



ST MARY'S COLLEGE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Whole-of-Organisation Prevention and Response Plan

**NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CODE
TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

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Contents

Introduction	03
Accountable leadership and governance	04
Safe environments and systems	06
Knowledge and capability	09
Safety and support	11
Data, evidence and impact	15
Appendix A – Whole-of-Organisation Assessment	16
Appendix B – Declaration Form	37
Appendix C – St Mary’s College Training Matrix	38

1. Introduction

St Mary's College is a residential college affiliated with the University of Melbourne, providing accommodation, academic support, pastoral care and co-curricular programming for 160 undergraduate students. The College is committed to fostering a safe, respectful and inclusive residential community grounded in dignity, accountability and care.

The majority of students at St Mary's are from regional and rural Victoria, with interstate (approx.15), international (approx. 20), and usually 5-6 international exchange students. There is a broad spread of students across all faculties, with Science, Economics & Business, and Arts forming the three largest faculty groupings. The College Council has a broad representation of University, student, staff, Newman College, and church representation, and members with professional skills (legal, financial, health etc).

The senior leadership of the College comprises the Principal, the Dean & Deputy Principal, and the Residential and Wellbeing Co-ordinator; in addition, there are the College Registrar, the College Accountant, and approximately 10 other FTE staff, including housekeeping, kitchen, and administrative staff; the College employs its own staff in the kitchen and housekeeping roles, rather than having contractors undertaking these roles.

This Whole-of-Organisation Prevention and Response Plan outlines St Mary's College's commitments to meeting the requirements of the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence (the National Code). It establishes a coordinated, whole-of-organisation framework to prevent gender-based violence, support those affected, and ensure effective, fair and accountable responses across the College.

This Plan has been informed by a Whole of Organisation Assessment identifying the College's enablers, systemic risks and barriers to preventing and responding to gender-based violence within a residential context. The Assessment is provided as Appendix A.

The Plan adopts a whole-of-organisation approach as defined in the National Code, applying across leadership, culture, systems, policies, education, service delivery, governance and community engagement. It is designed to operate in alignment with the University of Melbourne's Whole-of-Organisation Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan and relevant University policies and procedures.

This Plan is structured into the following operational areas, consistent with Standard 7 of the National Code:

- Accountable leadership and governance
- Safe environments and systems
- Knowledge and capability
- Safety and support
- Data, evidence and impact

This Plan is developed, implemented and reviewed through engagement and collaboration with students, staff and relevant stakeholders, including people with lived experience of gender-based violence, in accordance with the National Code.

2. Accountable leadership and governance

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

National Code Standard summary	Key actions	Evidence of compliance
<p>7.2 A Provider must require a student accommodation provider to prepare, implement and publish on its website a Whole of Organisation Prevention and Response Plan.</p>	<p>Prepare, implement and publish a Whole of Organisation Prevention and Response Plan</p>	<p>This Plan has been published on the College website. It has been developed by senior staff in consultation with students, mentors and residential tutors; it has not yet been approved by College Council as the primary guidance document was received in early December 2025; it will be reviewed by the Council at its first meeting of 2026. Council will monitor progress via Principal's reports, including annual de-identified data.</p>
	<p>The Principal has executive accountability for implementation, with operational leadership delegated to the Dean & Deputy Principal.</p>	<p>Responsibility for Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response is being incorporated into senior leadership Position Descriptions.</p>
	<p>Development of the Plan has involved consultation with staff, student leaders and reference to student feedback and lived experience insights gathered through College and University mechanisms. Focus groups and externally administered (Moores Legal) survey.</p>	<p>This Whole-of-Organisation Plan is available on the College website.</p> <p>Moores Legal conducted focus groups of students, key staff, and an anonymous survey of students; in-depth discussions were also held during initial 2026 student leadership training in November 2025.</p>
	<p>Council approval and endorsement.</p>	<p>First meeting of Council 2026 – minutes once available.</p>

	<p>Role descriptions and delegation schedules/Plan</p> <p>A GBV advisory group, comprising students and staff, will be established to meet each semester to review and monitor progress on the implementation of the Plan.</p>	<p>Position Descriptions of senior leadership</p> <p>GBV advisory group minutes – once advisory group meets.</p>
<p>7.3 A Provider must require a student accommodation provider to monitor and measure the impact of the Prevention and Response Plan on an ongoing basis and update the Prevention and Response Plan at least every four years.</p>	<p>Monitor and measure impact of the Plan on an ongoing basis and update the Prevention and Response Plan at least every four years</p>	<p>An externally administered survey of students will be undertaken annually to monitor progress. Baseline data are available for the anonymous online survey of students conducted by Moores Legal in November 2025. Progress on the Plan to be reviewed at least annually by the Principal and reported to Council.</p>
	<p>The Plan will be formally reviewed every four years, or earlier if required by changes in risk, legislation or University requirements.</p>	<p>Annual Council reporting schedule</p>
	<p>Review cycle documented in governance calendar</p>	<p>Reporting on Gender-based Violence Plan implementation and progress has been added to Council reporting schedule</p>

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS FROM WHOLE-OF-ORGANISATION ASSESSMENT

- Ensure all training aligns with National Code
- Establish a Gender-based Violence advisory group comprising staff and students to meet each at least each semester
- Embed responsibility for gender-based violence prevention and response within senior leadership position descriptions
- Encourage student leaders to speak more about respect, equality, inclusion and safety
- Closely monitor and follow up on training attendance
- Enhance council's access to data trends, training completions and systemic issues via annual reporting

3. Safe environments and systems

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

National Code Standard summary	Key actions	Evidence of compliance
<p>7.4a A Provider must require a student accommodation provider to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require its staff to declare any previous investigations or substantiated allegations of gender based violence in similar roles • consider any declaration and associated risks in employment/engagement decision making • consider any substantiated allegations found during a person’s employment with the college in promotion/ recognition processes • require staff to declare any existing or previous intimate personal relationship with a resident and manage and monitor any associated risks. 	<p>All staff, contractors and volunteers are required to disclose any prior investigations or substantiated findings of gender-based violence in similar roles. New staff will be required to make declarations as part of recruitment process.</p>	<p>Declarations (see Appendix B) of current staff have been conducted and are kept securely by the Principal. No prior investigations or findings of gender-based violence were revealed.</p>
	<p>All staff are required to disclose any existing or previous intimate personal relationship with a current resident, and the associated risk is to be assessed and managed. Any new staff will be required to make the same disclosures as part of the recruitment process.</p>	<p>Disclosures (see Appendix B) are kept securely by the Principal. Associated risk from any disclosures is assessed and managed. Any new staff will need to make disclosures during recruitment process. Associated risk will then be assessed and managed via appropriate and immediate action.</p>

	Any declarations become the subject of a risk assessment and appropriate action taken immediately.	All staff have recently completed the required Declaration form (see Appendix B). Forms are kept securely by the principal.
<p>7.4b A Provider must require a student accommodation provider to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prohibit the use of a Non disclosure Agreement, unless requested by the Discloser if requested, ensure it does not stop the Discloser from sharing information as part of seeking support ensure any settlement agreements do not contain a non disparagement clause. 	The College does not use non-disclosure or non-disparagement clauses in relation to gender-based violence unless requested by a discloser and permitted under the National Code.	The college's 'Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Policy' prohibits the use of a non-disclosure agreement or non-disparagement agreement in relation to Disclosures or Formal Reports that involve Gender-based Violence, unless requested by a discloser and permitted under the National Code.
<p>7.4c A Provider must require a student accommodation provider to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adopt the Provider's policies and procedures on preventing and responding to Gender-based Violence OR have and implement their own that meet National Code requirements develop and review the policy at least every three years in consultation with relevant stakeholders. 	The college has adopted a Policy and a Procedure that are specific to a residential setting, following consultation with students and staff – this consultation involved focus groups of students and SAFE co-ordinators, and an anonymous externally-administered survey of students. It is suggested to use more direct and positive language.	<p>The college's 'Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Policy' and 'Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Procedure' are also available on the Respectful Relationships page of the College website. This Policy and Procedure were developed following consultations with students and key staff via focus groups, and an anonymous externally-administered survey of students. The Policy and Procedure are compliant with the national code.</p> <p>The Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least every three years in consultation with relevant stakeholders.</p>

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS FROM WHOLE-OF-ORGANISATION ASSESSMENT

- Introduce RespectX platform to provide case management facility and anonymous or named reporting
- Enhance communication of expectations and day-to-day implications of Community Expectations Agreements
- Work with Qamba (IT provider) to include explicit GBV safety controls and enhance reminders of digital behaviour
- Continue to emphasise to students in all messaging that they have the opportunity and responsibility to make 'their home' as welcoming, inclusive and supportive as possible
- Encourage students and staff to always interact with mutual respect

4. Knowledge and capability

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

National Code Standard summary	Key actions	Evidence of compliance
<p>7.5 A Provider must require a student accommodation provider to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require residents and staff to complete prevention education and training and responding to disclosures training that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meets requirements of Standard 3 • is tailored to the student accommodation environment • s delivered or approved by the provider • promote evidence based prevention messaging tailored to the student accommodation environment • evaluate any initiatives and use findings to inform future activities. 	<p>All staff and student leaders complete mandatory prevention education and responding-to-disclosures training that is aligned with University of Melbourne requirements and tailored to residential contexts.</p> <p>Training content, scheduling and delivery are developed and delivered with University based staff and specialist subject-matter experts as required.</p>	<p>A comprehensive training program is provided for all students and staff – the training and delivery schedule are provided in Appendix C; it meets requirements of Standard 3.</p> <p>Training completion data are collected for staff and residents</p> <p>Evaluation summaries and feedback reports are collected</p> <p>Communication materials and student induction content is retained.</p>

	<p>Evidence-based prevention messaging is embedded throughout student induction, ongoing communications, community expectations agreements, and leadership training.</p> <p>Training effectiveness is evaluated annually, including completion tracking, feedback collection and improvement cycles.</p>	<p>Evidence and feedback collected are used to inform education and training the following year</p>
<p>7.6 A Provider must require a student accommodation provider to ensure risk assessments are only undertaken by people with expertise prescribed in Standard 3, and when internal capability is not sufficient, engage a person with the requisite expertise.</p>	<p>Risk assessments following disclosures or formal reports are undertaken by staff trained and assessed as competent under Standard 3 or by approved external specialists (e.g., Code Black Psychology).</p> <p>Training for responsible staff includes assessment of capability and knowledge of trauma-informed and risk-management principles.</p>	<p>Code Black Psychology has been engaged to provide an evidence-based and expert developed risk assessment tool to be used by experienced senior staff with assessed competence and trained by Code Black Psychology</p> <p>Training details of staff will be retained</p> <p>Case audit records demonstrating compliant assessment pathways</p>

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS FROM WHOLE-OF-ORGANISATION ASSESSMENT

- Identify training needs across professional staff, tutors/mentors, student leaders and contractors
- Provide targeted training for roles with key relevant roles
- Align messaging across residential tutor, academic tutor, mentor handbooks, employment agreements, induction, and community expectations agreements
- Reinforce key prevention and response expectations through regular community communication
- Establish a core staff group with enhanced capability in receiving disclosures, undertaking risk assessments and managing safety plans
- Capture post-training feedback from staff and student leaders
- Review incident and disclosure trends to inform targeted training priorities
- Review training materials annually and update to reflect learnings, sector developments and/or regulatory change.

5. Safety and support

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

National Code Standard summary	Key actions	Evidence of compliance
<p>7.7a-c A provider must require a student accommodation provider to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure its responses, practices and support services are safe, person centred and trauma informed provide or facilitate access to support services to disclosers and respondents promote and disseminate information on how residents and staff can access policies, procedures and support services. 	<p>Responses prioritise safety, dignity, agency and trauma-informed practice.</p> <p>The College provides, or facilitates access to, timely support options through internal personnel, the University of Melbourne’s Safer Community Program, and external services as appropriate.</p> <p>Support pathways and reporting options are communicated clearly at induction, in residential agreements, on the College website, and through student leader training and ongoing messaging.</p>	<p>Documentation of support pathways and escalation</p> <p>Trauma-informed response training records for staff</p> <p>Communications/induction materials (handbook, website)</p> <p>The Principal has 30 years’ experience working with tertiary students, 20 years’ applied research in bullying and harassment (using trauma-informed practices), 11 years’ experience as Principal and six years as residential tutor, and has completed numerous relevant training programs including mental health first aid, trauma in care, and vicarious trauma.</p> <p>The Dean & Deputy Principal has worked for many years in educational settings where trauma-informed approaches are required and has received extensive relevant training.</p> <p>The College Registrar has worked for 25 years in secondary and tertiary educational settings where a trauma-informed approach is required, and has completed training in mental health first aid, trauma, and child safety.</p>

<p>7.7d A provider must require a student accommodation provider to undertake a risk assessment following every disclosure and formal report.</p>	<p>A risk assessment is undertaken following every disclosure or formal report, with risks monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Risk assessment tool, developed by Code Black Psychology, and used by experienced senior staff trained by Code Black Psychology</p> <p>Case files showing monitoring activity via RespectX digital platform</p>
<p>7.7ei Where a disclosure relates to behaviour occurring in residence or at an event organised by the residence, a provider must require a student accommodation provider to take all necessary action to manage risk, including relocation of the respondent where required and facilitating urgent access to support services</p>	<p>Relocation of responder to a nearby hotel will be used in short-term where appropriate, until a more long-term arrangement can be sorted.</p>	<p>The College has a critical incident form to be completed initially by the first responder. This is then escalated as appropriate. A trained senior member of staff or external expert conducts the risk assessment and decides on the appropriate action to be taken.</p> <p>The College's 'Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Procedure' specifies that relocation of the respondent may be used by the College where required to ensure safety of the reporter, residents and staff; this will normally be to a nearby hotel in the short-term while a longer-term arrangement is made.</p> <p>Urgent access to support services is provided for both discloser and respondent; the College has direct access to a registered senior mental health practitioner with extensive experience in the university sector and who has provided mental health training and advice to the College for many years.</p>

		<p>The College’s ‘Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Procedure’ states that the discloser is encouraged to decide whether the university or the college will lead the response. Where the reporter chooses the University to lead the response, the College will co-operate fully with the University in its response and implement any outcomes decided by the University.</p>
<p>7.7eii A provider must have arrangements in place with a student accommodation provider to enable a discloser to choose the provider to lead the response to a disclosure, and the student accommodation provider must cooperate fully and implement any outcomes decided by the provider.</p>	<p>Disclosers will be enabled to choose the University to lead the response to a disclosure; the College will cooperate fully with University-led response and implement any outcomes decided</p>	<p>The Memorandum of Understanding between the College and the University will include this provision. (the agreement is pending)</p> <p>Code Black Psychology has been hired to provide an evidence-based assessment tool and to train experienced senior staff in risk assessment and</p> <p>St Mary’s also has direct access to external expertise as outlined above in Section 4.</p>

<p>7.7eiii A provider must have arrangements in place with a student accommodation provider to enable a discloser to choose the student accommodation provider to lead the response to the disclosure, and the student accommodation provider must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake a risk assessment within 48 hours and from this determine necessary safety measures (including relocation of the respondent) and immediately implement them. • manage and monitor risk. • share necessary information with the provider to protect safety of others • implement support plans for both disclosers and respondents that meet requirements of Standard 4 within 48 hours. 	<p>Where the discloser chooses the College to lead the response, a risk assessment and support plans for both discloser and respondent are completed within 48 hours and any resulting safety measures (including, where appropriate, offsite relocation of respondent) are implemented immediately.</p> <p>Risk to safety of discloser, respondent, staff and students is monitored closely.</p> <p>Necessary information is shared with the University in accord with Code and privacy requirements.</p> <p>Support plans, that meet Standard 4, for discloser and respondent, are determined and implemented within 48 hours.</p> <p>Immediate safety measures implemented proportionately to assessed risk, including off-site accommodation provision or adjustments when required.</p>	<p>The risk assessment will be undertaken within 48 hours of disclosure.</p> <p>The risk assessment will be used to determine any necessary safety measures.</p> <p>The determined safety measures may include relocation of the respondent as provided for in the Procedure.</p> <p>Any safety measures will be implemented immediately.</p> <p>Risk will be managed and monitored.</p> <p>The college will provide necessary information to the University to protect the safety of others as stated in Memorandum of Understanding.</p> <p>Support plans for both the discloser and respondent, that meet Standard 4 of the Code, will be implemented within 48 hours.</p> <p>Critical incident and relocation protocols.</p>
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ADDITIONAL ACTIONS FROM WHOLE-OF-ORGANISATION ASSESSMENT

- Clarify and document critical incident response pathways, including escalation triggers, after-hours arrangements and timeframes for action
- Strengthen protocols for temporary or permanent accommodation adjustments as a risk-mitigation measure
- Ensure student leaders understand limits of confidentiality, duty of care, and obligations to escalate disclosures safely
- Strengthen handover procedures between student leadership cohorts to maintain capability and continuity
- Enhance communication tools (visual maps, flowcharts, website content) to make reporting and support access clearer for all residents and staff
- Review coordination mechanisms with the University's Safer Community Program, ensuring shared understanding of response leadership, timeframes, and information flows.

6. Data, evidence and impact

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

National Code Standard summary	Key actions	Evidence of compliance
<p>7.8 A provider must require a student accommodation provider to collect and report data prescribed by Standard 6, where applicable.</p>	<p>The College collects required data relating to disclosures, support pathways, risk management actions, training completion and prevention initiatives, consistent with thresholds agreed with the University of Melbourne under Standard 6.</p> <p>De-identified trend data are reviewed annually to support continuous improvement and early identification of systemic risks.</p> <p>Reporting timeframes and escalation requirements are aligned with University expectations and National Code requirements.</p>	<p>The RespectX platform is being introduced in February 2026 for all students and staff and provides, among other features, a case management system that will facilitate reporting to the University according to Standard 6 of the Code.</p> <p>Secure record-keeping systems (eg hard copy, limited access, and locked) and de-identified data sets will also be retained</p> <p>Annual summaries and analysis reports to University and College Council</p> <p>Evidence of data used to inform decision-making or improvement actions</p> <p>A legally binding agreement between the University and the College has been in place historically and this will continue with additional reporting requirements.</p>

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS FROM WHOLE-OF-ORGANISATION ASSESSMENT

The College will address current capability and system gaps through the following actions:

- Strengthen internal tracking of training completions and prevention initiatives to ensure full compliance and visibility of risk trends
- Use findings from internal and University-level data analysis to inform planning, allocate resources, and direct prevention activities to priority risk areas
- Incorporate feedback loops with College Council to support oversight and transparency of risk trends.



ST MARY'S COLLEGE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Whole-of-Organisation Assessment

**NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CODE
TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

Executive summary

This Whole-of-Organisation Assessment of St Mary's College has been undertaken in response to the introduction of the National Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence. The assessment adopts a systematic approach, examining seven key areas of college operations that are directly relevant to the prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence (GBV): (1) leadership, culture and environment; (2) structures, norms and practices; (3) systems and infrastructure; (4) service delivery; (5) policies and procedures; (6) management and governance; and (7) community engagement. Each of these operational domains is considered through a framework that identifies key enablers, as well as associated risks and barriers.

This Whole-of-Organisation Assessment is informed by an understanding of the gendered drivers of violence against women, as articulated in Australia's national framework for prevention. These gendered drivers underpin the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032, Australia's overarching national policy framework to end gender-based violence within one generation. The identified gendered drivers are:

- condoning of violence against women;
- rigid gender stereotypes;
- men's control of decision-making and limitations on women's independence in both public and private life; and
- male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

In addition, other forms of discrimination and inequality—including racism, homophobia and transphobia—intersect with gender inequality and can compound individuals' experiences of violence.

There is a keen awareness of the heightened systemic risks of a residential college context. In-depth studies over the last decade have provided strong evidence that such environments lead to significantly elevated levels of gender-based violence in the sector. Evidence from Change the Course (2017) and the National Student Safety Survey (2021) indicates that residential colleges represent high-risk environments for the occurrence of gender-based violence. The evidence further demonstrates that the likelihood of such violence increases in contexts where men who hold discriminatory attitudes towards women and other groups, misuse alcohol.

Enablers are factors that facilitate change or progress – in effect, they act like a catalyst to make it easier to make real progress in preventing or responding to gender-based violence. Such factors may originate in a range of areas that include societal or organisational culture (eg the culture of a major feeder school), physical plant or buildings, and the degree of respect or trust in which the leadership is held by students.

Key enablers at St Mary's include the strong and clearly enunciated values of the college, the college culture, the experience and level of commitment of all staff to ensuring the wellbeing of all residents, and the openness and transparency of decision-making – particularly on issues concerning the wellbeing of students. The college's clearly articulated levels of pastoral care and its wellbeing focus facilitate an approach that makes it as simple as possible to express concerns at whatever level a person chooses – the various avenues (both internal and external to the college) are emphasised and reinforced regularly.

The confluence of young people in transition from high school to university, many away from home for the first time, access to alcohol, and a deep desire to belong to their new peer groups create a setting in which risk of gender-based violence is significant. Social media and internet sites can add significantly to this pressure and may distort the messaging received by students. Additional challenge comes from the wide diversity of knowledge and understanding among new entrants who have vastly different prior training and education, and any power imbalance between senior and junior students, and between staff and students.

It is acknowledged that a residential college setting may produce several barriers to the college's efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence – factors that can make the college's efforts more difficult. These include a possible reluctance to speak up against any behaviour that is unacceptable and not conducive to the development of a healthy college culture: such reluctance may arise, for example, from a desire to not be shunned by peers. Societal norms around alcohol consumption and self-image are particularly powerful in late adolescence and early adulthood and provide additional challenges. An additional barrier is the packed state of a student's daily life – academic, personal, employment and sporting and cultural pursuits can collectively make it challenging for a student to attend training and education sessions. Every effort must be made to make it as easy as possible for people to attend such important activities.

St Mary's College is focussed on strengthening its efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. The college's culture is healthy, as evidenced by recent independently conducted research in the area of gender-based violence but every effort must be made to ensure the college's expectations around behaviour are communicated clearly and reinforced at every opportunity.

The adoption of the RespectX platform from 2026 will provide an additional reporting avenue and also strengthen the college's case management and tracking of disclosures and reports to ensure effective follow-up. It will also enable more effective data collection including training participation and completion of students and staff. Bystander training based on scenarios will be widened from staff, tutors, and mentors to also include all students, rather than students simply being taught about bystander training. Education around power imbalances, with a focus on awareness of groups that are particularly vulnerable will be tightened and also provide evidence on intersectionality. A gender-based violence advisory group, including student and staff will enhance accountability and the opportunity to review, revise and improve the effectiveness of programs.

The assessment demonstrates that St Mary's College is well placed to prevent and respond to the insidious threat that is gender-based violence. The college's experienced and committed leadership and staff, healthy culture as evidenced by independent research, and strong pastoral emphasis and practice provide a sound foundation for increased efforts to mitigate risk and counter barriers so that the college will continue to create and improve a community that is welcoming to all, safe, supportive and inclusive and in which young people will have the opportunity to prosper.

Introduction

St Mary's College has existed as a fully independent college on its current Swanston St site, and affiliated with the University of Melbourne, since February 1966. From 1918 the predecessor St Mary's Hall, situated on the Avenue, Parkville, had operated as an appendage to Newman College, which was affiliated with the university.

St Mary's Hall was founded by the Loreto Sisters, an order of Catholic nuns with a strong academic and intellectual tradition. It was envisaged originally to cater for women students attending the university – drawn mostly from across regional and rural Victoria. In 1977 the college admitted men for the first time. The Loreto Sisters withdrew from leading the college at the end of 2013; the first lay principal was appointed in January 2015.

Today women continue to form a slight majority of the 160 undergraduate students in residence – this has remained so in most years since the 1970s. Students from across regional and rural Victoria continue to form the majority of St Mary's students.

St Mary's welcomes students from all faiths and none; around 50 per cent of St Mary's students are drawn from Catholic schools. Many St Mary's students are 'first in family' to attend university; many also are from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds and socio-economic situations – the majority of St Mary's students have part-time jobs to help pay their college fees. The college has a strong reputation as a welcoming, inclusive and supportive community.

The College is led by a Principal, Dean and Deputy Principal, and a Residential and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, all of whom live on-site in accommodation separate from student residences. Other senior staff include the College Registrar, College Accountant, and Conference Co-ordinator. St Mary's has its own kitchen staff of four chefs/cooks and a housekeeping team of four; the college also has its own maintenance person.

There are six Residential Tutors who live in the college in the residential wings but each in their own ensuite apartment – these are young graduate professionals or postgraduate students.

In addition, 21 student mentors are selected and appointed each year for their approachability and dependability – they are second or third year students.

All these people receive extensive training in preparation for undertaking their various roles and they report regularly on any concerns they may have about any student or behaviour that they have noticed.

This Assessment of St Mary's College has been structured to reflect the framework of the National Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence. The assessment accords therefore with the areas set out in the National Code:

1. Leadership, culture and environment
2. Structures, norms and practices
3. Systems and infrastructure
4. Service delivery
5. Policies and procedures
6. Management and governance
7. Community engagement

Each of these areas will be focussed on individually but each area will also contribute to building the overall picture of the college's effectiveness in preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

The information and data contained in the assessment has been assembled by the Principal and the Dean & Deputy Principal who have responsibility for the overall wellbeing of the college's students and staff. Several sources of information and data were drawn on to assemble this information:

- i) three focus groups facilitated by Moores Legal. The three focus groups comprised senior staff with responsibility for preventing and responding to gender-based violence across the seven affiliated residential colleges of the University of Melbourne, and student leaders across the affiliated colleges;
- ii) an online survey of students in seven affiliated colleges conducted by Moores Legal. The participation rate of St Mary's students in this informative data-gathering exercise was relatively high at 50.1 per cent while the overall rate across the seven colleges was 15.8 per cent;
- iii) in-depth discussions held at St Mary's annual 3-day initial student leader (GC and mentor) training in November 2025; and,
- iv) an anonymous online survey conducted at the conclusion of the 3-day initial student leader (mentor) training in November 2025.

Area of operation: Leadership, culture and environment

St Mary's College operates with a multi-layered leadership structure that combines professional staff leadership with strong pastoral reach from residential tutors and student mentors. The professional leadership team includes the Principal, Dean and Deputy Principal, Residential and Wellbeing Coordinator, and senior administrative staff, all of whom play visible and active roles in shaping a respectful and safe college culture.

Six Residential Tutors, who reside on the residential wings of the college, provide role-modelling of expected behaviours and ready access to engaged young professionals and graduate students – generally two or three years older, these young adults have themselves experienced the many challenges that a young undergraduate may face, including being away from home, parents, accustomed social and support networks. Residential Tutors are selected and appointed based on their dependability, approachability, demonstrated high level of responsibility, and appreciation of the critical role a positive college culture plays in transforming the lives of students.

Mentors serve as a critical first line of peer support and community leadership. They are selected and appointed annually by the college leadership based on their high degree of responsibility, approachability and integrity, and work closely with college staff and Residential Tutors to promote student wellbeing and contribute to prevention, early intervention, and inclusive culture-building. Mentors are expected to act as peer leaders, uphold safety protocols, model respectful behaviour, support student transitions, and respond to wellbeing concerns on their floor. Their visibility and accessibility contribute significantly to building a sense of safety and belonging.

The student body is represented through the Student Club's General Committee (GC) which organises many of the student cultural and sporting events that help build the college community. The GC includes elected and appointed roles such as President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Equity Representative, Culture Representative, Social and Sports Representatives, and General Representatives. In addition, the GC includes a wide array of student-led portfolios managed by Convenors, such as the Pride Rep, Women's Rep, Historical and Constitutional Convenor, Liturgy Coordinator, Environmental and Social Awareness (ESAC) Convenor, Merchandise Convenor, Magazine Convenors, Drama Rep, Ball Reps, and IT Convenors. This structure ensures that students from diverse backgrounds have pathways to participate in shaping college life. Each convener leads initiatives or contributes to activities that foster engagement, creativity, inclusion, and respect.

Collectively, this multi-tiered leadership structure provides a strong foundation for creating a trauma-informed, inclusive, and responsive college environment. The integration of student-led portfolios with safety, culture, and equity roles (e.g. Pride, Equity, Women's Reps) reflects St Mary's commitment to cultural inclusion and to responding proactively to the expectations set out in the National GBV Code.

The culture of St Mary's is one characterised by inclusiveness, equality, support for the individual, and safety. With 160 undergraduate students – the majority of who are from regional and rural areas, with around 20 international students – the college is described by students as being overwhelmingly friendly and accepting. The assessment of the St Mary's students themselves, as collected in the Moores Legal anonymous survey, is significant – 98.9 per cent stated that they feel safe at St Mary's and no students stated that they feel unsafe.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Mentor Handbook (2025 version) and Mentor Position Description (2026 version) outlining leadership expectations and culture-building responsibilities

Governance records and structural documentation outlining the GC's membership and convenor roles

Staff reflections and GC meeting summaries regarding wellbeing, safety, and event leadership

Discussions at initial mentor training (November 2025), staff debriefs, and cultural briefings

Minutes of college governance meetings (e.g. Council and committee agendas) that discussed student culture, safety and wellbeing.

Input from student leaders and representatives (Pride Rep, Equity Rep, Culture Rep)

Leadership, culture and environment

ENABLERS

- Principal, Dean & Deputy Principal, and Wellbeing & Residential Co-ordinator are visibly engaged in community life
 - Extensive experience of college leadership in working in directly relevant areas – Principal was a Residential Tutor for six years, and has been Principal for 11 years; Dean & Deputy Principal has worked extensively in school settings where trauma-informed approaches were critical.
 - Principal has international reputation for work on bullying and harassment and has undertaken extensive applied research in directly relevant areas
 - Leadership consistently reinforces expectations of respect, inclusion, valuing diversity, and safety
 - Student wellbeing is prioritised in all day-to-day operations and planning
 - Cultural change and enhancement framed as a core college value, not just compliance
 - Student General Committee provides structured, diverse student representation – eg Equity, Pride, and Culture Reps lead on inclusion. Student portfolios (e.g. Women's, ESAC, Liturgy, Drama) amplify varied voices
 - Student leaders help shape community standards through events and peer advocacy
- Residential staff and student leaders maintain accessible presence (eg Open door) and strong relationships
 - Students regularly seek support and advice from staff, residential tutors, and mentors
 - Relational model enables early identification of wellbeing concerns
 - Norms of care, respect, inclusion and accountability are reinforced through daily interactions
 - Orientation includes education on respect, equity, inclusion, diversity, consent, respectful behaviour, and drugs and alcohol
 - Peer-led events and campaigns promote dialogue on respect, inclusion and safety
 - Annual handbook reviews and policy updates are informed by student and tutor perspectives

SYSTEMIC RISKS

- Risk that harmful behaviours (e.g. sexist jokes, harassment) could go unchallenged
- Alcohol at social events which brings increased risk of misconduct or unsafe behaviour
- Proactive approach emphasises education on harm and risk mitigation, with direct accountability
- Equity-focused GC roles exist, but some dimensions of diversity are not as strong eg international students
- Females form a significant majority of GC, including president and vice-president
- Certain groups (e.g. international, minority-background students) are underrepresented in student decision-making, although it is significant that four of the six residential tutors were born outside Australia

BARRIERS

- Turnover of residents may present challenges in maintaining positive culture
- Limited visibility of student leaders' roles in promoting safe and respectful environments
- Annual student turnover (average duration is just under two years) could disrupt continuity of cultural initiatives
- Positive practices may not be consistently passed on without structured handover to new student leaders
- New cohorts of incoming students require repeated orientation on respect, inclusion, equality, safety
- Student leaders' efforts are extensive but not always visible to residents
- Student leaders are volunteers with limited life experience and training
- Competing academic, employment, and social demands may limit consistent implementation

KEY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE

- Ensure all training aligns with National Code
- Undertake online anonymous survey of residents; repeat regularly (e.g. biennially) to track change and guide future action; supplement with focus groups to explore inclusion, safety, and respect
- Encourage student leaders to speak publicly about respect, equality, inclusion, and safety
- Expand bystander training to all residents – not only staff, residential tutors, mentors and GC
- Actively support and encourage under-represented students into leadership roles
- Establish a Gender-based Violence working group comprising staff and students

Area of operation: Structures, norms and practices

The structures at St Mary's College facilitate a non-hierarchical community, involving daily interactions between staff, tutors, mentors, and students. The college culture is based on deeply held values of respect, inclusiveness, support and valuing each individual. These values are enunciated explicitly during the interview for admission to college, during several orientation and welcome sessions, and reinforced regularly at floor dinners, weekly high table dinners, and at all training of staff and students.

An example of daily reinforcement of inclusivity is the practice of filling tables in the dining room sequentially – that is, you sit at the next available table and not start a new table until the current one is full.

Pastoral structures are multi-layered – senior leadership, residential tutors, and student mentors. Approachability is emphasised, as is the diversity among staff, tutors and mentors – which serves not only to provide quality role-models, but also signals that the college values diversity as an enrichment for the benefit of the entire college community. There is little by way of year-level hierarchy – all student rooms are identical which leads to first and third year students being located next to each other on floors and they interact with no separation.

Although the majority of students are from regional and rural areas, there are around 20 international students and a small number of metropolitan students. Given the spread of students from across regional and rural areas, most of the students are the only one from their school – which, in turn, means there is little in the way of 'clicks' or pre-existing groups within the cohort – everybody is 'in the same boat'.

For example, our 2026 intake of new first year students is currently projected to comprise 73 students from nearly 50 schools. This results in a friendly, welcoming tone in all interactions and a strong culture of inclusivity.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Feedback from students and staff, and messages from parents

Daily observation of dynamics among the students, in the dining room and public areas of the college.

Discussions and workshops with student leaders, including at GC and Mentor initial training (November 2025)

Interviews with residential tutors

Externally administered focus groups which well supported by St Mary's students

Externally administered (Moore's Legal) anonymous survey data.

Structures, norms and practices

ENABLERS

- The values of the college explicitly include respect, inclusion, diversity, and equality.
- Values are clearly enunciated at every stage from promotional material, secondary school information sessions, enrolment application interview, and orientation and are reinforced in the daily life of the community – for example, via engaging in informal conversations, filling the dining room at next available seat, reminders at high table and other events.
- Safety and wellbeing are explained in information sessions during orientation
- Reinforced regularly at high table dinners by Principal and the Dean and Deputy Principal
- ‘Open door’ approach by Principal and Dean and Deputy Principal: if office door is open please drop by for a chat – no appointment needed
- Support structures (both internal to the college and external) are highlighted

KEY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE

- Encourage under-represented students into leadership roles
- Encourage student leadership to lead more culture-promoting activities

SYSTEMIC RISKS

- The values of the college include respect and equality for all, including gender equality, valuing diversity, and inclusion
- Women, LGBTIQ+ and students with a disability play a significant role in the college whether in senior leadership, residential tutor, mentor roles, organising events and programs, and also play a significant role on the GC.
- The values are clearly enunciated from even prior to applying to the college via the website, information sessions provided by St Mary’s leadership at feeder schools, and are then reinforced at interview, at ‘Move-in Day’ with parents and family present, extensively and comprehensively during Orientation, and reinforced consistently thereafter – for example, numerous events such as International Women’s Day lunch and speaker (usually an alumna), Pride Tern, First Nations dinner and dot painting session organised by a current student or Indigenous alumna.
- The college provides pathways for concerns to be raised outside the internal leadership of the college – an external advisor with vast experience in preventing and responding to GBV is always available to meet with staff or students

Area of operation: Systems and infrastructure

St Mary's College maintains a layered approach to safety, wellbeing, and risk mitigation through its physical and digital infrastructure, case management processes, and accessible pathways for disclosure and support. The physical layout of the college was designed with safety being paramount – buildings completely surround the large central courtyard of lawns and gardens. Fob access restricts entry to the residential buildings and courtyard, CCTV operates on all external doors and in some common public areas, and after-hours protocols ensure timely responses to incidents.

A 24/7 on-site staffing model includes onsite senior staff (Principal, Dean and Deputy Principal, Residential and Wellbeing Co-ordinator), and onsite pastoral staff (Residential Tutors), plus student mentors, all of whom work collaboratively to address any concerns and respond to safety concerns. There is 24/7 staff availability, including direct access to senior staff for emergencies. All visitors to the college must be accompanied by their host at all times – this is so that other students do not feel vulnerable.

All formal disclosures are escalated to senior staff, who document incidents and, where necessary, liaise with university counselling, medical services, or external specialists. An internal case management approach enables continuity of care, while informal concerns raised with mentors or tutors are handled with discretion and guided referral.

St Mary's has purchased the RespectX platform for introduction from the start of the 2026 academic year. This platform provides the option for students or staff to report a concern via either an anonymous approach or openly revealing who they are. RespectX serves as a reporting channel and also a case management platform which will further clarify follow-up and support for staff decision-making.

Wi-Fi is password-protected, and all users agree to digital conduct terms prior to arrival into college each year.

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) with a well known external third party was introduced in 2025 to provide an extra avenue for staff concerns or challenges to be raised externally and to aid employee wellbeing.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Interviews with Student Services, the Dean & Deputy Principal, and Principal on current documentation, privacy practices, and escalation protocols

Training reflections and discussions with residential tutors and mentors

Informal student feedback on safety, privacy, and accessibility of support

Physical audit of swipe-card access, CCTV coverage, emergency signage, and after-hours entry points

Review of tutor, mentor and student handbooks, reporting tools, and digital usage policies

Systems and infrastructure

ENABLERS

- 24/7 on-site staffing model with trained residential staff
- Clearly defined after-hours critical incident escalation protocol
- Secure physical layout and entry via fob access; CCTV on all external entry doors and in some internal shared spaces
- Confidential staff documentation and recordkeeping procedures
- GBV prevention is explicitly a component of annual enrolments documents
- Digital conduct expectations included in Community Expectations Agreements
- Strong pastoral relationships that encourage informal disclosures
- Central coordination of student wellbeing through Principal's office

KEY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE

- Introducing RespectX – a secure, digital reporting platform that is accessible to designated staff
- Work with QAMBA (IT provider) to include explicit GBV safety controls and enhance reminders of digital behaviour
- Formalise pathways for mentors/tutors to escalate disclosures to leadership

SYSTEMIC RISKS

- Overnight residential tutors record every concern, telephone call, lockout etc in duty book and these tutor reports are checked each morning by senior staff
- Only senior leadership and College Registrar have access to personal information
- Follow-up is undertaken by senior staff the next day
- Digital and IT conduct policy is clear and agreed to at enrolment each year and dot painting session organised by a current student or Indigenous alumna.

BARRIERS

- Balancing visibility (e.g. mentoring, shared living spaces) with resident privacy
- Student confidence in navigating complex disclosure boundaries may vary

Area of operation: Service delivery

The college provides several services to students, including accommodation, pastoral care and support, all meals, an academic support program including tutorials, financial support for those in need, guest speakers, and free access to the university gym and sports facilities.

Student accommodation is provided in 160 almost identical rooms – there is little in the way of hierarchical differentiation between the rooms, and all year levels are spread throughout the college. This helps avoid any potential for a hierarchy developing among the students.

The residential tutors and mentors provide close-level pastoral support and availability for students and they are encouraged to keep a close eye, in particular, on first year students. Residential tutors are normally two or three years older than the students and have normally lived out of college for two or three years prior to being appointed; they are young professionals or postgraduate students. They live in tutor flats spread throughout the college on the residential floors. Mentors are selected from among the second and third year students each October for the following year based on their approachability, reliability and personal integrity.

The college has exceptionally long-serving staff – the four full-time kitchen staff have an average duration of over 20 years at St Mary's, the four housekeeping staff have an average of over 10 years' service, and the administrative staff have an average of 10 years' service. All staff are extremely committed to the wellbeing and personal growth of the students and take great satisfaction and pride from seeing students develop across their time in the college. The staff are highly respected by the students. The students' families often get to know the college staff well; parents and families are always welcome to come for lunch or dinner with their daughter or son in the college dining room when in Melbourne – and many accept this hospitality. No booking is necessary.

Academic tutorials are provided for students in the evenings on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings. The tutors provide an interactive 1-hour tutorial for between four and 12 students. The tutorials are held in dedicated teaching spaces.

Pastoral care and support is provided by senior staff (Principal, Dean & Deputy Principal, Residential and Wellbeing Co-ordinator), residential tutors, and mentors. All receive extensive and multi-faceted training prior to commencing in their roles, and refresher training at least every two years. The Principal and the Dean and Deputy Principal operate an 'open door' policy whereby if their office door is open students are welcome to visit for a chat – no appointment is necessary. A duty phone is held by a tutor overnight and can be accessed at any time; for emergencies the senior staff are also available by phone 24/7.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Community Expectations Agreement

Orientation week sessions for new students

Information given to all residents on pastoral care

Reinforcement messages given throughout the year – for example, at High Table

Student handbook, Mentor handbook, Residential Tutor handbook

Messages from departing students and parents

Service delivery

ENABLERS

- The students appreciate deeply the level of commitment demonstrated by all staff to building an inclusive and respectful community
- Students genuinely regard the college as their home and seek to perpetuate the values that the college espouses
- Messages of respect, equality, valuing diversity, inclusion are reinforced daily – by staff and students themselves

BARRIERS

- It can be challenging to engage residents in their personal time, given the significant demands on their time – for example, study, part-time employment, cultural and sporting pursuits, volunteer service
- Students may not always appreciate fully the impact a comment may have on other person – developing empathy

KEY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE

- Continue to emphasise to students in all messaging that they have the opportunity and responsibility to make 'their home' as welcoming and supportive to all as possible
- Encourage students and staff to always interact with mutual respect

Area of operation: Policies and procedures

St Mary's College maintains a coherent suite of policies and procedures that guide safety, wellbeing, behaviour, and community standards across all aspects of residential life.

These include the Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Policy and the Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Procedure, the Community Expectations Agreement which outlines behavioural standards and responsibilities for all residents, and the Student, Mentor and Residential Tutor Handbooks, all of which articulate expectations around respectful behaviour, disclosure pathways, privacy, the college's values of inclusivity, diversity, and equity, reporting obligations, alcohol use, and leadership responsibilities. All students sign the Community Expectations Agreement prior to entry and prior to returning each year to college, reinforcing shared understanding of rights, responsibilities, and standards of conduct.

Policy settings relating specifically to preventing and responding to gender-based violence include procedures for managing disclosures and formal reports, safety planning, staff responsibilities, mandatory declaration processes for all staff, residential tutors and mentors (in line with the 2026 National Code), and escalation pathways, including to university and external specialist services. The College takes a trauma-aware approach that centres safety, dignity, and agency, and avoids punitive or disciplinary framings unless necessary for safety. The aim is to aid in the holistic development of these young adults.

The College is currently undertaking its annual comprehensive review of its handbooks, with this year an emphasis on ensuring alignment with the new National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to GBV, to take effect from January 2026. The review is conducted in partnership with student leaders (mentors)

and residential tutors, who are actively engaged in refining language, strengthening clarity of expectations, and ensuring content reflects lived experience and contemporary cultural settings.

The policies aim to ensure a consistent, fair, and transparent response to all incidents, reduce ambiguity for staff and students, and embed inclusive, rights-based language that reflects the diversity of our community.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Feedback from staff managing disclosures and formal reports

Alignment review with university policies and national sector guidance

Workshops with mentors and residential tutors regarding what policies need greater clarity, stronger enforcement, or improved communication

Consultations with student leaders and tutors during the 2025/6 handbook revision process

Policies and procedures

ENABLERS

- The 'Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Policy' and 'Sexual Harm, Gender-based Violence, Discrimination and Bullying Procedure' outline the college's safety-first and trauma-informed approach to disclosures
- The Community Expectations Agreement articulates clear behavioural, safety, and conduct standards for all students
- Student, mentor and residential tutor handbooks explicitly address respectful behaviour, inclusion, alcohol use, privacy, and reporting pathways
- Ongoing collaborative review of handbooks with student leaders and tutors strengthens relevance and sense of ownership
- Trauma-informed disclosure guidance is embedded in staff procedures
- Policies reflect commitment to safety for all students, including women, LGBTIQ+ students, culturally diverse students, students with a disability, and First Nations students
- Current disciplinary framework includes proportional, safety-led decision-making rather than punitive responses
- All staff, residential tutors, and mentors complete Declarations on GBV allegations and investigations, and also any intimate personal relationships with current college residents
- The college's Procedure is to move the alleged perpetrator, rather than the reporter

SYSTEMIC RISKS

- References to gender inequality and discrimination within policy documents may not be explicit enough
- Policies have historically emphasised individual misconduct rather than collective/cultural harms such as hazing or coercive group practices
- The short-term accommodation setting for a relocated alleged perpetrator is a nearby studio apartment or hotel

BARRIERS

- Variable knowledge among residents of the Policies and Procedures and the Community Expectations Agreement and handbooks' content
- Some senior students lack enthusiasm to attend further training

KEY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE

- Complete handbooks and policy revisions to ensure alignment with the National Code for GBV
- Strengthen explicit language on equity, power, gendered drivers of violence, and collective cultural risks
- Strengthen training on implications of Community Expectations Agreement
- Strengthen annual training for staff and student leaders on policy interpretation, application, and boundaries
- Conduct biennial reviews of all policies, with student and staff representatives participating in the revision process

Area of operation: Management and governance

St Mary's College is sited on land for which the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne is the registered proprietor (Roman Catholic Trusts Act 1907 (Vic.) and the University Colleges (Lands) Act 1960 (Vic.).

The land was granted upon condition that the trustee use the land and any buildings erected there for a college affiliated to and connected with the University of Melbourne for the 'education, residence and benefit of Roman Catholics in Victoria'. St Mary's was founded by the Loreto Sisters, a global order of Catholic nuns with a long tradition of intellectual, academic, scholarly and educational endeavours. The Loreto Sisters administered St Mary's from its beginnings in 1918 until the end of 2013. The College became co-educational in 1977 but in most years has retained a slight female majority among staff and students. St Mary's College opened on its current site and as an independent college in 1966; the predecessor St Mary's Hall, situated on The Avenue, Parkville, had been from its foundation by the Loreto Sisters in 1918 an annex of Newman College. St Mary's College is affiliated with the University of Melbourne.

The St Mary's College Council was established by a Deed of Appointment dated 12 August 1968 and was reconstituted 28 April 1980. The council is an incorporated body. It comprises a broad cross-section of the community with representatives of the church, the University, the Loreto Sisters, and the neighbouring Newman College, and other members drawn from the professions (medicine, law, accounting), college leadership, tutors, and students; just under half of the council members are female. There is a strong understanding of GBV among the council with several of the members having undertaken training in this area. Members of the council are not paid for their service. The Principal reports to the college council.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Affiliation agreement and MOU with the University (pending)

Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne

Management and governance

ENABLERS

- Members of the management and governing council have a strong, contemporary understanding of GBV as evidenced by the consistent resourcing and extensive training devoted to GBV prevention and response
- All the college's documents (eg Community Expectations Agreement; Policies and Procedures; college website; promotional and marketing material; student, mentor, residential tutor and academic tutor handbooks) reflect a strong commitment to gender equality, respect, diversity and inclusion
- Residential tutor, academic tutor, mentor, and student handbooks explicitly commit the college to gender equality, respect, diversity and inclusion
- Significant effort is devoted to enabling students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access St Mary's College – for example, students with physical or mental disabilities, students with limited financial means, 'first in family' students

SYSTEMIC RISKS

- Long history of GBV being taken seriously by management and council, and proportionate sanctions being imposed
- Long history of diversity in gender of council members and management. Current ratios of female to male council (7 to 10), staff (9 to 5), tutors (3 to 3), student presidents (6 of the last 12), student General Committee (7 to 4).
- Management and council explicitly recognise and treat GBV issues as an institutional risk – as demonstrated in risk analyses undertaken jointly by council and management
- Long history of serious resourcing of prevention programs and activities – eg regular and extensive training for students, mentors, tutors, and staff
- Women managers are regularly tasked with leading the work on GBV prevention and response nearby studio apartment or hotel

BARRIERS

- Appointment of governing body members is made by Trustees based on their individual skill sets of potential members
- Performance demonstrates high degree of equality between the genders – in fact, females have consistently outnumbered males in senior management throughout the college's history, and approximate equality between genders on council.

KEY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE

- Explicitly monitor gender balance of management and council on an ongoing basis and report this data every two years to council
- Proactively encourage applications from any under-represented groups

Area of operation: Community engagement

St Mary's College maintains a strong network of relationships with its broader community, including alumni, feeder schools, and regional partners. These relationships contribute to shaping the College's culture and play a role in recruitment, academic enrichment, and the reinforcement of shared values.

The College has established strong, long-standing links with regional and rural secondary schools, many of which are Catholic and most of which share the College's focus on holistic education and values-based formation. These feeder relationships support student transition into College life and influence the cultural makeup of the resident cohort. Information sessions at regional and rural schools are provided by the senior leadership of St Mary's and explicitly discuss the core values of the college – highlighting respect for all, equity, diversity and inclusivity as character-defining elements of the college. These interactions are significant in communicating St Mary's values and expectations to prospective future students and thereby facilitate the self-selection of students for whom the values and expectations have resonance. Regular discussions are also held with senior leadership of feeder schools to monitor alignment between the values of the school and the college.

As around 80 per cent of St Mary's students are from regional and rural areas, the number of schools the students are drawn from is high relative to the number of students. A typical annual intake of 75 new first year students can be expected to come from around 50 schools. This has direct implications for ensuring that everybody is 'on the same page' with respect to preventing and responding to GBV. Considerable effort is therefore devoted to providing a strong training program for all first-year students, commencing while parents, friends and family

are present at Move-in Day and extending throughout all the training and other activities on the O-Week program and extending into the semester (See the training matrix in Appendix C).

Alumni engage with the College through formal and informal channels—supporting community events, participating in student-led academic seminars, and sustaining intergenerational connections that reinforce the values, tradition, belonging, and pride in the College community. As a relatively high proportion of the college's most outstanding alumni are female, they have a significant influence in shaping alumni activities and usually form a majority of participants at alumni events, including in enrichment sessions with current St Mary's students.

The College recognises that the expectations of the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence apply not only internally, but also to how it engages with its broader community. Efforts will be increased to ensure that school outreach actively support the College's commitment to safety, diversity, inclusion, and respect for all. This is a recognition that external networks can influence College culture, and efforts will be made to strengthen communication, clarify expectations, and align community engagement with the College's values.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Observations of alumni involvement in College events and mentoring

Review of relationships with key feeder schools and regional communities

Informal input from staff and student leaders about alumni influence

Community engagement

ENABLERS

- Longstanding connections with regional and Catholic feeder schools support values-based recruitment
- Engagement with diverse school communities helps broaden the College's cultural reach
- Informal alumni networks often reinforce values of respect, inclusion, diversity and ongoing community ties
- Alumni contribute positively to the college culture through career advice sessions, guest speaking, and event participation – gender equality, respect, diversity and inclusion feature consistently in these

BARRIERS

- College values around inclusion, gender equity and diversity may not be fully understood by all students in feeder schools

KEY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE

- Review feeder school engagement to ensure inclusive, respectful messaging that highlights St Mary's values
- Revise and ensure equity, inclusion, and GBV prevention themes in all school communications

SYSTEMIC RISKS

- Cultural values among feeder schools are generally in close alignment with those of the college in terms of promoting gender equality, respect, diversity and inclusion but this may not always be the case for a small number in terms of the relative emphasis
- The majority of active St Mary's alumni are women; attitudes and behaviours align closely with the current college cohort; alumni have positive attitudes towards women and LGBTIQA+ people
- Demographic characteristics of students targeted in recruitment are Year 12 students attending regional and rural schools with a particular focus on Catholic schools. In most years, there is a slight female majority in the intake
- In its marketing and information sessions held at feeder schools, the college emphasises gender equality and inclusion for all as being core values of St Mary's
- Any negative elements of culture in feeder schools are challenged directly and immediately by St Mary's senior leadership information sessions at feeder schools.
- Any negative elements of culture in feeder

Declaration Form - Confidential

The College requires you to complete this form so that the College can meet its obligations under the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (National Code).

QUESTION 1:

Have you ever been subject to an allegation of “Gender-based Violence” (defined in the National Code as “any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy”)?

Circle answer: YES / NO

If your answer is Yes, provide details of the allegations, the findings and the outcome (if there is not sufficient space below please attach further details to this form):

QUESTION 2:

Do you have an intimate personal relationship with a current resident/s of the College?

Circle answer: YES / NO

If your answer is Yes, please name the resident/s:

QUESTION 3:

have you previously had an intimate personal relationship with a current resident/s of the College?

Circle answer: YES / NO

If your answer is Yes, name the resident/s:

Print Name:

Date:

Signature:

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St Mary's College Training Matrix

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
October of prior year	Intercollegiate Student Leadership Training - Contributing to a safe and Inclusive College Environment	Avyon Consulting- Kim Copeland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied safety-first and trauma-informed principles to understand student behaviour, decision-making and wellbeing in residential college settings. • Developed an understanding of the impacts of stress and trauma on students and their capacity to engage, lead and seek support. • Strengthened capacity to identify and assess student safety, wellbeing and risk, including early indicators of distress or harm. • Practised responding appropriately to disclosures, prioritising safety, listening without judgement, and referring matters in line with College policies and escalation pathways. • Built shared understanding of gender-based violence, hazing and harmful traditions, including how these behaviours can become normalised within collegiate cultures. • Used a hazing continuum to distinguish between positive community-building activities and behaviours that are coercive, unsafe or harmful. • Enhanced confidence in having challenging, trauma-informed conversations with students and colleagues about behaviour, boundaries and accountability. • Explored practical strategies for leading and supporting cultural change, including working with student leaders to promote safe, inclusive and accountable college environments. • Clarified the role of student leaders in taking a safety-first approach to wellbeing and risk in college life. • Developed a shared understanding of trauma-informed practice and how stress and past experiences can affect behaviour. • Built awareness of gender-based violence and the responsibility to promote safety, respect and accountability. • Used the hazing continuum to recognise, prevent and challenge harmful or coercive practices. • Enhanced confidence in having challenging, trauma-informed conversations with students and colleagues about behaviour, boundaries and accountability. • Explored practical strategies for leading and supporting cultural change, including working with student leaders to promote safe, inclusive and accountable college environments.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified the role of student leaders in taking a safety-first approach to wellbeing and risk in college life. • Developed a shared understanding of trauma-informed practice and how stress and past experiences can affect behaviour. • Built awareness of gender-based violence and the responsibility to promote safety, respect and accountability. • Used the hazing continuum to recognise, prevent and challenge harmful or coercive practices. • Examined normalisation of deviance and how standards can slip if boundaries are not actively maintained. • Identified practical ways to set and uphold a healthy, respectful college culture through everyday leadership and decision-making.
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Compulsory Y/N	First Year Students	Returning Students	Student Leaders	Res Staff	Senior Res Staff	Day Staff
Y				✓	✓	

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
January & February	College Culture (Student pre-arrival & Orientation)	Principal and student leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading of the Student Handbook, including College policies and information relating to gender-based violence, reporting and support pathways, the Sexual Harm, GBV, Bullying, Discrimination Policy, and the anonymous reporting tool RespectX. Culture conversations lead by Principal and also student leaders.

Compulsory Y/N	First Year Students	Returning Students	Student Leaders	Res Staff	Senior Res Staff	Day Staff
Y	✓	✓				

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
March	Consent and Respectful Relationships (Student Induction)	Elephant Ed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased understanding of consent and the characteristics of respectful relationships. Improved ability to identify healthy and unhealthy behaviours, including issues of power, boundaries and communication. Developed awareness of personal responsibility and bystander influence in promoting respectful and safe interactions. Strengthened confidence to make informed decisions, communicate boundaries, and seek or offer appropriate support.

Compulsory Y/N	First Year Students	Returning Students	Student Leaders	Res Staff	Senior Res Staff	Day Staff
Y	✓	✓				

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
February	Responding to disclosures of sexual assault workshop	CASA House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of sexual assault, consent and affirmative consent, including legal, social and cultural contexts. Ability to apply trauma-informed, safety-first principles when responding to disclosures of sexual assault. Increased confidence in responding appropriately to disclosures, including listening without judgement, avoiding myths and minimisation, and prioritising victim-survivor choice and safety. Ability to recognise common trauma responses and respond in ways that support regulation and safety. Knowledge of crisis response options, referral pathways and specialist sexual assault services. Awareness of vicarious trauma and strategies to support professional wellbeing and sustainable practice.

Compulsory Y/N	First Year Students	Returning Students	Student Leaders	Res Staff	Senior Res Staff	Day Staff
Y				✓	✓	✓

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
February & March	Responding to Sexual Harm: Policy, Practice and Support Pathways	Moore's Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the College Sexual Harm framework, including relevant legal guidance and institutional obligations. Awareness of the College SAFE Policy, including a safety-first and trauma-informed approach to receiving and responding to disclosures. Knowledge of internal and external support services, referral pathways and appropriate escalation options.

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Y	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
Week 6	Bystander Intervention and Sexual Harm Prevention for Student Leaders	Sexual Harm Response: UMSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of gender-based violence prevalence and the pyramid of violence, including how harm escalates across a spectrum of behaviours. Awareness of coercion, consent and the spectrum of sexual harm, and the role of power and social norms. Ability to apply the 4Ds of bystander intervention, including recognising barriers to intervention and identifying safe, appropriate responses. Increased confidence in responding to disclosures and referring students to appropriate support services and reporting pathways

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Y			✓	✓	✓	

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
Start of Sem 2	Effective Upstanding workshop	Elephant Ed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of gender-based violence, peer pressure and stereotyping, including how these influence social behaviour and norms. Understanding of strategies and frameworks for upstander intervention, including how and when to act to prevent harm or support others. Improved confidence to recognise and respond to harassment, discrimination and unsafe situations in peer contexts. Knowledge of support pathways, including seeking help for oneself and supporting peers. Enhanced understanding of the role of positive peer influence and how individual actions can contribute to safer, more respectful communities.

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Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
January, February & March	RespectX Anonymous Reporting Tool: Reporting and Support Pathways	RespectX & St Mary's College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the RespectX anonymous reporting platform, including the purpose and options for confidential or formal reporting of harassment, discrimination, bullying and related misconduct. • Knowledge of how to access and navigate RespectX, including reporting categories and when anonymity may be selected to support early issue identification. • Awareness of how reporting through RespectX links to College support services and response pathways, and the role of reporting in enhancing student safety and wellbeing. • Ability to describe the value of early, confidential reporting as a part of broader efforts to prevent harm and support respectful, safe college environments.

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Y	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
March	Safer Social Environments: Alcohol Awareness, Wellbeing and Harm Prevention	Sonya Karras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training addresses alcohol content, absorption and processing, including dispelling common myths, and supports students to better recognise signs of intoxication and associated risk. • Students are provided with practical guidance on risk-reduction strategies, including avoiding unsafe situations, not travelling with intoxicated drivers, and planning safe transport home. • The program outlines venue expectations and controls, including identification requirements, security roles and powers, and common dress and entry conditions. • Students receive guidance on responding to alcohol- or drug-related illness, including basic first aid, use of the recovery position, and clear advice on when and how to seek emergency assistance or alternative support services. • Ongoing education is provided on drink spiking, including prevalence, prevention strategies, and appropriate responses, alongside clear pathways for support following drink spiking or sexual assault. • The training reinforces understanding of consent in social contexts, particularly where alcohol or other drugs may affect capacity and decision-making. • Information is provided on getting home safely and accessing relevant alcohol and other drug information and support services.

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Y	✓			✓		

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
March	Healthy Relationships and Consent Awareness	Consent Labs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics across friendship, family and romantic contexts, including communication, trust and independence. • Reinforced understanding of consent, including how consent operates within ongoing relationships. • Increased ability to communicate constructively, including raising concerns, considering different perspectives and navigating difficult conversations. • Ability to identify unhealthy behaviours that undermine consent, including coercion, gaslighting, love-bombing and other relational red flags. • Knowledge of practical strategies for responding safely to unhealthy relationship behaviours, whether experienced directly or observed in others. • Increased confidence in applying learning to real-world, campus-relevant scenarios, supporting safe and respectful relationship practices.

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Y	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
March	Community Safety and Risk Awareness: Victoria Police	Victoria Police Acting Sergeant Nick Parissis Community Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of personal safety and legal responsibilities when engaging in the local community. • Understanding of risk factors associated with alcohol use, including impacts on judgement, safety and vulnerability. • Awareness of common pitfalls for young people, including behaviours that increase exposure to harm or legal consequences. • Knowledge of practical strategies to reduce risk, including situational awareness, safe decision-making and seeking assistance. • Improved understanding of the role of police and community liaison, including when and how to engage with local police for support.

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Y	✓					

Date	Training	Provider	Educational Outcomes
February	Mental Health First Aid: Tertiary Residential Context	Wish Group Deborah Penglase Senior Mental Health Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of common mental health concerns affecting students in tertiary residential settings. • Ability to recognise early warning signs of mental health distress and increased risk. • Knowledge of appropriate Mental Health First Aid responses, including how to approach, support and refer students safely. • Awareness of crisis situations and clear pathways for escalation and professional support. • Improved confidence in supporting student wellbeing while maintaining appropriate boundaries and role clarity.

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Y				✓	✓	✓