

Aquinas College Ringwood

2020

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1608

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Darren Atkinson, attest that Aquinas College is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2020 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School.

07/06/2021

NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Our College Vision

Vision

Inspired by Gospel values and mindful of our Catholic identity, our Vision is to ignite the fire of learning and shine as a beacon of excellence, hope and love in the world.

'Illuminare et Ardere'

Mission

Our Mission is to promote quality education while developing an awareness of God in our lives, the value and connectedness of all human relationships, a sense of justice, a hopeful spirit and a love of learning. We proclaim this Mission at Aquinas College by embracing six Core Values:

Spirituality: we nurture a connectedness to God and a Catholic faith that is informed by scripture, tradition and the regional parish communities.

Belonging: mindful of our diverse local and global community; we are culturally inclusive and respect the dignity of each individual.

Perseverance: we are challenged to continually strive for excellence in all aspects of our learning.

Compassion: we promote the service of others through education and experiences that are based on kindness and generosity informed by Catholic Social Teaching.

Stewardship: we encourage our community to respond to the need for sustainability in our contemporary world in the light of the Gospel and its call to action.

Justice: we promote opportunity and equity through awareness and support of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Each Core Value is assigned to a Year level and a deep understanding of that value is explored. So that by the time an Aquinas student reaches the end of their schooling in Year 12, every Core value will have been embedded via the curriculum and as part of daily conversation, providing a focus to embrace our potential and further understand our opportunities, both personally and as a community, to "light up and be on fire".

College Overview

We commenced 2020 with an enrolment of 1676 students. Not included in these numbers are 15 students from our long standing partnership with St Mary's College for the deaf and 17 International students. Our community in 2020 comprised 1219 families and some 250 staff in both teaching and non-teaching capacities. 300 Year 7 students joined our community amidst great enthusiasm and excitement.

2020 was to be a significant year for the College in terms of Accreditation and commencement of major building works. However, the year took some unexpected turns and our focus needed to be solely on the continuous learning of our students. This took priority over everything else and rightly so. Not only were their academic needs important, but more so than ever were their wellbeing needs and also that of our staff in a year that was nothing short of a rollercoaster ride. The ups certainly outweighed the downs though and our community is immensely proud of this achievement.

Principal's Report

The 2020 academic year was always going to be a big one for Aquinas College. We had a new Deputy Principal, Dr Rodezno, and a new Assistant Principal Staff, Mrs Goss. We were also due to seek accreditation with the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the Council of International Schools (CIS), both enormous undertakings requiring hours of preparation and documentation. Most importantly, we had 1700 students and nearly 250 staff members eager to commence learning with a hope that the year would be fruitful for all.

Then we were dealt COVID-19!

The first of what was to become many cancellations was a much anticipated Aquinas Band Tour of the United States of America. While COVID-19 was yet to hit Australian shores, it was apparent at the time that New York City was struggling to contain something highly infectious and requiring hospitalisation for many. Of course, the students were disappointed but understood that health had to take priority over anything else. As the year unfolded and the pandemic took a dreadful toll, it was the cancellation of extra-curricular events such as interschool sport, camps, retreats, Balls, Central Australia tours, socials and Graduation that seem to cause so much disappointment. As I heard one young man describe in a media interview:

"It's as though they've run school through a strainer and scooped out the good bits!"

Yet a remarkable transformation was taking place as teachers and Support Staff toiled tirelessly to move to remote forms of learning. Those who had only ever read of "flipped classrooms", or other models of online learning, were quickly building new skills in video conferencing and an outstanding program of "Continuing Learning" seemingly emerged overnight. Of course, there were countless hours spent collaborating in learning teams to distill from the curriculum the essential knowledge and a pedagogy in which students could be engaged via their device at home. The result was a remarkable remote learning program that enabled most students to progress and many to continue to flourish.

Students demonstrated a resourcefulness that they often did not believe they possessed. While we spoke of resilience at the College and one of our core values is "perseverance", it's when the chips are down that it becomes most apparent whether these qualities really exist. Not only did we see many students continue to thrive, we saw student leaders emerge who took responsibility to reach out to their peers with words of encouragement, especially as enthusiasm waned in the midst of a bleak winter. Parents and guardians should also be heartily applauded for their efforts to provide safe and effective learning environments in their homes, especially at a time when so many were dealing with the precarious nature of their own employment.

This Annual Report to the Community will tell a story of 2020. Just like in our own memory; the highlights will rise to be celebrated, and we will not dwell on the disappointments. There will be much that emerges from this year about what is truly important. We are people of hope and we look forward with great optimism.

Darren Atkinson - Principal Aquinas College

Church Authority Report

The end of 2020 will see changes to the governance of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, with responsibility being transferred to a new body; Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS). Up until now, parish primary schools and regional secondary colleges have been governed by the parish priests of the parishes which established them.

In this tradition, Aquinas College holds a unique place. Throughout the 1950s, the parish priests of Croydon, Mitcham, and Ringwood (among others) sought to provide for the secondary education of the young women and men of their parishes. When Religious Orders and Congregations - who had historically provided such education - were not able to do this, these pioneer Parish Priests turned to what was, at that time, a new model for the provision of secondary education: a school owned by a group of parishes, to provide a quality Catholic education for the children of the families of those parishes. When it opened on 8th February 1961, Aquinas College was only the second Regional College in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Since then, there have been all sorts of challenges and struggles: financial, physical, capital, personnel... the list is probably endless. But through all of this, the vision of those original Parish Priests has not changed: a quality Catholic education for the young people of their parishes. To realise this vision, in the beginning they were joined by Religious women and men. Today, we are joined by a dedicated lay staff to bring the very best of educational opportunities to the young people of the parishes of Croydon, Mitcham, Ringwood and Ringwood North. As our College song states: united our hearts will remain...

As we mark this milestone in the history of Catholic Education in this Archdiocese and this College, my prayer for Aquinas College is that it may continue to be the light which banishes darkness and the flame which sets our world on fire with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rev Anthony J Doran PP

President Association of Canonical Administrators

2017 - 2020

College Board Report

2020 was an extremely different and difficult year as we are all too well aware. COVID-19 had significant impact on every aspect of our lives and obviously the way our children have experienced their schooling has been no exception.

I would like to acknowledge the staff of Aquinas College for the way that they embraced remote learning, driven by their desire to ensure that all of our children could continue to receive a quality education regardless of the circumstances. I would also like to thank our principal Darren Atkinson and the expanded Senior Leadership Team for their efforts behind the scenes in establishing the frameworks required to ensure that Continuous Learning was available to all Aquinas students as we moved between the various stages of lock down imposed by the Victorian State Government during 2020.

As a result of the pandemic, we had to postpone the next phase of our building master plan that was focussed on significant improvements to our gymnasium and theatre precinct. We will look to reschedule these works at some point in the near future.

In addition, as a result of Leadership changes we also elected to delay the re-accreditation process required for ongoing membership of the Council of International Schools (CIS). While the Board's focus on CIS re-accreditation continued during 2020 the 10-year review visit by the CIS team was rescheduled to March 2021.

2020 was also a challenging year financially for Aquinas. While revenues were significantly below budget, it was comforting to know that as a community we were able to support the many families that had experienced financial hardship as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

Paul Ayton — Chair Aquinas College Board

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Development of ongoing faith formation opportunities for students, staff and families:

Promote the Catholic Identity of Aquinas amongst students, staff, families and the wider community:

Staff and students able to articulate the teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Christian tradition through a robust Religious Education curriculum.

- Inter-faith dialogue between members of Catholic and other faith communities.
- Student led social justice activities for the College community.
- Promotion of Catholic identity in the wider community and participation in the sacramental life of the Church by all members of the College.
- Students demonstrating an understanding of, and support for, the needs of others.
- Staff and students able to articulate the spiritual charisms of the Team patrons and their contemporary expression.

Achievements

Spirit of Aquinas Program

- Introduction to students where each year level was informed on their value and explored examples of this value and its interaction with other core values. Students received badges to remind them of their value and also began to receive commendations linked to the different values.
- Students with the highest points for each year level were awarded SoA certificate and prize
- Staff person of the week was also linked to the core values to keep them visible amongst staff.
- Staff Spirituality Day also provided opportunities to explore our core values.
- Board meeting held to inform and discuss the Core Values and explore how they occur within Aquinas

Interfaith

- Most events were cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

Faith Development

- Introduction of the Called Program for Staff faith development with approximately 40 Aquinas staff online. This program introduces some staff members and further develops others in our Catholic faith.
- Continued Monday prayer, prior to restrictions Monthly morning mass and various mass and prayer opportunities.

- Spirituality day for staff provided opportunities to explore the Horizons of Hope documentation and how this connects with our Aquinas vision and mission.

Social Justice

While many of our events were cancelled due to restrictions we were able to create some online activities where students and staff could still contribute

- The Aquinas Virtual Long walk involved an online video with contributions from Nova Peris, the FIRE carrier and Immersion students, students from other year levels who decorated feet to display.
- ANZAC Day was a student led initiative and had the creativity of the music department to create an online liturgy.
- Circles of Silence for refugees became the Web of Silence as students and staff joined online with signs of solidarity for asylum seekers and refugees.
- Tinnies for Vinnies was incorporated into our Christmas toys appeal where students and staff gathered gifts and food for those in our local community in need.
- Staff Christmas raffle also raised funds for St Vincent de Paul to help those in our community struggling to pay bills and purchase food.

VALUE ADDED

Liturgical celebrations were limited or adapted during 2020. Prior to the lockdown we were able to celebrate our Opening Mass with Fr Len as well as a few monthly morning masses. During and post lockdown we celebrated the following:

- ANZAC day liturgy - recorded and played online during pastoral session.
- End of Year Liturgies for all year levels. These were pre-recorded by Fr Dispin and the Year 10 Faith and Liturgy class. Students celebrated these liturgies as a homeroom/mentor with their teacher.
- Staff end of year Liturgy - held in person in the gymnasium

Retreat

- An adapted version of the Year 12 Retreat was held during an afternoon/evening for students to partake in the personal and faith development activities
- Year 10 students were able to complete the "letter to themselves" retreat activity which connects to their year 12 retreat in two years time.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Develop a school culture where students can maximise the 'Attributes of an Aquinas Student' to fully participate in opportunities at the College.
- Aquinas' students are articulate learners who are able to talk about their own learning and this develops student voice in all areas.
- Student Leadership is a learning focus.
- Ensure teaching/learning experiences are challenging and dynamic, taught by teachers who are outstanding in their field and in the education of young people.
- Staff goals were consistency and collaboration in working together and challenge for all students

Achievements

[LTAchievements]

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Year 12 class of 2020 achieved strong results. There was a significant increase in the number of students with ATARS of over 90. Our median study score is 30 which is the state average. There were some exceptional individual scores from both Year 12 and accelerating Year 11 students, which shows the continued dedication of Aquinas teachers and the sustained effort from students supported by their families.

There was no NAPLAN data for 2020. The trend data over the period from 2017-19 show that Aquinas students, on average, progress at a healthy and expected rate. Reading, Writing and Numeracy results are above the expected average for the state and nation.

Aquinas is focused on improving literacy and numeracy, especially reading, as this is key to success in high school studies. Through both the Visible Learning Project and a close reading of collective and individual student data, Aquinas has worked on ensuring that student reading performance is central to the secondary school experience. Aquinas has specific roles, Middle Years English, Middle Years Mathematics and Literacy Coordinator to ensure student success in these foundation areas of their learning. Maths Pathways is used to meet the various Numeracy needs.

MEDIAN NAPLAN RESULTS FOR YEAR 9		*
Year 9 Grammar & Punctuation		
Year 9 Numeracy		
Year 9 Reading		
Year 9 Spelling		
Year 9 Writing		

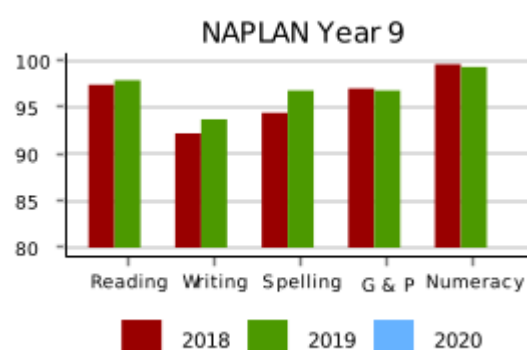
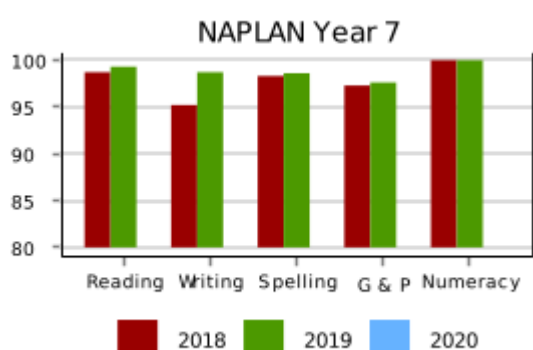
* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018	2019	2018 – 2019	2020	2019 – 2020
	%	%	Changes	%	Changes
			%	*	*
YR 07 Grammar & Punctuation	97.3	97.6	0.3		
YR 07 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 07 Reading	98.7	99.3	0.6		
YR 07 Spelling	98.3	98.6	0.3		
YR 07 Writing	95.2	98.7	3.5		
YR 09 Grammar & Punctuation	97.0	96.8	-0.2		
YR 09 Numeracy	99.6	99.3	-0.3		
YR 09 Reading	97.4	97.9	0.5		
YR 09 Spelling	94.4	96.8	2.4		
YR 09 Writing	92.2	93.7	1.5		

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

1. An increased knowledge of potential Pathways/Careers amongst students, parents and staff by:
 - Developing a Pathways Team
 - Establishing a team that includes the Pathways Coordinator, VET Coordinator, VCAL Coordinator, Careers Coordinator, Head of the Middle Years, and chaired by the Head of the Senior Years.
 - Conducting a review of pathways practices to enhance impact.
2. A more visible Restorative Practices process by:
 - All students and staff having full knowledge and understanding of Restorative Practices
 - A consistent implementation of Restorative Practices with all students
3. Embedding the core College values in students by:
 - Focusing on one of the core values at each year for a total of six years.
 - Year 7 Belonging
 - Year 8 Stewardship
 - Year 9 Perseverance
 - Year 10 Justice
 - Year 11 Compassion
 - Year 12 Spirituality

Achievements

It is considered that student wellbeing is essential to student success and achievement of the best learning outcomes. The Year 2020, with the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, demanded student wellbeing to be an area of key focus in practice, underpinning all considerations for the roll-out of our remote learning and return to school strategies. During periods of lockdown, it was vital that students were guided through social and emotional learning in order for them to engage in learning through the limitations that remote learning presented in such areas. Evidently, study skills development and application, wellness for the mind and body and positive education provided the staff and students with options to embrace the opportunities that emerged from the challenges that remote learning presented in positive ways.

The College embarked on a greater appreciation of the role of pathways planning as a key strategy to engage students in their studies. Finding relevance in learning for the purpose of achievement motivated students into not just maintaining engagement but achieving. The pathways team was developed and continuous review of practices led to greater appreciation of how senior students required assistance in formulating strategies to achieve their intended goals as they progressed through their final years of secondary schooling, forming links to further study or different programs within what is on offer at the College. This was possible due to the improved delivery of key information, specialised support for students requiring specific assistance and the

further creation of new processes that are being introduced in 2021 and beyond. A direct outcome is the introduction of the year 10 Pathways week as a way to launch the very important subject selection process.

While students learnt at the College or remotely, all interactions were founded on restorative practices and an appreciation of how following simple, yet structured methods to address any concerning behaviour leads to consistently effective outcomes. The College introduced the 4 Rs, focusing on the processes of Reminding, Redirecting, Relocating students, with the opportunity for them to Reflect on their actions, choices and consequences. This practice was helpful in assisting students and staff learn and teach under the remote learning context and when returning to the structures of face to face learning at school.

In its introductory year, the implementation of the Values of Aquinas program, as a way to enhance student engagement and sense of identity as members of the community, experienced success. Despite the outcomes being affected due to the lockdowns, the program started well and will continue to develop. Acknowledgement of the individual contributions through the recognition of merits and effort is a key strategy of the College as it continues to encourage a thirst for excellence across all areas of schooling. In addition, a review of student wellbeing practices has strategically linked each value according to the learning within the curriculum, the extra-curricular activities available for all students and the homeroom and learning mentor programs targeting personal holistic development as the students progress through each year level. Building an increased sense of identity and belonging to the greater Aquinas community for students has been a major focus and the rationale for developing the identities of the three Houses offer and the introduction of the Spirit of Aquinas program over the last year. Due to the periods of lockdown, the strategies have further led to more specific goals and outcomes for 2021.

In continuing the objectives of 2019, in 2020, the College continued forming the foundation of a robust and identifiable school culture where the six Core Values of the College are lived. To deepen student connection to the Core Values, alignment of a Core Value to each year level was initiated. As such, pastoral and curriculum activities and programs continued to be mapped to enhance a Core Value at each year. Therefore, Year 7 focuses on Belonging; Year 8 on Stewardship; Year 9 on Perseverance; Year 10 on Justice; Year 11 on Compassion; and Year 12 on Spirituality. Activities, where possible, have reflected this plan.

Student leaders led many activities throughout 2020 with the effort to engage and be a voice for the students. The Captains and Vice-Captains of the College represented the student body in meetings with the College Executive and Leadership teams in order to offer perspectives and assist our decision making across areas of learning, wellbeing and communication with the community. Leaders in other year levels supported their peers through innovation. Engaging competitions, advice, encouragement and support were offered through magazines, social media and our intranet. Participation from students was high and inclusive.

In order to provide effective methods of intervention when assisting students, there were regular meetings of pastoral staff to identify, strategise support, implement assistance and guide parents/guardians to maintain positive relationships and progress with students at risk. Students were categorised into groups based on their needs and advice was shared with staff, parents and the students themselves when formulating learning plans to address any specific challenges. The Youth and Family Centre and Educational Support Services were crucial in supporting pastoral staff members in this process. Upon returning to school, the Health Centre offered guidance and assisted in the implementation of initiatives to maintain adherence to regulations for the safety of the community. Key pastoral staff members were assigned monitoring responsibilities and all staff

were asked to report on any concerning matters. The College created explicit processes to ensure that all staff met their pastoral care responsibilities, inclusive of mandatory reporting and child safety.

VALUE ADDED

Spirit of Aquinas: Introduction of house point system, staff aligned to a House

- House Identity eg: Spirit lunches
- Planning Core Values with year levels
- PE uniform developed in consultation with the school community
- Case Management streamlined record keeping for communication, increased use of Student Notes on SIMON
- Student Leadership development: handover of leadership from Yr12 to Yr11; whole group forums; development of Middle Years roles including Music Captains
- First Year reunion
- Attitude for Gratitude for installation
- Commendations
- Student led activities: Day on the Grey, Farmer's relief
- VCAL transition camp
- Harmony Day — Senior years Athletics
- Fysical Friday activities embedded from an idea to student managed
- Great Ryrie Homework club

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Resulting from the restrictions and remote learning, the CEMSIS survey was not conducted in 2020, therefore, student satisfaction can only be anecdotally concluded by analysing local data sources. The College used the Pulse App as a way to identify student engagement and assess their wellness state. In addition, students were sent weekly surveys in which they outlined their feelings, successes, frustrations and other challenges. The College also maintained ongoing communication with parents and teachers so that intervention, when needed, took place at the earliest possible point. This approach allowed decisions for planning of prevention to be effective and well informed. Parents were continually informed of the progress of their children through personalised letters each time work was not completed, when there were concerns with progress or any other general matters affecting the progress of their child. However, when the number of letters exceeded a reasonable number, this was followed up with telephone or email communication from members of the pastoral team. Students were urged to communicate their concerns with their teachers, year level leaders, heads of school or members of the College executive and leadership teams. It is safe to conclude that most

students engaged in their learning, despite a number of students struggling to meet the requirements of the remote learning arrangements. In those cases, swift action led to ongoing management of the students in partnership with their parents.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Aquinas makes extensive use of our interface SIMON to record student attendance. Parents have access to a dedicated email address and phone number in both Middle and Senior Year levels to inform of student absence. Attendance is marked in every new class throughout the school day. Should a student be absent without notification, it is followed up in Middle Years with a phone call and in Senior Years with an SMS. For periods of extended absence, a letter must be written to the College Principal. Attendance was kept as a priority to illustrate engagement throughout the lockdowns, with a Google form sent each day to ensure that students attended to their responsibilities at the start of the day. The form was sent at 8.40am and students were required to return it by 9.30am. This method allowed the College to keep a record of attendance during the first lockdown. During the second lockdown, teachers were required to enter attendance for their classes using SIMON and this was monitored by the two reception staff for record keeping. Absences were followed up by the subject teacher and when concerns emerged, assistance was offered through monitoring by pastoral staff members.

YEARS 9 – 12 STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Years 9 to 12 Student Retention Rate	88.1%
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AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y07	94.8%
Y08	94.4%
Y09	93.5%
Y10	93.3%
Overall average attendance	94.0%

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES	
VCE Median Score	30.0
VCE Completion Rate	100.0%
VCAL Completion Rate	100.0%

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS AS AT 2020	
Tertiary Study	46.0%
TAFE / VET	15.0%
Apprenticeship / Traineeship	12.0%
Deferred	12.0%
Employment	10.0%
Other – The category of Other includes both students Looking for Work and those classed as Other	2.0%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Compliance of each standard specified in Ministerial Order 870 continues to be maintained. Our focus continues to be moving beyond compliance to embed initiatives and the pursuit of excellence in safeguarding discourse. Collaboration, steadfast commitment to transparency of intent and action guide our efforts in all areas of safeguarding with and for young people. Increasing opportunities for student voice as a form of protection participation a key objective for 2020. Generation of a Child Safety and Wellbeing Advisory Group composed of senior year students years 10-12 to work alongside the Child Safety and Wellbeing Coordinator has been achieved. Phase two of this initiative aims to expand this group to incorporate students from years 7-9 to enable an authentic whole school approach. This group provides students a platform to identify and raise their safety concerns with staff as a vital element of any child safe organisation. A safety audit of school grounds and common methods of transport routes taken by students on commutes to and from school was performed by students representatives to enhance risk mitigation strategies and future allocation of resources.

Professional learning support for staff and scheduled student briefings enables continuity, exploration and education of contemporary child safety discourse. Student voice will also inform future work and staff briefings to promote excellence in achieving standard seven.

Child safety was a key focus for 2020 in responding to the challenge of a COVID 19 impacted 2020. Clear governance and leadership was at the forefront of Continued Learning protocols, resource development and student check in platforms. Advice provided by Catholic Education Melbourne and the E safety Commissioner were adapted to inform online teaching and learning and individual student support. Staff updates and continued support to enact responsibilities associated with PROTECT obligations were maintained.

Digital forms of communication weekly were set up to gauge student physical and psychological safety. Development of a digital wellbeing hub to compliment existing digital safety information was provided with timely contextual focus. Support for students onsite in accordance with Government and Catholic Education Melbourne guidelines was established.

The Aquinas college community were informed of key strategic safety measures throughout periods of extended learning from home. Families were provided with access to online safety and wellbeing resources to further navigate potential challenges associated with a significant reliance on digital platforms globally. Individual student/ family meetings via

Continued preparation for CIS review and visitation was undertaken to seek further opportunities to build on the affirming pre-review reports. The standard of excellence achieved in pre visit reports confirmed our strategic implementation of Aquinas child safety initiatives. Child safety policies continue to be reviewed, updated periodically and in preparation for the shift in Catholic Education Melbourne governance structures. Preliminary work was undertaken for pending governmental reform associated with child safety, family violence prevention and information sharing entities.

Commercial resources designed to inform, educate and facilitate early intervention were investigated resulting in proposals to the college executive for 2021 implementation.

Achievements

There continues to be an increase in work undertaken to mitigate and risk manage child safety at Aquinas College. Appointment of a Director, Compliance and Infrastructure Development has further enhanced streamlining of risk assessment tools, safe storage of sensitive information inclusive of PROTECT reports. An additional Child Safety Obligation digital risk register was developed to record incidental information that may contribute to overall risk mitigation strategies and early intervention if required. Central and secure storage of completed templates of PROTECT reporting advice was achieved to enable staff with restricted access to remain informed as required in a large school with increasing rates of students at risk. A series of simplified flow charts to compliment government resources were designed and published to enhance continual efforts to achieve excellence in all standards, in particular 5-7.

Child Safety policies and every day practice expectations remain clearly identifiable on relevant documentation for staff to complete. Evidence of this can be located on Staff risk management and planning templates for student event/ excursion/ incursion.

Developments in electronic risk management, recording and responding to child safety concerns continue to improve supporting and maintaining our steadfast commitment to awareness raising and improvement of child safety policies and procedures. Compliance briefings are recorded enabling staff to review information at critical times as required. Digital resources available on SIMON have been increased and transferred to a user-friendly web page platform for staff to access. Plans for transition of the existing student Child Safety materials housed on SIMON are scheduled for 2021. Staff, Student and Family access to Child Safety materials remain available via school links and PAM on SIMON enabling engagement of stakeholders and continued promotion of this vital work.

Electronic access to the Thomas Street gate via student and staff identification cards has been rolled out across the college after the successful trial in 2019 of year 12 students. Swipe access enables safe and swift entry to the College during school hours on occasions students arrive at varied times. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Student Advisory group was recognised by the director of Catholic Education in the Director's news publication for excellence in protective participation of young people. This group continued to meet during lockdown offering valuable insights for the physical and psychological safety of their peers during this challenging time.

Monitoring points of entry was reviewed and maintained in accordance with an annual Child Safety (school environment and surrounds) review conducted alongside student representatives. Signage has been upgraded as required in particular with additional directives associated with COVID safe school operations.

Student cards with photographic identification consistent with the layout of Aquinas College student cards were generated and disseminated for all enrolled visiting VET students within the eastern cluster. This initiative enhances our existing identification requirements adding to a child safe environment. Acknowledgement of codes of conduct and associated Child Safety obligations have been maintained at points of entry and as required for online events during periods of lockdown and visitor restriction associated with COVID safe compliance.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To ensure Governance and decision making processes are efficient and effective.

To ensure Aquinas College, as an effective learning community, is seen as a rewarding place to learn and to work.

- Reaccreditation with CIS.
- Reaccreditation with VRQA.
- The staff Annual Review Meeting process is refined and expanded to be more inclusive of Support Staff.
- Transition to new governance model as MACS

Achievements

The College relationship changes with our Association of Canonical Administrators as of January 1, 2021, as Melbourne Archdiocese Catholics Schools (MACS) takes over governance of regional colleges. We look forward to continued partnership with our priests in supporting the role of the Catholic school in furthering the mission of the Church and offering spiritual leadership. A delegate from our Association of Canonical Administrators will continue to play a role on our School Advisory Council.

There will be significant change to the makeup of the Aquinas College Board at the end of 2020 as a number of long serving members end their association with the College as their youngest child graduates. Thanks to Mr Brad McDonald, Dr Roland Faktor, and Mrs Nadine Callaghan who have given generously of their time and expertise in offering advice to the College leadership in matters related to strategic direction, policy and finance over recent years. Thank you to Mr Paul Ayton who will continue in the role as Chairperson of the newly formed Aquinas College School Advisory Council.

The College has continued our preparation to seek reaccreditation with the Council of International Schools (CIS) and prepare for the Accreditation Visit in March 2021. We have undertaken the necessary compliance activities to demonstrate to the assessor that we are meeting our obligations for registration to the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The College will also endeavour to ameliorate current issues with managing stormwater as an important capital project in 2021. Root Partnerships will be contracted as Project Manager to oversee a significant capital improvement program to address a flooding issue that has impacted on our Theatre and its users on a number of occasions over recent years.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

Throughout 2020, Aquinas maintained its professional learning focus on teaching and learning, augmented by the process of moving to a remote learning model for much of the year. While developing collaboration, challenge and choice were again key areas for Learning Area teams, this became differently pertinent as staff and students migrated to our Continuing Learning Program. Staff employed their existing knowledge and experience of the features of Google Suite, and continued to refine and develop their skills in the use of new elements of Google Meet as our video conferencing framework. While teaching remotely, staff were ever more focused on ensuring clear and consistent feedback, reiterating the Four Part Lesson, and collaborating with their colleagues. Webinars, professional reading, live streams and video conference meetings focused on preparing and delivering curriculum that continued to reflect our College wide application of what it means to be a visible learner. Student wellbeing, connectedness and belonging were also primary focal points for staff, whilst always ensuring that Child Safety protocols were consistently applied.

All staff were encouraged to achieve goals set in the previous year's Annual Learning Plans and participated in internal and external Professional Learning accordingly. Throughout 2020 these internal and external activities focused primarily on adapting to the remote learning environment, and applicable curriculum and assessment updates, as well as ensuring high quality feedback, consistency, collaboration, challenge in our Continuing Learning mode. We also continued our work in student management, differentiation and special learning needs, and developing skills in vastly new technological opportunities. Learning Area Leaders continued to lead their staff in ensuring the College curriculum was focused on the expectations of the Victorian Curriculum.

Mental Health and Wellbeing was addressed throughout an array of targeted online webinars and programs. Pastoral Care and wellbeing for learning was a focus for staff, in both our Continuing Learning Mode, and upon our return to on-site learning at the College. Developing resilience, responding to change, fostering a sense of global citizenship, dealing with the unexpected nature of 2020, and building reflective agency and autonomy were all particular areas of online webinars, Pastoral Programs and wellbeing resources. The online platform, BeYou, was again a complementary resource to the existing frameworks and professional learning activities whereby staff could access a range of materials to support and reinforce the programs in place at the College.

As a whole staff, we again undertook the opportunity to update our CPR accreditation in order to maintain our First Aid qualifications from 2019. Through live streams, recorded briefings, in-person meetings and online training, the College maintained its compliance obligations with respect to OHS, Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Mandatory Reporting and the current Child Safety legislation. These online modules and in person demonstrations were part of ensuring the health and safety of our staff and students, which was a particular focus in the context of COVID-19 and its impact on our school community.

Through relevant online, internal and external professional learning, Aquinas supported staff to meet the VIT Special Needs Requirements wherein teachers are required to build their capacity to teach learners with disability. Additionally, study and training was a continued focus for Aquinas staff with a number of support and teaching staff completing study or further education across the year. TLN was utilised as an online resource for leadership, resourcing, wellbeing initiatives and differentiation across the year. Staff continued their working relationships and commitment to professional learning communities within their respective Learning Area institutions and organisations. VCE teaching staff applied for and completed External Examination and Assessor roles through the VCAA in a variety of mediums and in various different formats.

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2020	140
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1084

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Staff wellbeing and positive mental health was a high priority throughout 2020, and constant support was provided to all staff, particularly when working from home.

A number of wellbeing initiatives like virtual Morning Teas, online Trivia quizzes and weekly photo-story sharing allowed staff to stay connected both socially and professionally during the Remote Learning phase.

Professional Development opportunities, resources for the Continued Learning Plan and regular Learning Area meetings allowed teachers to feel supported and well-equipped to deliver the curriculum.

The Annual Review Meeting process became an "option" for all staff, giving them the opportunity to review their year and set goals for 2021. One of the goals would align with a Spirit of Aquinas value, allowing staff to consider what personal attributes they could develop and offer to the Aquinas community.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	84.4%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	85.4%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	2.0%
Masters	25.3%
Graduate	41.3%
Graduate Certificate	8.7%
Bachelor Degree	88.7%
Advanced Diploma	10.7%
No Qualifications Listed	7.3%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	5.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	164.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	144.3
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	97.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	80.4
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

College Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

That home and school work collaboratively to support student learning by:

- Increased parental awareness and attendance at College events and activities.
- Increase parent attendance at monthly Parents and Friends Network meetings to reflect 5% of the total family database.

Improved Parent partnership in the learning progress for the student by

- Increase in use and access of PAM by parents.

Students establish and facilitate interest groups about which they feel passionate by

- Increase the number of student-led activities.

Achievements

Despite the inevitable impact of the global COVID-19 Pandemic, Aquinas has been able to reach many of the set goals and intended outcomes outlined in the Annual Action Plan for 2020. A key achievement has been the increased partnership between parents and the school when supporting student learning. Data on the Parent Access Module (PAM) showed an increase in the number of parents accessing the module to familiarise themselves with the learning experiences of students, whether to check progression through completion of work or respond to correspondence from teachers. The Parent Access Module has continued to be an effective communication tool for the College to provide feedback to parents about student progress and its true value was certainly illustrated during remote learning. Much emphasis continued to be placed on the accuracy of timelines and course content for staff when uploading to our reporting interface with the understanding that parents would use this to support their children at home, in partnership with the College.

Our Open Day scheduled to be held in March was unfortunately cancelled due to Lockdown restrictions. However, we held an online virtual tour of our College in July which was well attended and gave families some opportunity to hear about programs and ask questions to the staff online.

The Parents and Friends Network welcomed our Year 7 families to the College at the start of the year with a Wine and Cheese Night. They also maintained communication in virtual on-line meetings throughout the year and contributed a welcome back gesture for staff. This consisted of a coffee and muffin, and all the staff members at the College were appreciative of the symbolic gesture.

Due to the restrictions imposed by health authorities, the Parent Forum for 2020 was cancelled. However, the Lighthouse newsletter became the primary source of communication with parents. We explored student learning and wellbeing strategies and voiced the relevance and importance of parental guidance and support throughout. We used this forum to gather as a community to explore some challenges associated with raising and guiding young people in what rapidly became a complex context. The frequency of the publication of the magazine increased during the lockdowns to a weekly edition. In addition, students from different year levels created ways to communicate with one another through the use of our intranet and/or social media. Year 12 students accessed Facebook as a way to keep in touch and Year 11 students created the "Quarantine Connection" magazine. This publication, accessible to all Year 11 students, provided the opportunities for all members to remotely engage in activities. Our College Captains and Vice-

Captains, together with other student leaders created a House Cup. This involved active participation in competitions to encourage students to maintain engagement as members of the community. A selected group of students held virtual cooking demonstrations, virtual running sessions and many more activities. There were many more initiatives that our students implemented as a way to support each other during what were challenging times and this enhanced student voice.

The 2020 Year 12 Parent Exit Survey was completed by 64 families, numbers a little down on previous years. These families are asked to reflect back on the past six years of their child's education at Aquinas College and provide insight into the experience they have had over the full secondary school life cycle. The feedback from those completing the survey is overwhelmingly positive with 90% choosing "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to the statement: Overall, I am satisfied with my child's education progress at this school. Similarly, very positive responses were received in the survey in about the sense of community, culture, and inclusive nature of the College with our mission to be a catholic school reflected in our acceptance of all, in our exposure to students of our catholic values and experiences, that our College is a place of care and compassion and through masses and the teaching of Religious Education. The feedback also highlighted areas for growth, specifically in the area of acknowledging all students, not just the obvious ones and involving more people in community services.

Student leaders provided insightful perspectives which supported the decision-making executed by College leaders. The College Captains and the Vice-Captains joined in online meetings and provided helpful advice as the decisions regarding student matters were made. In addition, staff were also involved in the sharing of images, thoughts and perspectives through what was known as the "alternative music Fridays" blog. This strategy allowed staff to maintain a sense of connection during periods of isolation during remote learning.

The circumstances we faced as a College community means that some goals and outcomes for 2021 reflect a progression from the 2020 experience. As such, the College will continue to establish strategies and processes to enhance Home and school partnerships, increase in parent attendance at monthly Parent & Friends Network meetings to reflect 1.5% of total family database, improved Parent Partnership in the learning progress for all students, Increased opportunities for student participation and leadership, improved Parent Partnership in the learning progress for the student and student led establishment and facilitation of interest groups that they feel passionate about.

VALUE ADDED

- House Cup Activities:
 - Cooking demonstrations competition
 - Photo competition
 - Physical Challenge
 - Music Competition
 - Art Competition
- Student Magazine "the Quarantine Connection" published fortnightly

- Virtual Running Team — students ran using the apps to record distance and time and then shared with other students
- Diversity Group — students met online to share experiences and support each other

PARENT SATISFACTION

Parents / Guardians had an opportunity to provide feedback through a range of avenues in 2020. As part of the CIS re-accreditation report, parents were invited to participate, and we had an excellent completion rate with 628 surveys collected. These results informed the self study report that was submitted in November.

Parent satisfaction levels were consistently high in this survey with 92.9% agreeing with the statement My child is appropriately challenged; 89.8% agree with the statement My child is appropriately supported academically; and 89% agreeing with the statement My child's learning needs are adequately supported by the school.

The survey also sought feedback from Parents / Guardians in regard to wellbeing and 96.7% agreed with the statement I trust that my child is safe at school; 96.8% agreed with the statement The school provides a healthy and safe environment for my child; and 94.9% agreed with the statement When my child first joined the school appropriate support was provided to help her/him settle quickly and successfully.

A sample group of Parents / Guardians were subsequently interviewed by the visiting CIS Evaluation Team and asked to discuss their views on the vision and mission of the College and the feedback was that those interviewed were both knowledgeable and supportive of the core values. Parent exit surveys for the graduating class of 2020 reflected a level of disappointment that their young person had not had the same opportunities for graduation and valedictory events as previous cohorts. But most respondents also acknowledged that this was largely outside of anyone's control given Covid-19 restrictions.

Future Directions

- Promote Learning Area Handbooks as a tool for enhanced teacher collaborative planning to reflect upon, improve, plan and document engaging and challenging courses.
- Immerse students and staff in the charisms of St Dominic, St Mary MacKillop & Blessed Edmund Rice to deepen the sense of belonging to one of these Teams.
- Embed a whole school approach to wellbeing where pastoral care opportunities are maximised within a Restorative Practices Framework.
- Embed the College's Core Values in students through the continued implementation of the Spirit of Aquinas program and the commendation system.
- Prepare a School Improvement Plan incorporating feedback from the team visit to reaccreditation with CIS.
- Increase knowledge of potential Pathways/Careers amongst students, parents and staff.
- Revisit the College Master Plan in light of the decision to defer the redevelopment of the gymnasium.