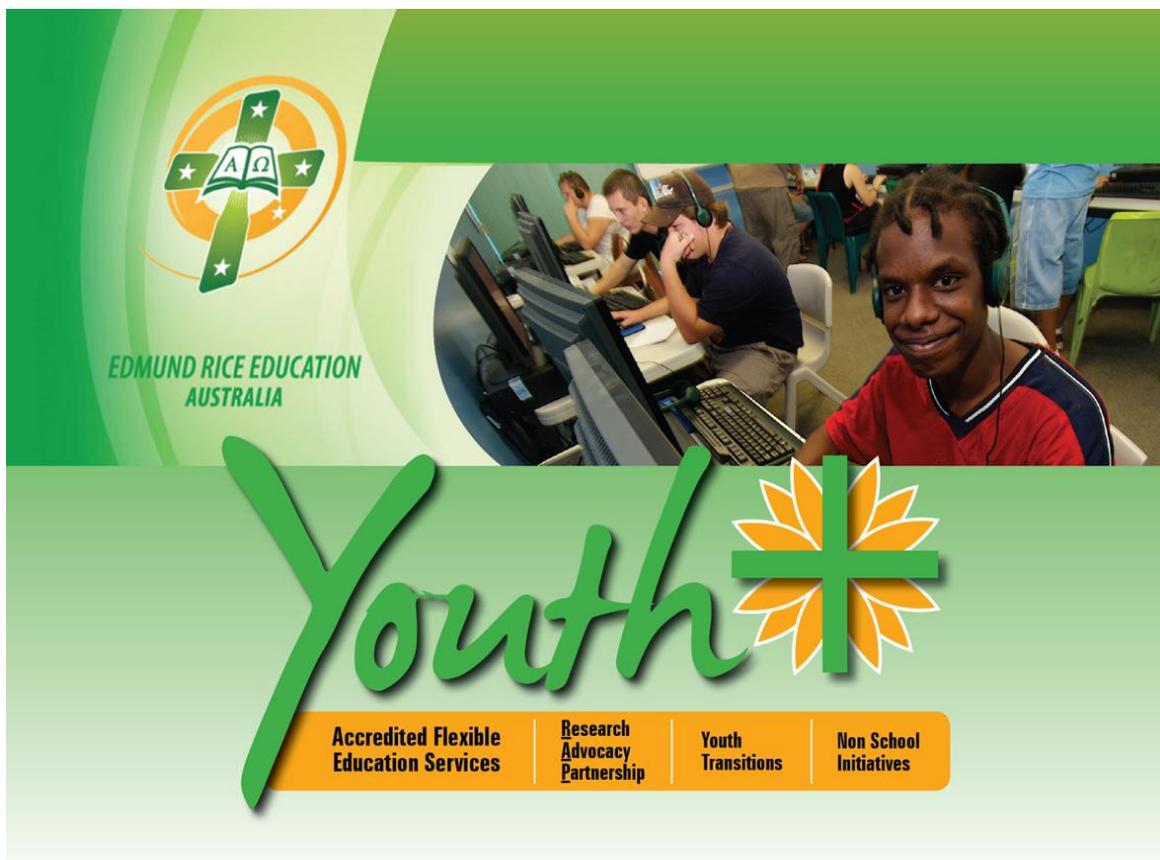


# St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre Annual Report 2018



## **About This Report**

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre (FLC) is registered by NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by Youth+ under the governance of Edmund Rice Education Australia.

The Annual School Report to the Community for this year provides the St Mary's FLC community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines information regarding school improvement initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year. Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and EREA.

This Report has been approved by Youth+ to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration. This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications.

Following its submission to NESA, the Report will be presented to the St Mary's FLC community, and be available on the school's website by 30 June 2019.

Further information about the school or this Report may be obtained by contacting the school:

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre  
63 Forrester Rd  
St Marys NSW 2760  
Office Ph: 0409 563 877  
Web: [www.youthplus.edu.au](http://www.youthplus.edu.au)

# Message from Key School Bodies

## Head of Campus Message:

As St Mary's moves into its fifth year of operation, we continued to see growth, strength and connectedness in and to our community. We have been able to celebrate the commitment of our young people to their education and build on our community engagement. Our staff team continues to provide, professional and caring, support and education in the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice.

The continued growth of the school in terms of young people enrolled and engaged, has both challenged and inspired our team. The main challenge we see is within the confines of our site/space and we continue to look at a means to alleviate this. Our inspiration comes daily via our young people, their families and their network supports and of course our very own hard working staff team.

We continued to build strong community connections and this year has seen strong connections with local community groups and service providers such as Neighbourhood Jobs, Reconnect, PCYC - Mount Druitt and Penrith, Wesley Mission and our local railway station. In an effort to continue to build our positive community we had our inaugural Community Day and Neighbourhood Sausage Sizzle, which was promoted, prepared and served by our young people to our local neighbourhood residents and businesses – there were very positive feedback from the community as a result of this.

Celebrations we have had this year included: our regular end of semester/year Awards Ceremonies – these are very highly anticipated and attended by many families and support services, our Community Day was also attended by many of our neighbours helping to create a positive community, Smoking Ceremony acknowledging our Aboriginal culture/s and again welcoming members of community and local elders into our school. Our celebrations are very much part of our daily and yearly rituals and routines and are looked forward to by our school community.

Much of our staff training and professional learning this year has been focused on compliance and safety and has included: Supervision Training, EREA Code of Conduct and Child Safety, Bronze Medallion, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, Fire Safety, NCCD, NSW office of Children's Guardian and Youth Mental Health 1<sup>st</sup> Aid. We also continued our commitment to having all staff trained in the Berry Street Education Model of trauma informed educational practices and of course our own Youth Plus Foundation Skills training (with all new staff also attending New Staff Days).

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre looks forward to providing engaging and inspiring education to our community and thanks the ongoing commitment and dedication of our staff team.

Jeanette Hartley - Acting Head of Campus.

## School Context

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre (SMFLC) is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia Youth+ and is conducted in accordance with the Youth+ philosophy and principles. SMFLC commenced operation as a registered Non-Government School in 2015 and is part of a national association (EREA) of over fifty schools which includes, in 2018, twenty Flexible Learning Centres.

The philosophy of the St Mary's FLC draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia and is grounded in the Edmund Rice Education Australia Charter document (see [www.erea.edu.au](http://www.erea.edu.au)). The document has a clear commitment to social justice, inclusive communities, liberating education and gospel spirituality, and stands in solidarity with disenfranchised young people of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds. The philosophy also has a practical focus, based in the application of four core principles of "Respect" (for self, others and environment), "Safe and Legal" environment, "Participation" (have a go) and "Honesty" (being fair dinkum) among all participants of the St Mary's FLC. This is evident in the ways the organisational culture and practices are shaped through the application of these principles. In essence, the principles establish a "common ground" among staff, young people and parents, a collective forum, where the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences are modelled and explored, both within the group, and individually and as members of the broader community.

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration on the Education Goals for Young Australians calls for improved educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged Australians, and states:

*"Australian Governments commit to working with all school sectors to*

- 'close the gap' for young Indigenous Australians*
- provide targeted support to disadvantaged students*
- focus on school improvement in low socioeconomic areas"*

(Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. 2008, p.15)

St Mary's FLC works with young people who are vulnerable and experience a complexity of inter-related needs. Participation, engagement and retention are key elements in the philosophy of St Mary's FLC, and the development of moral reasoning through the application of the four principles prepares young people for responsible citizenship. The learning experiences also build self-confidence and esteem in young people, promote an optimistic view of their potential and future, and assists them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life.

St Mary's FLC offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education. Young people are enrolled from both genders, from a variety of language, cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to First Nations culture, and from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage. Young people are exposed to learning experiences that develop understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultural values that constitute Australian society and specifically addresses the needs of young people and families from the Western Sydney Nepean region. Importantly young people are encouraged to participate in decision making processes that affect the school community, their own lives and the society in which they live. Learning is focused around the individual needs of young people and progress is carefully documented and monitored. Young people, in conjunction with their teachers and youth workers, draft learning plans with articulated education pathways.

Each of our classes function as a small community led by a teacher and a youth worker who operate as a partnership to facilitate learning options and support young people's wellbeing and social development.

## **Youth+ Foundation Statement**

Youth+ seeks to respond to the needs of young people disenfranchised and disengaged from education. Youth+ provides a place and an opportunity to re-engage in a suitable, flexible learning environment.

Youth+ seeks to build honest and authentic relationships with young people, their families and communities, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each person.

Youth+ is guided by the vision of Edmund Rice about the empowering service of education, to achieve personal and community liberation through educational experiences that enable transformation.

## ***Operation by Principles and Common Ground – (Actions taken by the school to promote respect and responsibility)***

The concept of '*common ground*' applies to all who choose to participate in our services. Adults and young people alike commit to participate in a learning environment that is democratic, relational and operates through key principles.

Relationships at our services are based on a respect for personal dignity and recognition of difference. An emphasis is placed on the peaceful resolution of conflict and spirituality is recognised as a universal human experience. Rather than being rule governed, the school uses principles, which are agreed upon (established common ground) as a basis for respectful social engagement amongst the community including young people, parents and staff. The principles are:

**RESPECT,  
PARTICIPATION,  
SAFE and LEGAL, and  
HONESTY**

These principles are used to guide group relationships. They represent broad directions for group practice and establish a common ethical framework which promotes appropriate learning and personal relationships.

The consequence of operating within a common ground set of principles is that all group participants, whether they are staff, young people or parents, are responsible and accountable for their behaviour, while allowing everyone to have a voice. Within this framework emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for the articulation of issues and their resolution. Considerable time, sensitivity and skill are often required to allow for briefing, challenge and registration of on-going expectations. Honest and open communication enables young people, parents/carers and staff to demonstrate their satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the school.

### **Parent and Carer Support and Involvement**

St Mary's FLC recognises that parents/carers are the primary educators of their young people, while remaining sensitive to the fact that many young people live independently of their families. We recognise our critical role in educating parents and carers, and being the link between young people and their carers in times of stress and crisis.

Particular reference is made to recognition of First Nations Culture through integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes in our curriculum and recognising National Days and Celebrations.

Class Staff (teacher and youth worker) have regular contact with parents and carers via phone conversations and catch-ups that happen on an almost daily basis. The importance of this informal contact cannot be overestimated. Parents and carers often phone wellbeing staff or the Head of Campus to share information or to ask for advice, and most particularly seek and share strategies and supports in times of crisis.

Parents and carers are invited into Operation by Principle as participants in Collaborative Problem Solving meetings with staff and young people. Staff seek the input of parents and carers in negotiating a way forward with young people. Staff often conduct home visits to encourage young person engagement through outreach and participation in on-site classes.

St Mary's FLC supports and encourages this role of parents/carers through: presentation ceremonies, newsletters, cultural and social celebrations, parents/carer meetings and home visits. Families are viewed as partners in their children's educational experience. While family circumstances may be related to young people's alienation, the importance of building positive family relationships is a priority.

## **Individualised Education Program and Learning Plans**

Curriculum plans are attuned to the individual young person by an assessment of need and delivery within a supportive environment that will re-engage the young person with learning and encourage a sense of community. Personal Learning Plans are developed by the class staff partnership and negotiated with young people to form an integral part of daily learning programs. Personal Learning Plans are informed by diagnostic testing in literacy and numeracy also, providing a snapshot of the young person's current needs and future aspirations.

Through this living document, young people articulate their learning, social, emotional and personal needs and goals. They are dynamic documents that respond to the changing contexts of young people as they progress through stages of life, and importantly the achievement of goals and milestones are celebrated. The Personal Learning Plans are revisited and adjusted frequently throughout the year. Teachers use this information to make learning and environmental adjustments for each young person, which they apply from a trauma informed practice.

## **Diagnostic Testing**

Usually a young person enrolling in the program comes with little or no documented educational history and therefore it can be difficult to ascertain their current educational ability and needs. To ensure that a young person is getting appropriate learning material we undertake a literacy and numeracy assessment of their current ability. This is initially completed using the Basic Key Skills Builder (BKSB) online assessment tool. BKSB is specifically designed for disengaged and educationally marginalised young people and adults. BKSB results are aligned with national benchmarks for accredited learning and training, and the results are able to be used to identify young people who may be ready to move into accredited training and transitional pathways.

BKSB is a validated diagnostic tool that is aligned to the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF). The ACSF provides a level that is nationally recognised, and aligns with the minimum literacy and numeracy standards in NSW for school leavers. The BKSB tool assesses mathematics (numeracy) across the following strands:

- Number
- Measurement

- Space
- Chance and Data.

In reading (literacy), the strands are:

- Text location and interpretation
- Contextual understanding
- Text and language knowledge.

## **Rhythm, Routine and Ritual**

Structure and predictability helps young people who have experienced trauma to feel safe and enables them to take safe risks and to develop. St Mary's FLC has built routine and ritual into daily practice in order to create a calm and predictable learning environment for young people. This also produces positive outcomes in young people's ability to negotiate and communicate, to think critically, to make decisions and to build their social capability.

Each day the community conducts an extended check-in session at the beginning of the day. This session allows young people to share issues of concern, address problems, air grievances and communicate openly with staff. It also allows days of significance to be marked, celebrated and discussed, for example Easter and Youth Week festivities.

A shorter check out session is held at the day's conclusion. The check out session is an opportunity to reflect on the day's events and celebrate individual and community achievements.

Each learning session or activity begins with a Working Agreement, in which staff negotiate with young people the ways in which Common Ground will be expressed through the Four Principles within the time period.

## **Learning Choices**

The school's educational approach includes flexible timetabling, smaller learning groups, and relevant curriculum. This enables the delivery of creative responses to the learning needs of the individual young person, incorporating their cultural and spiritual backgrounds and history of trauma.

The school's learning programs comply with NESA Mandatory Course requirements for Stage 4 and 5 of schooling, with a strong emphasis on providing meaningful and engaging learning through individual adjustments and personal learning plans.

In 2018, our school continued our relationship with the Victorian based Registered Training Organisation, Access Skills Training who provide us with support to offer the Certificate II in General Education for Adults . This course is integral in providing access pathways for any of our young people who wish to pursue further education options including TAFE courses. It has an added benefit that many of the required and elective units are directly related to a range of workplace skills. This helps to prepare our students for the workforce and can show employers that our young people have the specific skills that they require. In 2018, we had two classes totalling 30 student throughout the year who enrolled in and completed some or all of the required units. One unit required students to undertake work experience and in 2018 we had six students complete this in areas

including childcare, warehousing and retail. We were proud to see that six students completed the entire course and received their Certificate. Of these, some students progressed into fulltime work while several others have enrolled in further studies at TAFE. The remainder received statements of attainment for the units they completed and will continue studies with our school.

### Multi Disciplinary Teams

Team members use a multi disciplinary approach to provide health, educational, cultural, social and emotional support for young people. Educational, community and allied health professionals are encouraged to collaborate closely to provide wrap around care for the young person. Information is shared and expertise is respected. The youth workers on staff, lead by the Head of Wellbeing work holistically to develop links with external support agencies such as Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Family and Community Services, Drug & Alcohol support services, housing and accommodation services, Drug Rehabilitation and Juvenile Justice.

### Young Person Support

Each young person at St Mary’s FLC belongs to a class which is facilitated in partnership by a teacher and youth worker called key workers. The role of the staff partnerships is to establish a close relationship to the young person, collaborate with them to develop a Personal Learning Plan, monitor their progress, advocate on their behalf, provide advice, support and direct referrals in times of acute distress, and to support the young person to achieve their stated personal and educational goals. The role of class partnerships is complex and broad, and the tasks of key workers include ...

### Curriculum

The St Mary’s FLC provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of young people, and promotes their emotional, cognitive, spiritual and academic development. Learning programs are developed with the intention to:

- empower young people to take personal responsibility for their learning
- support young people to become independent learners
- address deficits or gaps in literacy and numeracy
- develop in young people the skills and dispositions of twenty first century learners including collaboration, innovation and knowledge creation,
- recognise and celebrate the skills and knowledge of young people,
- enable young people to experience challenge within a safe and supportive learning environment
- provide a sense of achievement that is relevant and authentic to the real world

Learning experiences address NESAs Mandatory Courses for years 7 to 10 with a strong focus on Literacy and Numeracy. Courses offered appear below.

NESAs Mandatory Courses	
Stage 4	English, Mathematics, Science, Personal Development Health and Physical Education, Geography, History, Creative Arts,
Stage 5	English, Mathematics, Science, Personal Development Health and Physical Education, Geography, History,

## Community Engagement and Wellbeing Programs

### Community and Team Building

Sport and outdoor activities continue to make up a large part of the timetable St Mary's FLC, and help us to build a positive community within our school. This year we have had competitions against a few different teams. In the cooler months we played Wheelchair Basketball and Indoor Oz Tag against the Shalvey PCYC staff and Police from Penrith and Mount Druitt. After these games we held a community lunch with all participants sharing a meal together. St Mary's FLC also played a regular Oz Tag game against the Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre each term. This game has become the basis for the development of our relationship with other FLCs across the state.

### Youth Workshops

Our school continued to host a variety of workshops over the year. These workshops have been designed for our young people to gain knowledge and skills in areas of personal growth and development that aren't part of the usual school curriculum. We have been fortunate to have many community organisations offer their expertise and to give their time to our students. Workshops offered throughout 2018 were from the Western Area Adolescent team from Mount Druitt visit; Drug, Alcohol and Relationship counsellors from Ted Noffs; Regular visits from the Penrith region Youth Command; the Worksmart team from Wesley Mission have developed a Men's Health program for our young men to participate in and Senior Constable Reg Singh from Nepean Crime Management Unit continued to attend community meetings to offer support to our community in relation to laws and safety.

### Cultural Group

In 2018 our young people undertook a variety of activities including developing the text of our Acknowledgement of Country for use at check-ins and community activities. The names of our class groups were changed to names of a variety of animals in local aboriginal language. Links were established with local elders which culminated in a smoking ceremony which has become a regular part of our school year at the beginning of each semester.

### Girls Group

This group continued through one of the local Police officers at Shalvey PCYC who sourced some great professionals to educate the small girls-only group about local community support programs, skin care, physical and emotional adolescent changes, and make up application techniques. This program positively linked some of our students to great services and workers in their own community with whom they continue to work with.

### Craft and Art Projects

We have had many young people choose to engage in different art and craft electives offered throughout the year. A number of murals were completed throughout the school as well as basic bicycle maintenance and craft activities.

## Young Person Enrolments

2018 Young Person Enrolments	
Girls	36
Boys	30
Total	66
Indigenous	29
LBOTE	2

## Characteristics of the Student Body

The young people represent a diverse population of indigenous(44%) and non-indigenous males and females of secondary school age, up to 18 years. The young people who attend the St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre have typically experienced significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations which demand unique responses. Some young people present with diagnosed disabilities but many show signs of learning difficulties, and undiagnosed conduct disorders or unstable mental health. The support for our young people is embedded within an educational framework but also typically involve medical, multidisciplinary, legal and/or social support personnel and systems.

## 2018 Enrolment by Gender and Attendance

2018 Young People Enrolment by Gender and Attendance Rates By Year Level				
YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	ATTENDANCE RATES
7	1	2	3	51.47
8	6	6	12	63.68
9	7	6	13	60.56
10	16	22	38	46.20
<b>TOTAL</b>	30	36	66	51.81

## **School Management of Non-Attendance**

Attendance requirements are established to maximise the young person's learning opportunities and performance. All enrolled young people are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent. Parents/carers have a responsibility to assist the young person to attend school regularly and a further responsibility to contact the school explaining why absence has occurred when the young person is domiciled with them. The particular circumstances of each young person are considered in the context of this policy.

### **Monitoring daily attendance**

Each young person is supported by a staffing partnership (comprised of a teacher and support staff member). The staffing partnership has delegated responsibility to monitor the daily attendance of young people enrolled in their class. The staffing partnership completes a hard copy attendance roll during the school day, which is transferred to an electronic data base at the end of each day. Both hard copy and electronic attendance rolls are filed securely for the period as specified in relevant legislation.

A register is also kept in the school's administration area for any young person who arrives or leaves the school during the course of the school day. The young person is required to sign themselves in or out of the school using the register. Where a late arrival or early departure has not been arranged in advance with a parent or guardian, and the young person is under 18 years of age, the school will contact the young person's parent or guardian to advise them that the young person has arrived on, or chosen to leave, the supervised school site.

### **Monitoring absences**

Parents or legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that they notify the school to explain the absence of their young person on any particular school day. Notification may be provided to the school face-to-face, or via email, phone call or text message.

If the young person is expected to attend school on a given day and does not arrive by the commencement of the school day, or does not access transport support as arranged, the young person's classroom staff members will contact the young person and their carer as soon as is practical in order to seek an explanation for the absence.

If the staffing partnership is not able to reach a young person on their carers in relation to an absence, they will speak with the Head of Campus to determine what further action should be taken. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that the young person is safe. This may include contacting alternate carers or services (where consent has been previously given to do so). Follow up may also include contacting the Department of Health and Human Services or the Police where the Head of Campus deems that the young person may be at risk of harm.

The absence will be recorded as 'unexplained' until otherwise justified, at which time attendance record will be updated to show that the absence was explained.

All communication with young people and carers regarding school absences is documented electronically and filed securely, as specified in relevant legislation.

All needs updating as per Framework/Complispace

## Post School Destinations

Destination	Number of Young People
Full Time Employment	10
Other Secondary School	4
TAFE Courses	3

## Professional Learning

St Mary's FLC is committed to the ongoing professional development and formation of staff. This continues to enrich the educational opportunities provided for our young people and models to our young people the modern reality of lifelong learning.

- Individual Reflective Supervision
- Youth+ Network New Staff Induction: New Staff
- AIS Child Protection Training, Creating Safe Working Culture, WHS.
- Technology of Participation Days (each term)
- Literacy Professional Learning, Reading 2 Learn: Teaching Staff(each semester)
- Curriculum Planning
- EREA Women in Leadership Conference: Head of Campus
- EREA Deputy Principals Conference: Head of Campus
- Berry Street Education Model: New Staff
- Youth Mental Health First Aid – All Staff

## Details of the Teaching Staff

Teacher qualifications fall into 1 of 3 categories for all teachers responsible for delivering the curriculum:

Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI – NOOSR*	100%
Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications	0%
Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context	0%

\*Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Staff Retention

## Workforce Composition

Teachers	8
Youth Workers	3
Support Staff	3
Workers identifying as indigenous	1
Total number of staff	14

## School Policies

The following gives a summary of some of the school policies in use. Copies of all Policies are available from the school office and are made available to every parent and young person at an enrolment interview and policies such as Student Welfare, Anti-Bullying, Discipline Procedures and Complaints and Grievances are available via the school website:

<http://www.youthplus.edu.au/stmarys-flc/>

### Enrolment Policy

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre offers a non-fee paying, inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education. Young People are enrolled from both genders, from a variety of language, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture, and from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage.

The young people enrolled have typically experienced one or more significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations which demand unique responses as young people who are at risk or have disengaged: young people in out of home care, Aboriginal young people, young offenders, young people affected by homelessness, newly arrived and refugee young people, young parents and carers, young people with disabilities and young people with mental health concerns.

### Managing Student Attendance and Non-Attendance

St Mary's FLC has a commitment to supporting regular school attendance by all enrolled young people to support them to participate fully at a Wollongong FLC through regular attendance, while ensuring that the school's duty of care to young people and other legislative obligations are met.

Our school holds a number of responsibilities in relation to student attendance. These include:

- that the Principal must ensure that a register is kept recording the daily attendance or absence of each school-aged young person in line with the Ministerial Directive.
- that a young person is excused from attendance if he or she is prevented from attending because of a reasonable cause approved by the Principal, and the parent has given notification.
- that the Principal may require a student to not attend a school on any day on which the student has an infection or is suffering from an infectious disease.

Regular participation in meaningful education is critical for young people's academic, vocational, social and emotional development. Given the specialist nature of the Flexible Learning Centres we recognise that many young people face significant challenges to regular school attendance. Factors

such as mental illness, substance addiction, ongoing family conflict and previous negative experiences at school can make it very difficult for young people to attend school every day. FLC's undertake a range of processes and supportive mechanisms to ensure that young people work towards consistent attendance and that all absences are justified.

If the young person is expected to attend school on a given day and does not arrive by the commencement of the school day, or does not access transport support as arranged, the young person's classroom staff members will contact the young person and their carer as soon as is practical in order to seek an explanation for the absence.

If the staffing partnership is not able to reach a young person or their carers in relation to an absence, they will speak with the Head of Campus to determine what further action should be taken. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that the young person is safe. This may include contacting alternate carers or services (where consent has been previously given to do so). Follow up may also include contacting the Department of Family and Community Services or the Police where the Campus Principal deems that the young person may be at risk of harm.

All communication with young people and carers regarding school absences is documented electronically and filed securely, as specified in relevant legislation.

This policy complies with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws. Enrolment interviews are conducted to assess a young person's needs in the light of the above criteria and to assess the Flexible Learning Centre's ability and resources to meet those needs.

For informal care arrangements, where a student is not living with a parent/guardian but is living in an informal care arrangement, the school may accept an enrolment form signed by the informal carer if the carer provides a signed Informal Relative Carer's Statutory Declaration to the school. The informal carer may be a relative, significant friend or a person within the child's extended social network.

### **Register of enrolments**

A data base register of enrolments is maintained that contains the following information for each young person:

- their name, date of birth, age and address
- the name and contact details of any parent or guardian of the young person
- emergency telephone numbers, including that of a nominated doctor
- the date the young person ceased to be enrolled and any applicable data from previous school and year
- the date of enrolment
- details of medical or other conditions for which the child may need special evidence of residency.

### **Student Welfare Policy**

St Mary's FLC seeks to provide quality education for all young people, taking account of their age, background, ability and interests, to assist them to become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and for the wider community.

Young people are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy, therefore, young people welfare is the responsibility of all staff working in a whole school context. Student learning cannot be separated from welfare. Helping young people to learn effectively and to develop

positive attitudes and behaviours are goals of the St Mary's FLC community. This requires that each young person is educated in an environment which provides for their individual development.

## Anti-bullying Policy

### Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the **Network Principal** (or a delegated authority) to implement this policy and to monitor its performance.

It is the responsibility of the **Head of Campus** to ensure that:

- They are familiar with anti-bullying policies and procedures, and that they follow them accordingly.

It is the responsibility of **Flexible Learning Centre staff members** to ensure that:

- They are familiar with anti-bullying policies and procedures, and that they follow them accordingly;
- They engage with other members of the South East Network and flexi school communities in ways that are safe and respectful;
- They work with colleagues and young people to prevent and respond to bullying in line with this policy.

It is the responsibility of the **Network Principal** to ensure that:

- **All Heads of Campus** are aware of their responsibilities in regard to preventing and responding to bullying;
- **Heads of Campus** are given continuous support and guidance to implement uphold the anti-bullying policy.

## Anti-bullying procedures

### Definitions

The Australian Government's *Student Wellbeing Hub* defines **bullying** as follows:

*An ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).*

Bullying behaviours may occur in person or online (cyberbullying) and can include, but are not limited to:

- name calling, teasing, ridiculing;
- physical violence;
- putting down others and their achievements;
- spreading rumours;
- throwing objects;
- demands for money or possessions;
- damaging, removing, hiding belongings;
- any threatening behaviour;
- making racist comments;
- glaring and menacing gestures;
- deliberately leaving someone out of activities;
- making/ using inappropriate comments/ language about another person that are of a sexual nature;
- making negative or offensive comments about family members of others;

- inappropriate and unwanted use of digital technologies such as nuisance phone calls/emails/text messages/private online messages.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. However, these incidents may still need to be addressed using restorative and collaborative practices. Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance);
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection;
- one-off acts of meanness or spite;
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

In addition, the Edmund Rice Education Australia *Code of Conduct* defines **workplace bullying** as: *Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person, or a group of persons, that causes a risk to health and safety. Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to the circumstances, may consider unreasonable, for example because the behaviour is victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening, and may include:*

- *putting workers through "initiation rituals";*
- *verbal abuse, threats, sarcasm or other forms of demeaning or intimidating language or communication;*
- *constant unwarranted negative criticism or "nit-picking";*
- *threatening to take unjustified action against a person unless they comply with unreasonable requests;*
- *deliberately isolating a worker by refusing to talk to or interact with them.*

Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner is not workplace bullying.

A **Contact Officer** is a staff member who has been nominated by their colleagues and has undergone training in order to support and advise staff members on issues of concern or grievances. The Contact Officer documents any concerns that are brought to them and can act as a support person for staff members who feel they are being bullied. The Contact Officer is not an advocate and is not responsible for directly responding to the bullying. Each campus has at least one male and one female Contact Officer.

#### Guidelines

Each South East Network Flexible Learning Centre will implement a range of **preventative measures** in order to establish and maintain safe and respectful work and learning environments. These include:

- Offering a wide range of curriculum-related activities and materials that encourage healthy relationships.
- Employing non-teaching staff (such as Youth Workers, Social Workers or Psychologists) and establishing relationships with community services in order to meet the wellbeing needs of young people.
- Providing a range of supportive mechanisms for staff members, including professional supervision (internal and external as required), professional development and opportunities to build collegiate relationships.
- Providing information on developing healthy relationships, the impact of bullying and the warning signs for staff, young people and parents.
- Ensuring adequate supervision of students is in place during school days and activities.

Each South East Network Flexible Learning Centre will also implement measures to **respond to allegations of bullying** among young people and staff members. These include:

- Providing staff and young people with information about their rights and options in response to bullying.
- Provide staff with training, skills and strategies to address bullying among students through supportive and restorative practices, in line with the South East Network Positive Behaviour Support Policy.
- Identify Contact Officers who, along with other members of the leadership team, are able to provide confidential advice and support to staff members who are concerned about workplace bullying.
- Develop and implement clear and just procedures for responding to bullying.
- Act upon all reported cases of bullying and respond appropriately to incidents of bullying in line with the policy.
- Treat very seriously any case of retaliation against a person for reporting bullying or any case of deliberate false accusation of bullying.
- Engage with a Police School Liaison Officer when required.

All South East Network and Flexible Learning Centre staff members will:

- Model appropriate behaviours that enable development of positive relationships.
- Use classroom strategies that include all young people in the learning process.
- Address issues of bullying as soon as they become aware of an incident.

***What to do if you are being bullied:***

- Remember that bullying is not ok and you are not blame.
- If you feel safe and comfortable to do so, speak to the person who is bullying you and explain your concerns.
- You may also choose to:
  - *Speak to a trusted colleague, Contact Officer or someone in a Position of Leadership.*
  - *Contact the Access Employee Assistance Program.*
  - *Contact the Victoria Police or the Fair Work Commission.*

***What to do if you observe bullying behaviour:***

- *If staff members observe bullying behaviour between young people, they have a duty of care to respond in ways that maintain the safety of the learning community and in line with the Four Principles of Operation. This might involve speaking to the young people involved at the time of an incident, or separately following an incident, and facilitating a restorative process. See What to do if a young person tells you they are being bullied.*
- *If a staff member observes bullying behaviour between colleagues, they may choose to:*
  - *Express their concerns to the colleague who is being bullied, or the colleague who is perpetrating the bullying.*
  - *Seek advice from a Contact Officer or someone in a Position of Leadership.*
  - *Contact the Access Employee Assistance Program or your Supervisor if the incident was distressing.*

***What to do if a young person tells you they are being bullied:***

- *Take the matter seriously and be supportive.*
- *Find a space to speak confidentially and sensitively with the young person.*
- *Listen non-judgmentally while the young person tells you the whole story. When they have finished ask further questions if necessary to determine when, where and how the bullying occurs.*
- *Reassure the young person that the bullying is not ok and it is not their fault. Thank them for their honesty and willingness to talk to you about the bullying.*
- *Listen to what they want to do to address the bullying and help them work out their options. These can include:*
  - *Supporting the young person to develop their own strategies to respond to the bullying, such as ignoring the behaviour, avoiding the perpetrator or speaking to the perpetrator.*

- Working with staff members to develop a Safety & Support Plan.
- Participating in a Collaborative Problem Solving conversation or Restorative conversation with a staff member and the perpetrator.
- Asking a trusted staff member to speak to the person who is bullying. The staff member might work with the person who is bullying to develop a Safety & Support Plan or an Individual Engagement Plan to enable them to be safe and respectful at school.
- Reporting the bullying to someone in a Position of Leadership and asking them for advice or to follow it up.
- Document the conversation in the database student notes.
- 

If a young person has told you that they are being bullied, it is important to inform their guardian(s) and

and Respect for others is essential to enabling the establishment of and support for positive relationships. Any form of bullying is contrary to the rights of the individual, weakens morale and interferes with the effectiveness of the work and learning environment and may be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of an individual. This community will address bullying by implementing educational activities to inform the community about bullying and its related effects and implement protocols that sensitively and immediately manage incidents of reported bullying or harassment and provide support for the victim and perpetrator.

- discuss how the school, guardian(s) and young people involved can work together to address the bullying.
- If you have significant concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a young person, it may be necessary to report these to Department of Community Services, The Ombudsman and the Police. In this instance, you should inform your **Head of Campus** and discuss whether a notification is appropriate.

#### **What to do if a staff member tells you they are being bullied:**

- Take the matter seriously and be supportive.
- Find a space to speak confidentially and sensitively with the staff member.
- Listen non-judgmentally while the staff member tells you their concerns.
- Reassure the staff member that bullying is not ok and it is not their fault.
- Listen to what they want to do to address the bullying and help them work out their options.

These can include:

- Supporting the staff member to develop their own strategies to respond to the bullying, such as ignoring the behaviour, avoiding the perpetrator or speaking to the perpetrator.
- Speaking with a trained Contact Officer.
- Making a time to meet with their Supervisor, someone in a Position of Leadership or contacting Access EAP for further advice and support.
- Documenting the incidents of concern.
- Participating in mediation or a restorative conversation with the perpetrator.
- Making a formal complaint to someone in a Position of Leadership and asking them for advice or to follow it up.
- Reporting the bullying to Victoria Police, if appropriate.

#### **Related documents**

*South East Network, Youth+ Pastoral Care (Staff & Student Wellbeing) Policy*

*South East Network, Youth+ Duty of Care Policy*

*South East Network, Youth+, Positive Behaviour Support Policy*

*South East Network, Youth+ Safety & Support Plan*

*Edmund Rice Education Australia Code of Conduct*

*NSW Ombudsman Reportable Conduct*

[Australian Government National Safe Schools Framework](#)

[Australian Government Bullying No Way website](#)

### **Discipline Policy**

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre aims to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every person has a right to enjoy their time at school. Respect for others is expected.

When inappropriate behaviour occurs the following dimensions will be considered in the light of operation by principle

- student behaviour education and pastoral care
- pastoral care for the whole school community
- student connectedness and engagement
- a Restorative Practice approach
- operation by principle as the framework for negotiation(Collaborative Problem Solving)

### **Complaints and Grievances Policy**

St Mary's FLC respects the right of all members of the community to have access to a process, which will give full and fair consideration to any grievance that may arise. All grievances and actions taken will be recorded in a School Complaints Register. The process endeavours to hear in a timely and equitable manner any grievance raised to ensure that the principles of natural justice are followed.

A grievance is any written complaint made against a member of the School community or School in respect to any action, policy, process or situation relevant to the running of the School by:

- a member of the School community
- any member of the public
- any legal identity

**The full texts of the above policies are available on line ([www.youthplus.edu.au/stmarys-flc/](http://www.youthplus.edu.au/stmarys-flc/)) or at the school office.**

### **Student Welfare Policy**

The St Mary's FLC seeks to provide quality education for all young people, taking account of their age, background, ability and interests, to assist them to become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and for the wider community.

Young people are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy, therefore, young people welfare is the responsibility of all staff working in a whole school context. Student learning cannot be separated from welfare. Helping young people to learn effectively and to develop positive attitudes and behaviours are goals of the Wollongong FLC community. This requires that each young person is educated in an environment which provides for their individual development.

### **Anti-bullying Policy**

Respect for others is essential to enabling the establishment of and support for positive relationships. Any form of bullying is contrary to the rights of the individual, weakens morale and interferes with the effectiveness of the work and learning environment and may be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of an individual. This community will address bullying by implementing educational activities to inform the community about bullying and its related effects and implement

protocols that sensitively and immediately manage incidents of reported bullying or harassment and provide support for the victim and perpetrator.

## ***Milestones of 2018***

### **Learning**

- The St Marys FLC community continues with four class groups.
- A group of 12 young people participated in a the local 'Community Jobs' Program
- 30 young people enrolled in the Cert II CGEA throughout the year.
- All of these students completed some part of their Cert II.
- Six students completed the Cert II CGEA and successfully enrolled in further education and in mainstream settings
- The senior class again had two TAFE visits in 2018 where they met with TAFE staff onsite at the Nepean Campuses Kingswood and Penrith for information sessions on available courses and enrolment processes

### **Welfare/personal learning**

- The Young Women's group continues to operate on a weekly basis. The group was supported by a youth worker who planned content to be delivered each week from various community services, geared strongly on the development of relationships with local youth service providers and help seeking.
- Induction booklets were expanded as were whole school agreements around a variety of areas including, excursions, electives and meetings.
- Aboriginal Cultural Group was established with a focus on cultural activities and developing a text for our regular Acknowledgement of Country. A variety of smoking ceremonies, musical performances and cultural activities addressing student identity were conducted.
- Reconnect providing regular on-site counselling
- Visits by staff and establishment of links to Juvenile Justice Services and a variety of other support services.

### **Community and Partnerships**

- Catholic Schools New South Wales
- Ongoing involvement with ACSSS – Association of Catholic Specialist School Settings
- St Dominic's College
- Federation of Institute and Ministerial PJP Catholic School Authorities in NSW and ACT.
- Wollongong FLC
- Senior Constable Reg Singh- Nepean Region Crime Management

## Priority Areas for Improvement for 2019

- Continued search for more suitable premises to meet the needs of more young people in our community who have been excluded from mainstream schooling.
- Integration of CompliSpace Policies, Frameworks and Staff Training particularly in the areas of Child Safety, WHS and Risk Management.
- Continues strengthening of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander young people to connect to culture through engaging learning choices.
- Deepening our understanding of Common Ground and worker skills in implementing Collaborative Problem Solving conversations.
- Further development of Literacy and Numeracy programs that address gaps in learning for our cohort of young people
- Development of and links to Accredited Transition to Work programs (Community Jobs) and the Ready to Work programs incorporating more skill sets and short courses for young people.
- Berry Street training modules for all staff
- A focus on Quality Teaching & Learning with a focus on goals for each session on the board and the introduction of Learning Walks in classes in line with AITSL standards.
- More staff to get their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and relevant upgrades.

**St Mary's FLC**  
**Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2018**

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1,703,384</b>	<b>1,601,233</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Administration		236,708	183,424
Boarding		-	-
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	<b>3</b>	41,934	47,971
Employee benefits	<b>3</b>	1,247,455	1,137,776
Faculties and co-curricular		53,796	76,172
Finance costs	<b>3</b>	-	-
Insurance		15,010	11,854
Operating lease rentals	<b>3</b>	-	-
Maintenance and utility		77,193	55,657
Other expenses from ordinary activities	<b>3</b>	-	-
Trading activities - expenditure	<b>3</b>	-	-
Other significant expenses	<b>3</b>	-	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>1,672,096</b>	<b>1,512,854</b>
<b>Profit/(Loss) for the year</b>		<b>31,288</b>	<b>88,379</b>
<b>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>			
Gains or losses arising on remeasuring available-for sale financial assets		-	-
<b>Total other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>31,288</b>	<b>88,379</b>

## **Conclusion**

The St Mary's FLC continues to offer an education option for those who through marginalisation cannot access a standardised education. St Mary's FLC maintains authenticity as an inclusive community and works to provide care, hope and socialisation skills as well as an academic learning program under the governance of NESAs, Catholic Schools NSW and Edmund Rice Education Australia.

### **Jeanette Hartley**

Acting Head of Campus  
St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre

### **Ivan Mahoney**

Network Co-Principal  
South East Network  
Youth+, Edmund Rice Education Australia