

2022 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: St Albans Secondary College (8330)



ST ALBANS
SECONDARY COLLEGE

- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).
- The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December of the previous calendar year from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
- The school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School.

- This 2022 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community

About Our School

School context

St Albans Secondary College, located 17 km to the west of Melbourne, is a 7 to 12 co-educational school with an enrolment of 1625 students. The College's vision, values and guiding principles combine to create a safe, supportive and structured environment where every student is guided and inspired to achieve to the best of their ability. Our College community values respect, integrity, leadership, and the pursuit of excellence. We are proud of our school community's achievements, and this is supported by the school's 2022 Performance Summary which shows that our results in almost every area are significantly higher than the average for the State, and for similar schools. St Albans Secondary College has regularly been recognised as a high performing school in studies undertaken by the Department of Education and the University of Melbourne. In 2022, the school's VCE, VCAL and pathways outcomes were well above state benchmarks in all measures. These outcomes, together with excellent attendance rates, continued achievement in students' literacy and numeracy skills, and significant improvement in students' sense of connectedness and safety, are a testament to the combined efforts of staff, families and students. Our commitment to foster the academic and personal development of each student, to provide a high quality education, and to guarantee a broad range of programs to challenge and enrich all students, is a significant factor in these achievements.

Our Attendance Policy of 90%, close monitoring of student absences, and effective communication with parents ensure that the importance of regular attendance for successful student learning is well embedded in the school culture. The Select Entry Accelerated Learning (SEAL) program is offered to challenge and motivate gifted and talented students from Year 7 right through to Year 12. Additionally, enrichment electives are offered from Year 9, and VCE subjects are available to selected students from Year 10. Our top achievers are supported with scholarships, as well as university mentoring programs including the Kwong Lee Dow Scholars' program, and they consistently gain entry into top level tertiary courses.

A focus on positive, respectful relationships as an essential part of a safe, enjoyable learning environment has also contributed to the College's excellent results, as has our strategy of enhancing student voice and leadership across the school, and providing a rich extracurricular program. Activities include a comprehensive instrumental music program, drama and music production, public speaking and debating, writers' workshops, a camps program, sports teams and carnivals, a House system, and a range of student clubs. Our vision for wellbeing is to support all members of our school community to develop a resilient mindset by striving to ensure that everyone feels Connected, Protected and Respected. The development of a comprehensive allied health team approach to student wellbeing, work over the last 2 years on resilient mindsets, and further strengthening policy implementation in relation to student wellbeing have been important in fostering engagement, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships.

Creating a strong community is an important part of the College's strength. We actively seek the contributions and participation of families, as well as business and university partners, and our vibrant and growing Alumni program, to create the best possible surroundings for our students to learn and grow. Our students benefit from a range of high quality opportunities to engage with business and community partners through mentoring and leadership programs, as well as the Alumni program. Our staff are deeply committed to fostering the learning and wellbeing of each student. Parent satisfaction with the school is well above the state average, and reflects the confidence parents and families have in the work we do together.

The challenges we faced once we returned to onsite learning in 2022, whilst different from those of the previous two years, were no less demanding of staff, students and families. Illness and the adjustments needed to transition to a more 'social' setting were enormous and, to some extent, the intensity of them caught us by surprise. However, all of the work we had done together over recent years on curriculum, teaching practice, policies, student and staff wellbeing, and on strengthening partnerships with families and across the community stood us in good stead to support students and staff to return, and to ensure that our focus on learning and wellbeing was maintained. The success of this is certainly reflected in our excellent outcomes for students, both academic and in terms of wellbeing.

St Albans Secondary College is proud to be an accredited provider of education for international students. Our reputation for academic excellence and a supportive learning environment has attracted 41 students from overseas who are currently completing their secondary education with us. The school is committed to a sustained program of facilities improvement in order to enhance the learning and work environment for students and staff. Upgrading of the school's facilities continued in 2022 with the development of outdoor recreation areas, as well as ongoing landscaping of the grounds, and improvements to student and staff facilities. Planning began for two major upgrade projects: renovation of one of the original buildings; and a refurbishment of the Performing Arts Centre. The College has 189 staff members: 4 Principal Class; 133 teaching staff; and 52 education support (ES) staff. This equates to 172.9 equivalent full time staff: 4 principal Class; 125.8 teaching staff; and 43.1 ES staff.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

2022 was an excellent year for learning outcomes at the College. We achieved some of our best results ever in many areas measured. The College's response to COVID 19, where we maintained a consistent online approach to learning, where teachers ran classes for every timetabled lesson, meant that we have not suffered a dip in learning for our students.

We have had a renewed focus on further improving the teaching of Mathematics. Based on student feedback there was a focus on Maths teachers providing their students with enough time to apply their learning. We also worked on changing the way Maths was assessed, with a greater emphasis on problem solving, and open-ended analytical questions.

In 2022 we launched the Whole School Numeracy Plan. This involved identifying the numeracy skills required in subjects other than Maths, and documenting where and how they will be taught and assessed.

Our English and EAL teachers had a renewed focus on a consistent and explicit approach to the teaching of reading. This approach was also clearly linked to the reading in Literate Practices at Year 7. There has also been an emphasis on the teaching of writing, with the consistent use of the writer's notebooks.

For English Years 7 to 10, 85.4% of students were at or above expected level according to teacher judgements. This compares favourably with the State at 76.3%. For Mathematics Years 7 to 10, the figure was 78.8%, compared to 67.4% for the State.

Our NAPLAN results were also strong, with the College being recognised as one of the top 10 schools in the State. Highlights include 49.6% of Year 9 students in the top 3 bands for Reading, compared to the State figure of 47.2%. In Year 9 Numeracy, 54.4% of students were in the top 3 bands, compared to the State figure of 44.7%. For Year 7 Reading, 54.6% of students were in the top 3 bands, which was the same as the State. Our Year 7 Numeracy results were very strong. 62.1% of students were in the top 3 bands, compared to 52.5% in the State. In all areas of NAPLAN the College was well above the results for like schools, which is a pleasing result.

Our VCE results were our best ever. We achieved a median VCE study score of 31.0, compared to the State at 28.8. Our rate of VCE successful completion was 98%, and for VCAL, the rate was 94%.

To further strengthen student learning outcomes, the College has also had a focus on supporting teachers to improve their capacity to differentiate the curriculum and assessments to meet students at their point of need. High quality professional learning has been provided to help build teacher confidence to utilise research based differentiation approaches in their practice.

To support students to take ownership of their learning we have continued and strengthened the process whereby they set Effort Goals. This process is now focused at Years 7 to 9, where it is an integral part of the Learning Manager program.

Wellbeing

2022 was a year of consolidation for the College in relation to student wellbeing, returning to our first full year of onsite learning post the COVID 19 pandemic and lockdowns of 2020 and 2021. Sub Schools, Wellbeing staff and teachers have pursued an unrelenting focus on creating safe and orderly learning environments in which the wellbeing of students, as well as their learning outcomes are privileged. An increase in student engagement in Wellbeing programs and an increase in student use of the language of Resilient Mindsets (known as Connect Protect and Respect - CPR) was observed and confirmed by data obtained from student forums.

A strong bounce back in student wellbeing, post COVID, has been realised, evidenced in Student Attitude to School (AtoSS) data, in which the College improved contrary to declining state data, outperforming state means in all domains surveyed. Specifically, the College targets to increase our percentile rankings in AToSS measures: student resilience/perseverance, from the 78th percentile to 80th percentile, student sense of connectedness from the 60th percentile to the 68th percentile, advocate at school measures from the 46th percentile to the 54th percentile and respect for diversity indicators from the 76th percentile to the 77th percentile were all achieved. The actual percentiles for these targets were the 82nd, 68th, 68th and 83rd percentiles respectively.

During 2022, the College also completed a review and update of the Behaviour Management Policy, which included the development and launch of a positive behaviour matrix, linked to CPR and the school values. The principles of restorative and Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) have been further integrated into the policy and a reflective tool for students has been developed.

Additionally, the College developed a “Student Support Snapshot”. This tool provides teachers with data to support students in the classroom regulate their behaviour. These profiles are completed in partnership with students. Professional learning for all staff was delivered on a range of wellbeing topics. This included all Wellbeing, Sub School and Individual Needs staff undertaking training in TIP. Another significant area of professional learning was focused on gender diversity. Staff developed personalised learning goals, through peer coaching, on supporting the experience of girls in the classroom, modifying language and behaviour to be more inclusive, and calling out discrimination. A detailed resource document was also developed to support staff implement these goals. Throughout 2023, numerous programs were developed and provided to engage students. The College hosted many wellbeing celebrations and days of action including International Women’s Day, NAIDOC Week, National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence, IDAHOBIT Day, Multicultural Day, Wear it Purple Day, National Day of Reconciliation, Transgender Day of Visibility, RUOK Day, Disability Awareness Days and Youth Day. The College is immensely proud of our work in wellbeing and the culture we have created, where we strive every day to ensure all members of our community feel Connected, Protected and Respected.

Engagement

We have maintained an average attendance rate at or above 90% for all year levels. The average number of days absent per student in 2022 was 16.5, up from 9.7 in 2021, but this is still well below the state number of 27.7 days and similar schools with 26.1 average days of absence per student. Twice each term, our Sub School teams, Wellbeing team, and a Principal Class Officer, through our Case Management process, meet to discuss students whose attendance has fallen below 90% and to put in place strategies to address this.

The proportion of Year 7 students who remain at the College through to Year 10 increased from 76% in 2021 to 84.3% in 2022 and is now well above the state retention rate of 73.1%. Students who exit the College after Year 12 continue to move into high-quality pathways; 57% of the 2022 Year 12 cohort with a university place, 28% going to TAFE, and the majority of the rest of the cohort going on to full-time employment. In 2022, we had 100% of Year 10 to 12 exit students with positive destinations, compared to the state with 90%.

We have a comprehensive Managed Individual Pathways planning process that commences at Year 7 and continues to provide high-quality support to all students, even after they exit the College. The Year 6 to Year 7 program provides a very supportive transition process for students: our 2022 Year 7 students participated in a range of events to promote a positive transition from Year 6 including taster days at our school, visits from the transition team staff, and parent information evening sessions. In Term 4, we conducted a comprehensive orientation program for Year 10 and 11 students, as well as a step-up program for Years 7 – 9. In 2022, the percentage positive endorsement for the transitions variable in the Parent Opinion Survey was 82%, which was above the state level of 72%.

Our extensive work with our business and community partners in support of our students was fully reinstated in 2022, including Year 10 work experience after the impacts of lockdowns over the previous couple of years. We provided an onsite program for the work experience days due to the requirement of vaccination not being met by a number of students and also the increased challenge of placing students into workplaces due to lingering concerns around Covid. We are in the process of building a strong alumni connection and the school has employed a part-time alumni coordinator to further strengthen this program. Our annual Business Partners’ breakfast and Year 10 speed careering day were both run very successfully in 2022 and included representation from alumni as well as a broad range of community businesses who work with the school.

Course counselling ran for all Year 9, 10 and 11 students with individual student meetings held with a staff member who could assist students identify the pathways that would best meet their needs. Pathways for our PSD funded students were a regular point of focus for the Engagement Team and we were able to secure appropriate pathways for each of those moving beyond the college. We ran a number of targeted careers programs including Morrisby for Year 9 and the Careers Development Program for Years 7 and 8.

In 2022, students at the College had access to a range of extracurricular activities to support engagement and connection including the Swimming and Athletics Carnivals, Year 12 Study Camp, Year 11 Team Building Day, proactive program days for each of Years 9 and 10 and we also ran the Year 7 and 8 Camps for each individual home group in those levels.

Financial performance

All figures related to the financial position as presented in the Performance Summary have been reviewed and confirmed as correct. All funds received from the Department, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with Department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised. The school has an active Finance Committee with non-DET School Council member representation, together with a representative Program Budget sub committee. The school has developed and continues to refine its financial management policies and practices. All figures from the Financial Performance and Position have been checked and confirmed as being correct.

The surplus of **\$1,215,398** is accounted for as follows:

1. Art Program donation: **\$25,000**
2. Revenue received in advance: **\$71,962**
3. Funds set aside for projects: re-blocking & PA : **\$1,000,000**
4. Outstanding orders: **\$221,394**

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.stalbanssc.vic.gov.au>