



December 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the year comes to a close, I write on behalf of the College Board to reflect on 2024, share some updates and to warmly welcome those families joining our Star community for the first time in 2025.

Celebrating a Year of Growth and Achievement

This year has been marked by remarkable achievements across academics, the arts, sports, and social justice initiatives.

The Class of 2023 truly excelled, with exceptional results in both VCE and vocational studies. Impressively, 61% of our students achieved an ATAR of 80 or above, placing them among the top 20% of high achievers in the state.

We are also proud to celebrate five students from the Class of 2023 who received Premier's Awards, recognising Victoria's top-performing VCE students. This included an Outstanding VCE Vocational Major Student Award, a significant accomplishment in the inaugural year of this category.

Our sporting teams have shone at state and national levels, and the creative talents of our students have been celebrated through award-winning performances and exhibitions. Star students also continue to make meaningful contributions through social justice programs, embodying the values of the College and Kildare Ministries and the legacy of the Presentation Sisters. We are proud of our students' dedication to fostering a better, more inclusive world.

A New Era of Facilities

In 2025, we intend (subject to the usual planning and approval processes) to embark on the next major stage of our facilities development masterplan—a state-of-the-art building designed to inspire health, physical movement, wellbeing and excellence.

The redevelopment of Sebastian Hall will significantly enhance the College's ability to come together as a community. The space (as well as improving our sports facility) will serve as a central hub for hosting Masses, assemblies, information evenings, and other key events that bring students, staff, and families together. This transformation reflects our commitment to fostering connection and community spirit within the College and enhancing the holistic education of all students.

We are in the planning phase of this project, and we look forward to sharing updates as the project progresses.

Government Funding of Education

Our tuition fees at the College are significantly influenced by the Commonwealth Department of Education's assessment of the school community's financial capacity using the Capacity to Contribute (CTC) metric.

The Commonwealth Government calculates this by using the median family income of students at the school for the year and transforming this into an annual Direct Measure of Income (DMI) score. The CTC score that applies to funding for a school is the average of the DMI scores for the school for the previous three years. If DMI increases, government policy assumes that families have a greater capacity to contribute to school fees, resulting in reduced funding levels for the College.

The DMI and CTC score for Star has continued to rise in recent years, resulting in a significant reduction in government funding.

There has been considerable political and public debate surrounding the current and future methods of educational funding, including the imposition by the Victorian Government of a Payroll Tax for non-Government schools with average annual fees per student exceeding \$15,000. While this does not yet impact our College, and we will continue to work as a Board and College Leadership team to advocate against this tax.

College Fees for 2025

With reduced Government funding in a challenging and inflationary economic environment, an essential fee adjustment for 2025 is necessary.

On average, fees will increase by \$30.44 per student per week in 2025, amounting to \$1,583 per student for the year. The single Capital Fee per family, used for care and maintenance of College buildings, will not be increased for 2025.

Programs such as camps, excursions, and the MacBook initiative will remain integrated within our fee structure, ensuring that every student continues to benefit from a comprehensive and enriching education.

Ensuring Access to Education

We understand that any fee increase can place a strain on family budgets, and supporting families facing financial difficulties is important to the College.

A discount of 2.5% is available for early full payment of fees, and a range of payment plans can be used to manage these fees throughout the year.

The College Bursary Program continues to assist families experiencing financial challenges, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to thrive at Star.

We encourage families who can, to contribute to the tax-deductible Bursary Fund to help provide this vital support. Please refer to the attached information for details on how to make donations toward Star of the Sea College Bursary and Star Building Funds.

As always, if your family is experiencing financial hardship, please contact the College Finance Office on 9595 9595 for a confidential discussion on support that may be available to you.

As we step into the future, the Star community's shared spirit of resilience, generosity, and ambition ensures that our students can achieve their best selves within the richness of the Presentation tradition.

We look forward to continuing to offer an outstanding education for all of our students in 2025.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa A. Dwyer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'D'.

Ms Lisa Dwyer

Chair Star of the Sea College Board