



27th August 2025

RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO DISCRIMINATION & BULLYING IN TASMANIAN SCHOOLS

*This submission addresses the particular areas of (b) and (d) of the terms of reference:
(b) inquire into and report upon the measures necessary to prevent and remedy discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff
(d) examine and recommend what efforts are being made and should be made towards meeting those obligations by Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff*

**Stella Maris Catholic School, Burnie, Tasmania
Enrolments: 434 students Kinder - Grade 6**

CATHOLIC LIFE AND MISSION

As a Mercy school, Stella Maris embraces the challenge of empowering young people to play a vital role in the world of the future. We challenge each other to be Brave, Curious, Kind, and ***like Jesus***.

The Mercy mission demands a particular commitment to the life of Jesus Christ. As upholders of this mission, we educators are called upon to find new and creative ways to meet the challenges of today's complex society. We aim to create a sense of community where academic excellence, acceptable behaviour, and complete student participation are encouraged.

Through the curriculum, students at Stella Maris are allowed to become equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate learning now and in the future. Our staff strives to ensure that students witness quality, equity, and justice and always feel secure and safe in the school environment. All students are given opportunities to experience success and are encouraged to reach their full potential as valued members of society regardless of their ability level. We endeavour to recognise the value and dignity of everyone in our school community and promote positive interaction between all members.



At Stella Maris
We strive to be the best person we can.
We choose to be brave.
We choose to be curious.
We choose to be kind,
Just like Jesus.

MISSION

At Stella Maris, we follow the Mercy tradition inspired by Catherine McAuley. We provide a God-centred educational environment that ensures high levels of learning for all. We involve and engage families in decision-making. We reach out and make connections with our world. We take care of all God's creations. We are inclusive. We value our community's opinions, successes, and needs in their lifelong journey of faith and learning. We are filled with hope that by taking a shared responsibility, we have endless possibilities.

OUR SPIRITUALITY

Nurturing the spirituality of all school community members begins with daily prayer in the classroom, which is part of every gathering. Staff pray together each Monday afternoon, and the Leadership Team gathers for prayer every morning. Professional learning in the area of Spirituality is a priority for all staff. All classes are encouraged to participate in Christian Meditation, where we hope they find God in stillness. We have a prayer room where all students have opportunities to further deepen their relationship with God by experiencing different forms of prayer and listening to, wondering, reflecting on, and responding to various Gospel stories through Godly Play.

LITURGY

Celebrating through Liturgy is central to our spiritual development. We celebrate the Eucharist at the beginning and end of the year and for special Liturgical events, such as Pentecost. We also celebrate special Liturgies for our Mercy Feast Day, Mary, All Saints and All Souls' Day, Holy Week, Easter and Christmas, as well as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparent's Day, Lenten Liturgies, ANZAC Day and NAIDOC Week. Each grade is rostered on each term to celebrate Liturgy in a more intimate setting.



NURTURING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

- Stella Maris participates in the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program, which teaches our three expectations—**respectful**, **safe**, and **responsible**. This is closely linked to our Making Jesus Real (MJR) program. Students participate in a 'buddy' system, where students in the upper classes 'buddy' with a junior class for various activities. Other programs include:
 - MJR - Making Jesus Real
 - Tasmanian Police - Adopt a Cop program - yearly sessions for Gr 6 students that include:
 - Respect for others, how name-calling can get out of hand, bullying and how it is in an adult world and the consequences
 - Social Media, & the pitfalls, building your reputation, things can stick; an employee calls for a reference
 - Being brave & standing up & speaking out
 - General safety in the community
 - Marty Ogle - Marty's Consultancy - sessions that include:
 - IT - it is here to stay, so how best to be involved
 - Laws in Tasmania
 - The eSafety government website
 - Pressures associated with social media, including peer pressure, screen time, cyberbullying
 - Pornography & groomers
 - Gaming - benefits and problems
 - Online gambling, scams, etc
 - Restorative Practices
 - Peaceful Kids
 - JCP Youth - Youth Empowerment Program
- We have a rigorous enrolment process guided by the Catholic Education Commission Tasmania (CECT) Enrolment Policy. We welcome families of all backgrounds. As our Mercy tradition and charism reflect, we are committed to the marginalised families in our community who seek an education at our school. This is evident from our dedication to stand with the displaced and model a world of welcome and inclusion.
- We proactively contact families when we know they may be having difficulty paying school fees due to family income changes such as job losses, the loss of a parent or child, or due to domestic/family violence incidents.
- During our mid-year Kinder Interviews, we communicate to all families that we offer fee assistance or fee remission to families that may need it.



PASTORAL CARE

- Stella Maris supports pastoral care for its students, families, and staff through various initiatives and practices to foster a nurturing and inclusive community. Key ways in which pastoral care is provided include:
 - FOR STUDENTS:
 - Dedicated Pastoral Staff: We provide a school chaplain three days a week and a CatholicCare school counsellor five days a week, providing emotional and social support.
 - Wellbeing Programs: Regular programs and workshops focused on mental health, resilience, and social skills are provided throughout each year, including:
 - JCP Youth - Youth Empowerment Program
 - MJR - Making Jesus Real
 - Marty's Consultancy
 - Peaceful Kids
 - Adopt a Cop
 - Safe Spaces: We have dedicated spaces where students feel safe to express their concerns and seek help.
 - The Hub
 - The Library
 - The Pastoral Care & Wellbeing Office
 - Peer Support: Peer mentoring programs where older students support younger students.
 - Individual Learning Plans: Tailored plans for students with specific needs, ensuring they receive the appropriate support.
 - FOR FAMILIES:
 - Communication Channels: Open lines of communication between the school and families through regular meetings, newsletters and online platforms.
 - Parent/Guardian workshops: Workshops and resources for online/cyber safety, sex education, child development and effective parenting strategies.
 - Community Events: Organising community events that bring families together, fostering a sense of community and belonging.
 - Welcome BBQs
 - Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations
 - Grandparent's Day
 - Feast Day celebrations
 - Class Liturgies and Masses
 - Parent Engagement Group meetings and events
 - End of Year celebrations
 - Assemblies

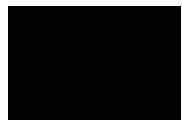
Stella Maris Catholic School

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- Support Services: Providing access to external support services and resources for families in need.
 - Speech Pathologists
 - Occupation Therapists
 - Psychologists
 - Financial support: Providing groceries, supermarket gift cards & money transfers in times of urgent care/emergencies
- o FOR STAFF:
- Professional Development: Training for staff on pastoral care, mental health, and well-being.
 - Mental Health First Aid
 - Rosie Psychology - Staff Burnout PL
 - Rosie Psychology - Trauma PL
 - Palliative Care Tas - Grief PL
 - Support Networks: Establishing support groups and providing peer mentoring for staff members.
 - PLTs
 - Team Leaders
 - Wellbeing Initiatives: Programs promoting staff health and well-being, such as:
 - Social Club activities
 - Go Home Early afternoons - No Staff Meetings
 - Timetable structure - providing uninterrupted release time
 - Birthday Morning Teas
 - Staff BBQs, Monthly hot drink Thursday - free
 - Celebrations of staff milestones
 - Light House Project - Regular staff check-ins from the leadership team
 - Counselling Services: Access to confidential counselling and support services for staff:
 - EAP
 - School Chaplain



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