child, 35% for the 3rd child and the 4th child is free, after full fees are paid for the 1st child. Only one type of discount is available per child.

22 The College Board delegates to the Head of College all operational authority to approve courses of instruction consistent with the objectives of the school: to determine all matters relating to order and discipline, and may be called upon to arbitrate on matters pertaining to a student's eligibility to enrol. The decision of the College Board is final, and no correspondence shall be entered into.

23 Parents and Guardians must abide by the Rules and Regulations that govern the College and be responsible for payment of fees and charges by the prescribed times. Continued enrolment is at the sole discretion of the College Board and Head of College.

24 Waiting List: If a Student on Waiting list for a particular year is informed that position is available: Option 1 - position is accepted and application process continues with requirement payments prior to commencement; Option 2 - position is not accepted for varied reasons and parents do not wish to proceed for the applied-for vacancy position. Process stops here and name is withdrawn, noted with withdrawal date/notification reasons etc; Parents may reapply in future with a new application process commenced to apply for a new position if one becomes available.

Declaration by Parents or Guardian and Person responsible for payment of fees

Student's Full Name _____

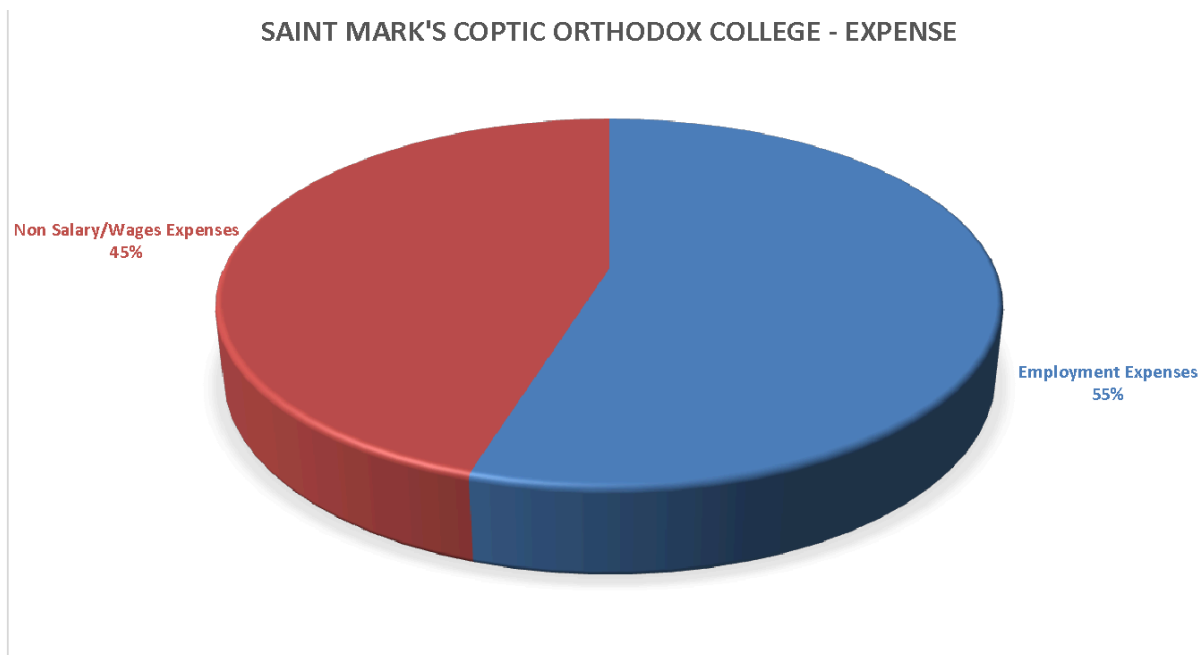
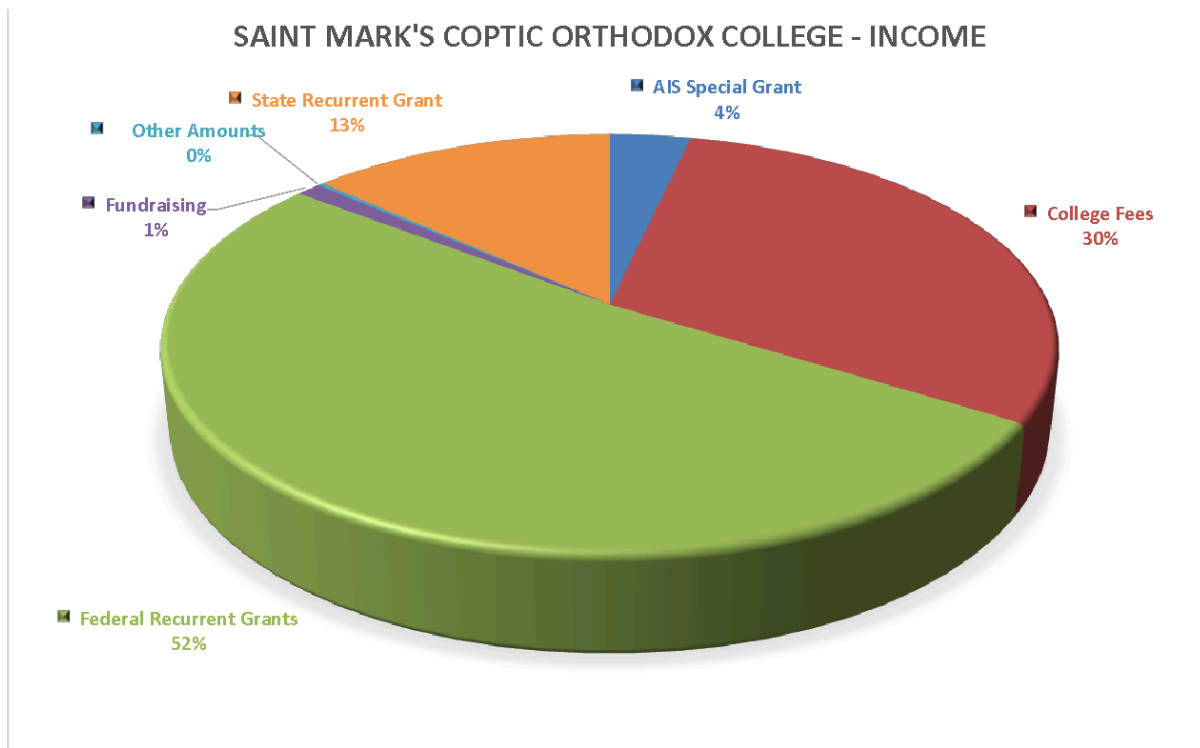
Class / House _____

Parents / Guardians Signatures

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: __/__/____

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: __/__/____

Summary of Financial Information 2023



About this Report

In preparing this report, St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College has gathered information from standardised evaluations and reports, as well as school-based assessments conducted throughout the year.

Contributors to this Report

The following members of the College Leadership Team have contributed information for this report:

Mr. Anthony Deans - Head of College
Rev. Fr. George Nakhil - College Chaplain (Spiritual/Pastoral)
Mrs. Deborah Grohala - Deputy Head of College
Mrs. Silvia Nada - Head of Primary

Governance and Ownership

The College is owned by the Coptic Orthodox Church (NSW) Property Trust and is governed by the NSW Coptic Education Board through its nominated Directors. The Board is the delegated and authorised subcommittee responsible for overseeing the College's operations, including administration, financial matters, and capital projects, through the Head of College.

All members of the School's Board have read, understood, and signed the "Responsible Persons" document, along with the Roles, Responsibilities, and Confidentiality Requirements of Directors following their required Induction Program offered by AISNSW. The Head of College produces and presents monthly reports (and additional reports as requested) to the School's Board, keeping them informed of all aspects of the school's operation. Through the Head of College, the school's ethos is monitored and continually developed.

Endorsement and Publication

Information included in this report is endorsed by the NSW Coptic Schools Board.

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