



Learning and Teaching

ST MARY'S COLLEGE



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A Liberating Education in Practice

Learning at St Mary's College is purposeful, relational, and aspirational. We strive to nurture capable, confident, and curious learners - equipped not only with knowledge, but with the mindset, character, and creativity to contribute meaningfully to the world. Our approach is research-informed, values-driven, and rooted in the belief that all students can grow when they are challenged, supported, and engaged.

St Mary's students are inspired to take ownership for their learning and develop mindsets that foster resilience and accountability for their daily learning habits.

We believe:

- Every student has the capacity to think deeply, create meaning, and act ethically
- Learning should be inclusive, intellectually rich, and culturally relevant
- Classrooms must foster independence, collaboration, and excellence

As part of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), we are shaped by the Touchstone Liberating Education - a philosophy that honours the dignity of each learner and encourages them to think critically, act with integrity, and respond to the needs of their time.

These principles inform every aspect of the learning process, including curriculum and assessment design to how we teach and engage every student.



The RAISE Learning Model

Teaching and learning at St Mary's is underpinned by the RAISE Learning Model a whole-school framework that cultivates the learning behaviours, cognitive skills, and dispositions students, need to thrive in school and beyond. RAISE underpins our culture of high expectations, in which all learners diligently strive for success and aim to reach their potential.

RAISE stands for:

R	Ready to Learn
A	Active Learners
I	Intent on Success
S	Seeking Understanding
E	Engaged in Creative and Critical Thinking

What informs our Teaching

Our approach is grounded in research from the science of learning and shaped by best-practice. The RAISE model complements a professional culture that values intellectual depth, as well as mastery of relevant skills and knowledge.

We focus on three core priorities:



Explicit Instruction

Learning is structured and sequenced. Teachers model processes, build background knowledge, provide guided practice, and offer timely feedback to close learning gaps and extend thinking.



Literacy and Numeracy Across the Curriculum

These skills are foundational. Reading, writing, reasoning, oral communication and numerical skills are taught explicitly in every subject and assessed to ensure all students have access to the full richness of the curriculum.



Relational and Responsive Practice

Teachers know their learners well and use data, observation, and dialogue to adjust how and what they teach. We create conditions for trust, motivation, and meaningful engagement in each classroom.





The Assumption of Mary

The Assumption of Mary, our patron saint, offers the spiritual inspiration for the RAISE Learning Model.

In her we see the embodiment of **faith, courage, and openness to transformation.** The moment of her Assumption body and soul into heaven calls us to aspire toward our highest potential. Just as Mary was lifted up, we are called to rise: to learn with purpose, to achieve with integrity, and to grow into the fullness of who we are created to be.

The visual representation of the RAISE model reflects this call to rise. It expresses the aspirational nature of learning, inviting students to grow in understanding, pursue excellence, and develop a strong sense of purpose. At its heart are the values embodied by Mary our spiritual mother and patron saint.



RAISE LEARNING MODEL

STUDENTS

READY TO LEARN

I arrive on time with the relevant learning materials, manage distractions, and organise my home study so I can fully engage in each lesson

ACTIVE LEARNERS

I listen actively, contribute to class discussions, work with others, and connect new learning to what I already know



ENGAGED IN CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

I apply my thinking to create, respond or solve with authenticity and attention to detail, reviewing and refining my work to continually improve

INTENT ON SUCCESS

I set learning goals, refer to success criteria, and take steps to improve by responding to feedback and reflecting on my growth.

SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

I focus during instruction, take clear notes, practice skills with support, and complete independent tasks to build my understanding

RAISE LEARNING MODEL

TEACHERS

READY TO LEARN

Teachers establish expectations, support home study and provide productive learning environments in which students can succeed

ACTIVE LEARNERS

Teachers use engaging hooks, retrieval practices and selective technological tools to create an environment for learning effectively



ENGAGED IN CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

Teachers explicitly teach thinking skills, model reasoning strategies, and differentiate tasks to challenge students to analyse, evaluate, and apply knowledge to their highest standard

INTENT ON SUCCESS

Teachers set challenging tasks with clear intentions and success criteria, celebrating success in all forms

SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

Teachers explicitly model new concepts and skills, scaffolding guided and independent practice and checking for understanding.

RAISE LEARNING MODEL

PARENTS

READY TO LEARN

Parents support students to be well rested, organised, attired and prepared for each school day

ACTIVE LEARNERS

Parents encourage students to develop study habits and a positive mindset towards learning

ENGAGED IN CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

Parents encourage students to think deeply, ask questions and develop skills

INTENT ON SUCCESS

Parents encourage students to do their individual best, set goals and be focused

SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

Parents encourage students to develop constructive relationships with teachers and engage in learning habits that support understanding



RAISE in the Classroom

HOW WE LEARN AND TEACH

RAISE provides a shared teaching framework that brings clarity, consistency, and coherence to every learning environment. It supports teachers to design purposeful learning experiences and to foster habits that equip students not just for academic achievement, but for continual personal growth.

Each stage in RAISE builds upon the last:

R**Ready to Learn**

creating calm, focused, and welcoming environments that prepare students for engagement.

A**Active Learners**

encouraging participation, questioning, and engagement in every lesson.

I**Intent on Success**

guiding students to set goals, reflect on feedback, and persist through challenges.

S**Seeking Understanding**

deepening learning by promoting conceptual thinking and relational insight.

E**Engaged in Creative and Critical Thinking**

inviting students to imagine, analyse, and synthesise, thinking independently and working collaboratively with purpose.

Through RAISE, teachers share a common language that helps students internalise what good learning looks like. It's not just what we teach, but how we teach it, with deliberate actions that empower every learner to move forward.





RAISE Across the Years

A JOURNEY FROM BELONGING TO BECOMING

RAISE is more than a model for learning, it's a journey of spiritual and personal growth. It reflects the deeper meaning of the word raise: to lift up, to support, to help someone become their best. In our Catholic tradition, prayer is described as raising the heart and mind to God and in many ways, learning is a kind of prayer in action. When we learn with purpose, creativity, and wonder, we draw closer to who God made us to be.

The five phases of RAISE help students develop the mindset, habits, and spirit they need to grow. The first four stages are not just steps to complete but rather ways of being that prepare students to engage with what matters most.

These stages lead to the final one - Engaged in Creative and Critical Thinking - where students are truly ready to interact with what the Catholic tradition calls the three great gifts: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. These transcendentals are paths to how we recognise God in the world. When students learn to think deeply and creatively, they not only learn knowledge, they also become more human, more loving, and more open to wonder.

"THE GLORY OF GOD IS THE HUMAN

Each stage draws students into deeper phases of learning :

01

Ready to Learn

is about preparation and attentiveness, being present in each moment and open to learning.

02

Active Learners

are curious and involved. They ask questions, try new things, and take responsibility for their learning.

03

Intent on Success

is about finding your purpose, setting goals, and following through.

04

Seeking Understanding

is about gaining insight that's shaped by love and guided by truth.

05

Engaged in Creative and Critical Thinking

is the culmination. It's where students connect everything they have learned and begin to think in ways that reflect God's creativity. Through this they come to recognise what is good, true, and beautiful in the world and respond with imagination, compassion, and wisdom

RAISE invites every learner to grow in heart and mind - to see learning not just as a duty, but as a gift. A way of discovering who they are, how they belong, and who they're called to become in the world.

In doing so, they are not just equipped for the world - they are formed to shape it. They become ambassadors of Christ, whose thinking, creating, and acting reflect the love and wisdom of God.

This is the ultimate purpose of RAISE: to form students who are "fully alive" - intellectually engaged, spiritually grounded, and ready to succeed in a rapidly evolving world.



The 3 Stages of RAISE

AT ST MARYS COLLEGE

The RAISE Learning Model provides a developmental progression from early secondary through to the final years of schooling. While the framework remains consistent, the demands, complexity, and level of autonomy increase. Students are supported to evolve from structured learners to independent thinkers, capable of navigating uncertainty and contributing beyond the classroom.

Years 11-12 | Becoming

Years 9-10 | Broadening horizons

Years 7-8 | Belonging

Years 7–8 | Belonging

In the junior years, students are introduced to the habits, expectations, and routines that underpin successful learning. The focus is on active participation, developing foundational literacy and numeracy, and understanding how to organise, reflect, and respond appropriately to feedback.

Focus Areas include:

- Learning how to learn: note-taking, goal setting and navigate our Learning Management System (SIMON)
- Building confidence in reading, writing and reasoning
- Engaging in discussion, group work and structured reflection
- Developing a sense of belonging and personal responsibility

Years 9–10 | Broadening horizons

These years mark a shift toward more complex learning, greater student agency, and deeper self-awareness. Students begin to connect their learning with broader questions of identity, society, and the future.

In Year 9, students engage in a dedicated program that includes real-world learning experiences, personal development, community engagement, and opportunities to explore creative and critical thinking in new contexts. In Year 10, work experience and guided course counselling help students explore who they are and how they can find a vocation to aspire towards.

Focus Areas include:

- Deepening understanding through sustained inquiry and extended projects
- Developing leadership, independence and collaboration
- Strengthening decision-making through subject selection and goal planning
- Participating in immersive learning that builds adaptability and resilience
- Exploring personal awareness and insights in regard to careers







St. Pier Giorgio Frassati scaling a mountain

RAISE ASTRA Badges

PER ASPERA AD ASTRA – THROUGH CHALLENGE TO THE STARS



The RAISE ASTRA badges invites Years 7 to 10 students at St Mary's College to engage in projects that challenge them to develop advanced skills in their chosen area of study. These projects are rooted in themes of justice, community and service, aiming to cultivate critical thinking, creativity and a deeper understanding of the common good. The latin phrase "Ad astra", meaning "to the stars", speaks to the desire for academic growth and excellence.

Inspired by Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati (pictured), one of the Church's newest saints, the program also reflects his motto "Verso l'alto!" (to the heights), urging students to strive for both intellectual excellence and moral purpose. His deep devotion to Mary, tireless advocacy for the poor and love for adventure serve as a reminder that true achievement is found in service to others and courageous action.

The RAISE ASTRA program celebrates students who demonstrate initiative, independence and a commitment to personal and academic excellence. These achievements are recognised through real physical badges, tangible symbols of accomplishment that can be earned across a diverse range of challenges.

For example, students might receive badges for conducting an advanced science inquiry, composing an original musical or written work, designing a sustainability initiative, leading a community fundraiser or completing a physical endurance challenge linked to personal growth. These projects are designed by subject area specialists and draw on senior level curriculum knowledge, integrating social justice, enterprise, creativity and wellbeing.

Year 9 Magnificat Program

"THEN MARY SAID, 'MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE SPRIT OF THE LORD.'" — LUKE 1:46

The Magnificat Program is St Mary's College's unique Year 9 experience, inspired by Mary's song of praise in the Gospel of Luke. Mary's Magnificat is a bold declaration of faith, justice and hope a call to recognise God's presence in the world and respond with courage, compassion and purpose. This same spirit lies at the heart of the program, inviting students to grow in confidence and character as they begin to understand who they are, where they belong, and how they can make a meaningful difference. It is a year of broadening horizons, where students are empowered to use their voice, explore their world, and respond to life with action.

The program is designed to take learning beyond the traditional classroom, using the vibrant city of Melbourne as an extended learning environment. Built around the themes of Connection, Community and Contribution, students participate in a diverse range of immersive activities that help them explore who they are, where they belong and how they can make a difference.

Through a rotating series of cultural and educational experiences, students visit places such as the Immigration Museum, ACMI, NGV Australia, and the MCG. They take guided and self-guided tours, explore public art and street art, engage with Australia's multicultural history and First Nations cultures, and even participate in a food tour of South Melbourne Market. Each experience is carefully selected to support core curriculum areas while also fostering cross-curricular priorities including sustainability, cultural understanding and global awareness.

The Year 9 Magnificat Program encourages students to engage deeply with their community, appreciate the rich cultural fabric of their city and develop the confidence to contribute with integrity and compassion. Like Mary, they are invited to embrace life fully saying yes not only with their minds, but with their hearts and actions.



Year Outline

Term 1: Connection with Each Other and the School Community

- Explore the question: "How can we connect with each other and our school community?" Participate in team-building days
- Engage in collaborative class projects
- Initiate small-scale school community activities

Term 2: Community and Culture

- Focus on understanding and celebrating Melbourne's cultural diversity
- Participate in experiences that highlight different cultures
- Develop appreciation for multiculturalism within the local context

Term 3: Contribution

- Emphasis on giving back to the community
- Involvement in service projects
- Engage in social justice initiatives
- Reflect on personal and collective impact

Term 4: Reflection and Consolidation

- Reflect on personal growth throughout the year
- Consolidate learning from previous terms
- Consider how to carry forward lessons learned into the future

03

Years 11–12 | Becoming

In the senior years, students are expected to apply their learning with discipline, initiative, and confidence. Whether pursuing VCE or a vocational pathway, students are supported to pursue excellence, manage complexity, and make meaningful contributions in and beyond the classroom. The combination of VCE, VCE VM and VET, as well as opportunities to broaden their learning experience and construct a sense of who they want to be as they enter the next stage of their life beyond the college.

Focus Areas include:

- Applying analytical, creative, and ethical reasoning to complex tasks
- Managing deadlines, revision, projects and performance under pressure
- Using feedback and self-assessment to refine work
- Preparing for transitions through careers counselling, mentoring and personalised support
- Striving for success in completion of all key assessments and competencies

Learning as a Journey of Becoming

At St Mary's College, learning is understood as a process of growth - intellectual, personal, and spiritual. Through the structure of the RAISE Learning Model and the values of Liberating Education, students are supported to think clearly, act responsibly, and engage with purpose. They develop knowledge and skills while also forming identity and direction within a learning environment that is rigorous, reflective, and attuned to the demands of a changing world. For each one of our graduates, the final two years of the St Mary's College journey is both a culmination of what has been cultivated already, as well as the beginnings of a lifelong pursuit toward excellence and wonder.







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