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A young woman in a school uniform is sitting at a table, smiling. On the table is a large periodic table of elements made of LEGO bricks. She is holding a black container labeled 'PERIODIC THE EL'.

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.

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.

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 a sense of purpose

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 stands for:

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

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:

01

Ready to Learn

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

02

Active Learners

Encouraging participation, questioning, and visible thinking in every lesson.

03

Intent on Success

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

04

Seeking Understanding

Deepening learning by promoting conceptual thinking and relational insight.

05

Engaged in Creative and Critical Thinking

Inviting students to imagine, analyse, and synthesise - to think independently and work collaboratively with complexity and 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.

"TO LIVE IS TO CHANGE AND TO BE PERFECT IS TO CHANGE OFTEN"
ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

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 capabilities 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.



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 stages of RAISE help students develop the mindset, habits, and spirit they need to grow. The first four stages are not just steps to complete - they are 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 become more human, more loving, and more open to wonder.

"THE GLORY OF GOD IS THE HUMAN

Each stage draws students into more than just knowledge:

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

isn't about competing with others - it's about finding your purpose, setting goals, and following through.

04

Seeking Understanding

is not about collecting facts - it's 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've learned and begin to think in ways that reflect God's creativity. It's how 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 serve** 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.

03	Years 11–12 Becoming
02	Years 9–10 Broadening horizons
01	Years 7–8 Belonging

01

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

02

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

Years 11–12 | Becoming

In the senior years, students are expected to apply their learning with discipline, initiative, and confidence. Whether pursuing VCE, VCE VM 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 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

Learning as a Journey of Becoming

At St Mary's College, learning is understood as a process of growth—intellectual, personal, and ethical. 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.





