



MERCEDES
COLLEGE



Annual Performance Review 2024



CIS INTERNATIONALLY
ACCREDITED
SCHOOL
CRICOS Code 00365D



As part of its funding agreement with the Australian Government, Mercedes College is required to ensure that 'School Performance Information' is made publicly available. Information is provided publicly via the Mercedes College website, as well as within the College community through regular electronic updates.

The information within is provided in response to the reporting areas required by the Australian Government in line with Schools Assistance Regulations 2009 responsibilities. The information relates to the 2024 school year. Questions about this information can be directed to the Principal's Executive Assistant, on +61 8 8372 3200.

Mercedes College is a Council of International Schools (CIS) accredited Reception to Year 12 International Baccalaureate (IB) world school.

Renowned for fostering leadership and critical, creative thinking in its students, Mercedes College has a proud record of excellence in all endeavours, providing a holistic approach to the students' learning journey. Through a progressive, internationally focused curriculum supported by six core values, the College provides opportunities that help students to reach their full potential, regardless of their chosen pathway.

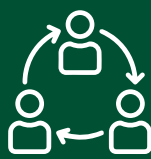
The strategic direction of Mercedes College is underpinned by its Mercy Keys, along with a series of guiding principles.



Guiding Principles



Student and family-centric



Collaborative and accountable



Well governed and managed



Efficient and sustainable



High performing



Evidence-led

From the Principal

At Mercedes College, we take great pride in attracting and retaining exceptional educators who see it as a privilege to inspire and guide our students, both in their learning and personal growth.

We set high expectations for our staff and students alike, underpinned by strong support systems that empower every learner to reach their full potential.

Our commitment goes beyond academic excellence. Our teachers enrich the student experience with opportunities in service, sport, the arts, spiritual reflection, and intellectual exploration—ensuring a well-rounded and meaningful education.

As we approach the conclusion of our 2021–2025 Strategic Plan, we're already seeing the results of our forward-thinking investments in technology, facilities, and future-focused learning. Innovative, high-performance learning spaces are now in use, and new avenues for community engagement continue to strengthen our connections.

Now, we enter an exciting period of reflection and renewal.

We've begun the important work of shaping our next strategic direction—one that will ensure Mercedes College remains a vibrant, future-ready school known for its excellence, strong community connection and commitment to student wellbeing.

Andrew Balkwill
Principal

Mercy Keys

Justice
Loyalty
Integrity
Compassion
Responsibility
Mutual Respect

Contextual information about Mercedes College

Strategic Goal 2.0

Shape our learning experience to produce confident, ethical and successful global citizens ready to address the challenges of their time.

Mercedes College proudly stands as South Australia's only Catholic school offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum from Reception through to Year 12—and one of just a few schools nationally to deliver all three IB programmes. Students are inspired to become curious, confident, and capable lifelong learners, with the skills and confidence to flourish in their academic, extra-curricular and personal pursuits.

For more than 30 years, Mercedes students have embraced the richness of the IB journey. In the Primary Years Programme (Reception to Year 5), students explore learning through inquiry and creativity. The Middle Years Programme (Years 6 to 10) builds on this foundation, fostering critical thinking and global awareness.

In their senior years, students have the flexibility to choose between the IB Diploma Programme and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), both underpinned by the rigorous and holistic IB learning approach. Years of IB study in the junior and middle years give students a powerful head start—no matter which path they take.

The IB programmes cultivate an education that transcends borders—disciplinary, cultural, and geographical—challenging students to think deeply, act compassionately, and engage meaningfully with the world around them.

At the heart of this exceptional academic experience is a strong, values-led education. Grounded in the Mercy Keys, six core values shape daily life at Mercedes College and foster a vibrant, caring, and connected community.

In 2024, 46 per cent of Year 12 graduates achieved an ATAR in the top 20 per cent of the country, with 21 per cent of them achieving an ATAR in the 90s. The College Dux achieved an ATAR of 98.45.

Graduates achieved 17 Merits from 13 subjects, including Biology, Business Innovation, Chemistry, Creative Arts, German, History, Outdoor Education, Physical Education, Physics, Research Project, Spanish, and Spirituality, Religion and Meaning.

A further 20 graduates undertook Vocational Education and Training alongside their academic studies, in fields as diverse as business, health services, early childhood education, music, information technology, and entrepreneurship, and 65 graduates took on a student mentor role for younger peers while completing their studies.



Total enrolments in 2024	1,155
Male	587 (53%)
Female	523 (47%)
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	5
Refugee	0
English as Additional Language or Dialect*	110
Student attendance rate	91%

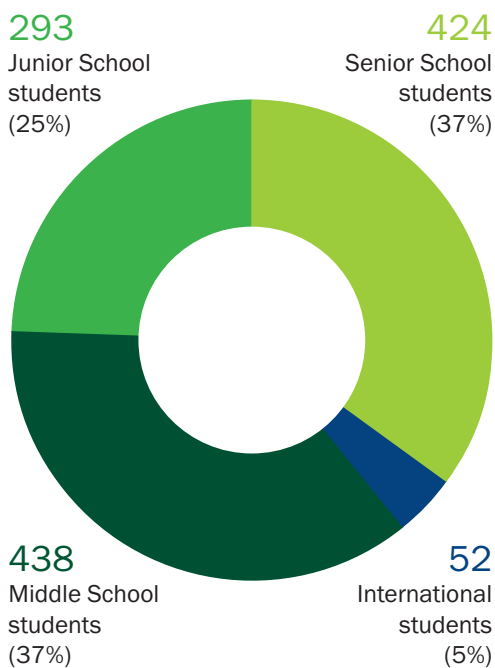
*Local students only, not inclusive of international students.



The International Student Programme (ISP) attracted 52 students from 13 countries, including Austria, China, France, Germany, Iran, Switzerland, Thailand, and Vietnam.

International students generally live in Homestay accommodation, with support from specialist staff ensuring their social welfare and academic needs are met. These specialists help facilitate enrolment at the Adelaide International School to accommodate language needs of newly arrived international students prior to joining the College.

Breakdown of Year Levels



Staffing Profiles

Strategic Goal 3.0

Support our staff to flourish and reach their full potential.

In 2024 Mercedes College had a dedicated and skilled workforce comprising:

Total staff	233
Teaching staff*	135
Non-teaching staff	98
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	0

*Of the teaching faculty, 64 per cent are female, and 36 per cent male.

To successfully deliver the programmes offered by Mercedes College, teachers have responsibility for key areas including Performing Arts, Languages, Humanities, Science, Visual Arts, Mathematics and Physical Education.

Mercedes College is structured with three Heads of School (Junior, Middle and Senior) responsible for all staff and students within that sub-school. Other positions of responsibility include Learning Area and Year Level Leaders.

With a holistic approach to education and learning, the Wellbeing Team comprises two registered Educational and Developmental Psychologists, a Student Counsellor, and a Learning Enrichment Team who all support the academic and wellbeing outcomes for our students.

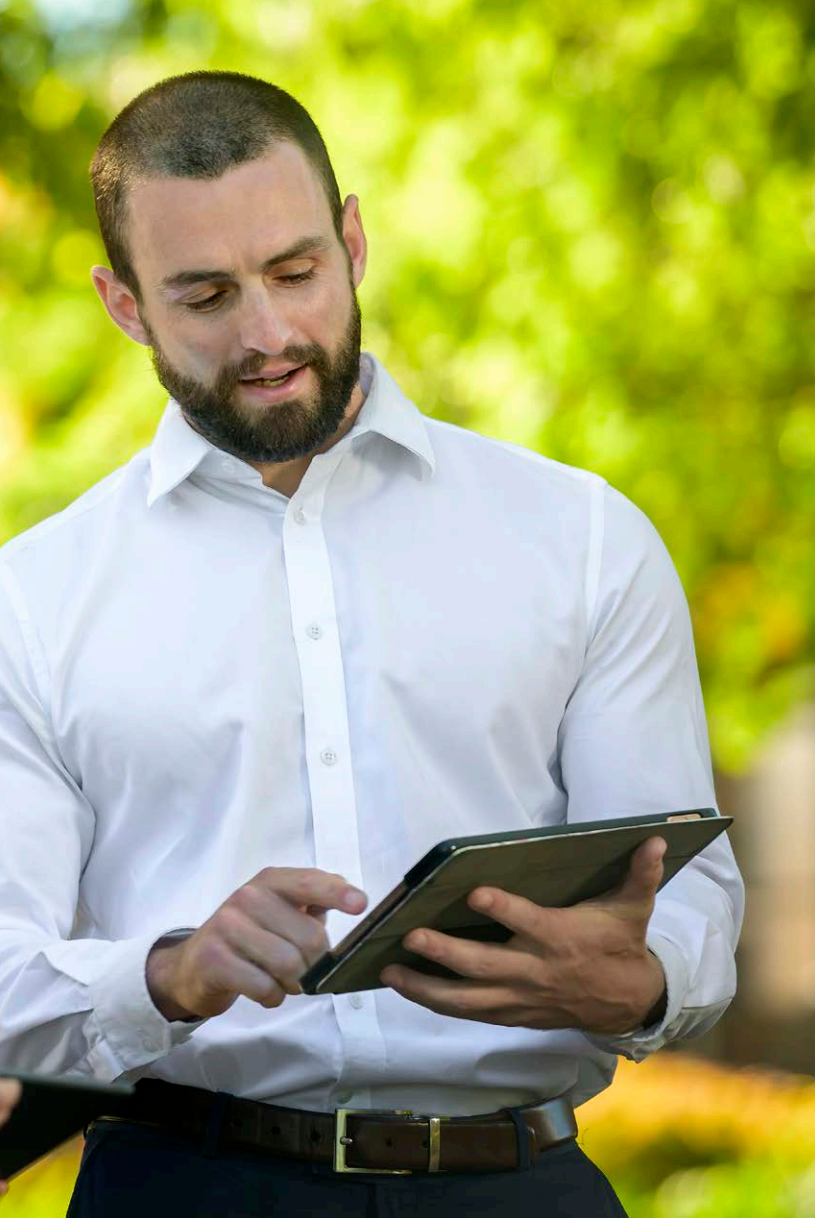
Teacher Qualifications

Doctorate	1
Master's Degree	27
Bachelor's Degree	156
Graduate Diploma in Education	17
Diploma of Teaching	15
Other Graduate Certificates	17
Other Diplomas or Certificates	18



All teaching and non-teaching staff members at the College participate in relevant and effective professional development activities that enable them to deliver all educational programmes to a high standard.

These professional development activities comprise a combination of local and international events and meet local, national and International Baccalaureate expectations.



Governance

The membership of the College Council comprises:

- One member appointed by the Director of Catholic Education.
- Three members elected by the College community
- Five members recommended by the Council and appointed by the Director of Catholic Education.
- Mercedes College Principal (ex officio)

Throughout 2024, the governing College Council, together with the Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, focused on ensuring Mercedes College remained a leading IB world school.

The College also operates three standing committees: People, Culture and Engagement, Faith and Education, Finance, Risk and Infrastructure.

Mercedes College has proudly achieved re-accreditation with both the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the International Baccalaureate (IB). This comprehensive and rigorous process reaffirms our standing as a leading educational institution in Australia, committed to global standards of excellence.



College Income

Strategic Goal 5.0





Revitalise our operating model to long term sustainability.

As a Catholic school, the primary source of funding for teaching and learning programmes, and ongoing operational needs, is derived from family tuition fees.







National and State Government grant funding programmes provide some additional resources to assist with the financial viability of the College, as does private donations and fundraising with our community.



Source of income

	Tuition fees	55%
	Australian Government Grants	31%
	State Government Grants	8%
	Other income	6%

Source of expenditure

	Employment costs	67%
	Grounds and maintenance	5%
	Levies	4%
	Depreciation	5%
	Teaching resources	7%
	Administration	12%





Student Attendance

Strategic Goal 1.0

Nurture our students to flourish and reach their full potential.

Student academic success is directly related to school attendance, and Mercedes College works with families to ensure maximised learning opportunities.

Families contact the College when a student will be absent, and this notification is recorded in the student's Daily Planner. If the College does not receive notice of an absence, a message is sent to families.

The overall average attendance rate in 2024 was 91 per cent.

Remote learning via Managebac, whether while absent or after a student's return, is actively managed by teaching staff to help students manage their time and workloads.

Junior School		Middle School		Senior School	
Reception	92%	Year 6	92%	Year 10	89%
Year 1	92%	Year 7	91%	Year 11	89%
Year 2	92%	Year 8	91%	Year 12	87%
Year 3	92%	Year 9	90%		
Year 4	92%				
Year 5	93%				



Teaching and Learning Overview

The IB/CIS evaluation conducted in March 2024 affirmed the high quality of teaching and learning at Mercedes College.

Notably, the targeted approach to identifying and supporting individual student needs was highly praised. Case management strategies, learning enrichment programs, and effective pedagogical practices were highlighted as key areas of strength.

In 2024, the College continued to prioritise literacy development across all year levels. A whole-College literacy agreement was implemented, reflecting a unified commitment to building strong foundational literacy skills – critical for student success in both academic and real-world contexts. Ongoing analysis of NAPLAN data informs the College's literacy strategy, providing the opportunity to fine-tune areas of focus and maximise student outcomes.

As a forward-thinking school, Mercedes College remains responsive to global trends shaping education. In 2024, our teaching and learning leaders turned their attention to the evolving role of artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom. With the support of a Learning Design specialist, staff engaged in professional learning workshops exploring the opportunities and challenges AI presents.

Educators discovered that AI can generate tailored learning activities that meet the specific needs of their students, offering new levels of personalisation. They also recognised the value of AI in connecting learning to real-world contexts, quickly sourcing authentic, relevant content that sparks engagement and deepens understanding.

At all three levels of the IB Programme, students develop strong academic, social and emotional characteristics

The IB Programme

At all three levels of the IB programme – Primary, Middle and Diploma – students develop strong academic, social and emotional characteristics as they:

- Are encouraged to think independently and drive their learning
- Build a sense of identity and cultural awareness
- Develop their curiosity and spirit of discovery and enjoyment of learning
- Become equipped with the skills to learn, individually or collaboratively, and apply these qualities across a broad range of areas
- Participate in programmes of education that can lead them to some of the top universities around the world
- Become culturally aware through the development of a second language
- Engage with people in an increasingly globalised, rapidly changing world

NAPLAN Annual Assessment

Annually students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are required to participate in Australia-wide reading, writing, spelling, and numeracy testing (NAPLAN) to establish a national standards benchmark.

Mercedes College uses NAPLAN results to closely track student performance. Individual student data and proficiency levels are used to plan any additional support needed for the student to progress in their schooling. The proportion of students in each proficiency level is also monitored and considered.

Achievement in the upper two levels is an indication that students are demonstrating or exceeding expectations at the time of testing.

Approximately 70 per cent of students nationally will achieve the upper two levels. The following table shows the percentage of Mercedes College students who have achieved in each of the upper two levels, all of which meet or exceed this expectation.

Year 3

Reading	84.1%
Writing	97.7%
Spelling	70.5%
Grammar and Punctuation	75.0%
Numeracy	73.5%

Year 5

Reading	81.3%
Writing	84.3%
Spelling	74.3%
Grammar and Punctuation	82.9%
Numeracy	81.3%

Year 7

Reading	82.9%
Writing	73.3%
Spelling	79.8%
Grammar and Punctuation	72.1%
Numeracy	85.7%

Year 9

Reading	80.5%
Writing	71.4%
Spelling	82.6%
Grammar and Punctuation	73.3%
Numeracy	86.7%

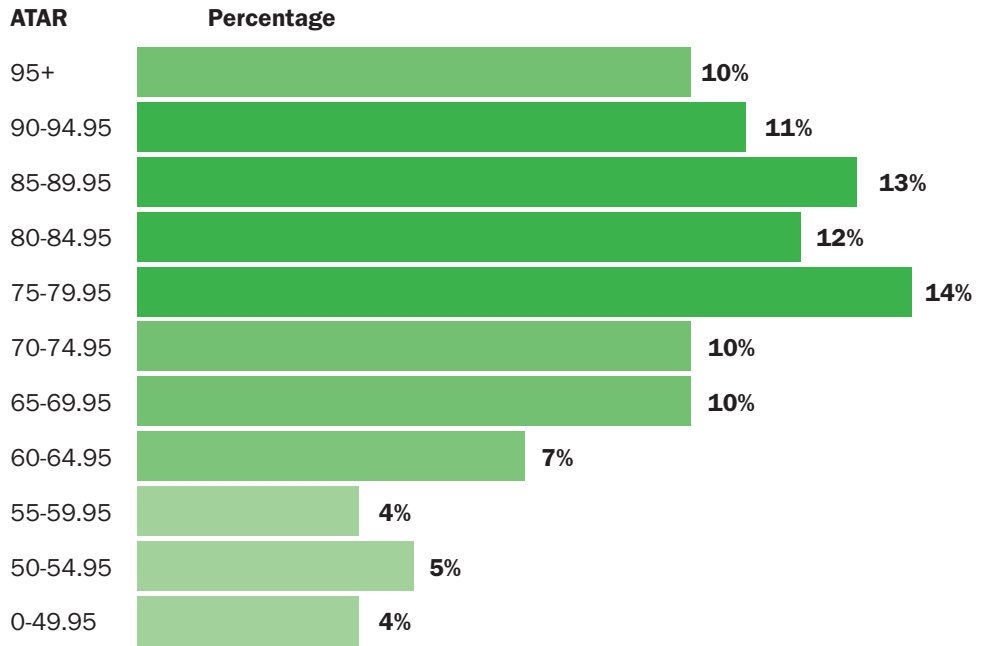
Senior Secondary Outcomes

In 2024, 131 students studied Year 12 at Mercedes College.

- 23 students studied the IB Diploma.
- 104 students studied SACE.
- 11 students studied SACE with at least one IB Diploma subject to boost their ATAR.
- 20 students studied SACE with a Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathway.

The median ATAR for the 2024 cohort was 78.63, with our Dux achieving an ATAR of 98.45, and 28 students (21 per cent) reaching Laureate status for achieving a Merit and/or an ATAR of 90 or more.

ATAR Distribution



101 graduates seeking tertiary education received a university offer, with 84 per cent offered their first preference.

Popular Tertiary Directions



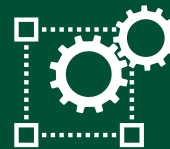
21%
Business
Commerce



27%
Health
Medicine



3%
Sciences



12%
Engineering



8%
Psychology



5%
Arts
Design



10%
Law



6%
Construction
Architecture



5%
ICT



3%
Education

Mercedes College Community Satisfaction

Strategic Goal 4.0

Build partnerships with parents and the community.

The College has a group of committed Year Level Representatives, who volunteer to act as conduits for information for their year level. They share updates, organise social events and keep the families connected throughout the year. The group also provides feedback to the College on new ideas or emerging initiatives.

Close to 300 volunteers helped enrich students' experience in classrooms and on excursions, as well as acting as community mentors in the College's successful Student Mentoring Programme.

Top five reasons given for choosing to join Mercedes College in 2024

1. Quality teaching and learning
2. Co-education
3. Reputation for academic results
4. Safe/nurturing environment
5. Values/Mercy Keys

New Families

Families who are new to the College are invited to participate in a survey to capture their opinions and satisfaction rates for their enrolment experience, induction process, learning outcomes being achieved, and communications received.

The highest intake in 2024 was Year 7 (49 per cent) followed by Reception (19 per cent).

97 per cent of families who attended a Tour prior to starting at the College, rated their experience as very or somewhat satisfying, as they did for their child's experience on Orientation Day (94 per cent). Their enrolment experience was also rated well, with 91 per cent very or somewhat satisfied.

Communications between the College and new families was rated highly in general, with qualitative feedback from those less satisfied with their experience, citing the different number of communication channels being used, as a barrier to ease of access and understanding of information.

College leadership is actively reviewing the effectiveness of communication platforms, with opportunities identified for better utilising existing software, with a view to reducing the number of platforms used in 2025.

Student Input

Students are also prompted to provide feedback about their learning process, participating in regular 'pulse checks' with their Home Group teachers.

This quick check helps educators gain insight into student perceptions of their learning, as well as tracking engagement, 'the mood', and attitudes that can help identify any student concerns.

Staff Feedback

The College conducted a Staff survey, seeking input and feedback on key areas such as leadership, communication, professional development, role clarity and 83% of staff responded. Top level results were shared with all staff, via their line Managers, seeking additional feedback. This was followed up with Listening Forums inviting further staff feedback, and a subsequent 'Check-In' six months after the initial survey. Feedback from the survey continues to be used to improve processes across the College.



Online Engagement

The College community remains strongly engaged with social media content, with followers increasing by 14.51 per cent in 2024, with the greatest growth seen on Instagram, where followers increased by 30.5 per cent.

- Facebook content garnered a reach of 103,200 people, with 11,422 interactions
- Instagram content achieved a reach of 50,444 people, an 80.30 per cent increase.
- Professional social media continues to attract interest, with LinkedIn followers increasing by 19.06 per cent

The College weekly online newsletter, The Hedge, remains a popular source of insight into Campus life, with an average readership of 608 unique views per edition.

Community Events

In 2024, Mercedes College proudly celebrated its 70th anniversary—a milestone that brought new energy and excitement to the community.

The year was marked by a series of memorable celebrations, including an Emerald Ball at the Adelaide Convention Centre—a glamorous evening with families, staff and Old Scholars, that honoured the rich history and vibrant spirit of the community.

Adding to the excitement, the Senior Formal made its debut, giving Year 11 and 12 students a night to celebrate as a cohort. Events for Mothers and Fathers Day, Quiz night, Food Fair and Christmas Picnic attracted record attendance from the community.

One of the most significant highlights was the official opening of the new high-performance Arts and Sports Precinct — a key moment in the 70th year, that brought over 1,500 members of community together to celebrate the future of learning and achievement at Mercedes.

2024 was a true celebration of connection, community, and Mercedes College pride.



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