

# Policies & Principles

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Our motto, "Ecclesiae Filia", which is Latin for Daughter of the Church, honours the patroness of the College, Saint Teresa of Avila, whose spirituality and dynamic leadership in the Church provides inspiration for our students.*

Avila College was established in 1965 by the parishes of Mount Waverley, Glen Waverley, Syndal, Mulgrave and Jordanville who invited the Presentation Sisters to administer a Catholic College committed to the education of girls.

Central to this commitment is the belief that students learn when they are valued and respected. To that end, Avila's policies are based on Christian values which uphold the dignity of the human person.

The vision of Avila is to encourage each student to grow toward a womanhood of faith, hope and love.

The mission of Avila is to be a Christian community that actively encourages an environment of faith, trust and concern for others.

Based on the realisation that each student is unique and made in the image and likeness of God, Avila aims to:

- \* encourage a love of God through prayer and scripture
- \* create a sense of belonging within the Catholic Church community through participation in Sacramental life
- \* foster a knowledge and understanding of the Church's teachings
- \* promote awareness of contemporary, social issues
- \* encourage practical, Christian responses which reflect the teachings of Christ contained in the Gospels

As a place of learning, Avila provides a comprehensive and balanced curriculum which aims to:

- \* provide an environment where learning is valued
- \* develop critical thinking
- \* encourage imaginative and creative talents
- \* promote life-long learning skills
- \* enable students to become active and responsible members of society

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION and PASTORAL CARE

Religious Education is the *raison d'être* of the College and pastoral care is a significant aspect of life at Avila. This is evidenced through the formal and informal Religious Education Program which is designed to meet the needs of students at their various stages of development.

The program includes compulsory classes at all year levels, prayer and liturgy experiences, care of individual students, and genuine concern for other people at a wider community level. Occasions for private and communal prayer and for the celebration of Eucharist are an integral part of the program.

The needs of students as individuals are of particular concern within the Avila community and a comfortable rapport between staff and students is vital. Each class has a homeroom teacher who provides a consistency of care through regular daily contact; Year Level Co-ordinators have an overall focus on pastoral care; and qualified Counsellors are available for students who may be experiencing personal difficulties. A Seasons for Growth program is offered to students in need of grief counselling.

In keeping with the philosophy of Avila, students are encouraged to become involved in the care for others in the school environment and beyond. Pastoral care of other students is encouraged through the work of leaders at each year level. Also, through the Peer Support Program, Year 10 students are trained to work with small groups of Year 7 students to promote self-worth and confidence and to help ease the transition into secondary school. Students are provided with opportunities to become involved at a wider community level through fund-raising activities and community service.

## COUNSELLING

Counsellors, trained in psychology and pastoral care work, are available to the students, staff and parents.

In some cases, and following consultation with parents, teachers will refer a student to a Counsellor for academic assessment. Avila endeavours to provide a relaxed counselling service whereby students are comfortable to make appointments themselves as the need arises.

The Pastoral Care Worker is involved with students in a variety of ways such as participation in Christian Living programs and student integration and welfare.

# CURRICULUM POLICY

The curriculum is designed to offer students a stimulating and extensive range of educational experiences.

It is underpinned by the need to encourage genuine **participation in Christian life**, provide **opportunities to achieve to a level commensurate with individual ability**; and to foster **personal development**.

## **Participation in Christian life**

The curriculum:

- explores the meaning of a Christian community
- provides opportunities to experience prayer and liturgy
- fosters a knowledge and understanding of Scripture and the Christian tradition
- promotes the development of social awareness and the acceptance of responsibility
- fosters Christian responses to the needs of individuals and groups in society
- encourages a sense of hope, and a positive and confident approach to the future

## **Opportunities to achieve to a level commensurate with ability**

The curriculum:

- provides equal access to opportunities for learning
- recognises that students learn in different ways and at different rates
- offers a richly diverse platform of learning upon which students can achieve and grow
- encourages an understanding of the nature and history of society, new technology, and economic and governmental systems and their impact on people's lives
- provides information on an extensive range of career possibilities, and fosters adventurous thinking in terms of career paths

## **Personal development**

The curriculum:

- fosters an awareness and understanding of others and their culture
- develops a sense of individual responsibility for self and society generally
- encourages active participation in decision making
- focuses on communication skills and the ability to work effectively with others
- encourages self-discipline
- enables discovery of personal capabilities
- presents challenges to further stimulate growth
- recognises achievement
- promotes self-respect, and tolerance and respect for others
- encourages the flexibility to accept and adapt to change
- helps develop skills and interests to enhance the creative use of leisure time

The curriculum is subject to ongoing review and renewal in order to provide the best possible programs. Considerations are based on contemporary educational developments and input from parents and students.

In addition to the classroom programs, Avila offers an exciting range of extra curricular activities to further enhance learning and personal growth. These include debating and public speaking, drama, music, literature, social justice issues and sport.

# ASSESSMENT

**A**ssessment is integral to learning and is underpinned by the aims and objectives of the curriculum.

Assessment is based on clearly defined criteria for student class work. It aims to inform students about their progress in achieving curricular objectives, acknowledge levels of competence and identify areas in need of improvement. A range of assessment techniques is used and includes tests, oral assessment, diaries of learning activities, essays, practical work, assignments, peer and self assessment, and work folios. Students have the opportunity to discuss assessed work with teachers

## Reports

Reports are a record of performance and they indicate the extent to which assessment criteria have been met and the quality of student work. Two types of reports are provided at each level - written reports which are sent home at the end of each semester; and oral reports, in the form of student/parent/teacher interviews, in the middle of each semester.

# HOMEWORK POLICY

**H**omework is integral to the learning process and helps develop disciplined study habits.

Homework enables students to:

- develop independent learning, research and time management skills
- develop initiative and self motivation
- practise what has been learned in class and consolidate knowledge concepts and skills
- rehearse time-consuming skills that require systematic practice such as music
- complete unfinished class work

## Parental Support

Avila aspires to work in partnership with parents to foster a love of learning. Homework is one way in which parents can share in their daughter's learning and familiarise themselves with ongoing class work.

Parents have an important role to play in fostering learning and ensuring homework time is used productively.

They can support their daughters practically by:

- providing an appropriate home learning environment and resources
- encouraging reading, both for pleasure and information
- inviting discussion of topical events from newspapers and television
- communicating opinions, concerns, and comments on homework to the relevant teachers

Homework should be part of an established routine. If a student is unable to perform a task, this should be acknowledged in her College planner and presented to the relevant teacher.

The following times for homework are recommended, with allowances for individual differences:

Years 7, 8 and 9	a maximum of 90 minutes per evening
Year 10	a maximum of two hours per evening
Years 11 and 12	a maximum of three and a half hours per evening

Time should be made available for extra curricular activities which, together with time for reflection and relaxation, are essential for the development of a well-balanced young person.

# BEHAVIOUR POLICY

*I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10)*

*As a Catholic College community we focus on our abilities to heal, guide and nurture.*

*Our key values are respect, honesty, support, forgiveness, trust and justice.*

*We stress positive and worthwhile achievements at all times.*

*Every student has the right to a good name and to be proud to be part of the Avila College community.*

*We challenge behaviour which is against our beliefs.*

Our working atmosphere:

- \* recognises the rights of people to teach and learn
- \* enables students to feel successful
- \* helps develop personal responsibility
- \* involves students in making decisions
- \* provides a healthy physical and emotional environment for all

## ***What happens when a problem occurs?***

If someone does not live out what we believe, the following steps are taken:

1. The relevant teacher and student discuss the problem and try to reach an agreement about future behaviour.
2. If an agreement cannot be reached, the problem is discussed with the Year Level Co-ordinator.
3. If the problem continues after an agreement is reached, the matter is referred again to the Year Level Co-ordinator for further action such as:
  - detention
  - a behaviour diary to be kept for every lesson
  - discussion with parents and others concerned
  - suspension from a particular class
4. If there is still a problem, the matter is referred to the Vice Principal to determine further action such as:
  - suspension from the College
  - Saturday detention
  - formal meeting with parents
  - discussion regarding the most suitable options available for the student concerned such as employment, undertaking a course elsewhere, or attending another school.

The College Counsellor and Pastoral Care Worker are also involved whenever necessary.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## **General Behaviour**

Avila students are expected to behave in a way which reflects the spirit of the College. They must show courtesy, common sense and consideration for others at all times.

Smoking is NOT permitted on the College premises, nor by students in College uniform or attending work experience.

Walkmans, radios, mobile phones, or any other items of value, should not be brought to College.

## **Uniform**

The College uniform is compulsory and blazers must be worn to and from school. The sports uniform is to be worn on designated days. Make-up is not permitted and the only form of jewellery allowed is a set of plain sleepers or studs for students who have pierced ears. Hairstyles should be natural and tidy and kept off the face.

Uniforms are available from the Uniform Shop which is opposite the College at 36 Charles Street, Mount Waverley.

## **Attendance**

When a student is unable to attend school, a parent is required to notify the College by 10 am on the day, otherwise parents will be telephoned to check why the student is absent. Dental or other appointments during College time should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. The College requires written notification of such appointments. A courtesy telephone call would be appreciated to inform the Year Level Co-ordinator of unexpected periods of absence. Students absent from College are responsible for all work missed and should discuss this with subject teachers. Students may not leave the College grounds during school hours without permission from their Year Level Co-ordinator.

## **Extended Absence Forms**

Students who will be absent from College for more than two weeks need to obtain an Extended Absence Form from their Year Level Co-ordinator.

## **Communication**

Homeroom teachers and Year Level Co-ordinators welcome contact from parents wishing to discuss any aspect of their daughter's education. Discussions with other staff members and/or the Principal will be organised if necessary.

Teachers and parents may also communicate through the student's College diary.

Other forms of communication include:

- *Avila News* - distributed every two weeks to provide important College news and dates.
- *Avila Matters* - a quarterly publication covering the highlights and activities of each term.
- Avila College Calendar which lists important dates throughout the school year.
- Additional notices are sent home to parents as required.

## **Camps**

Camps are held at Year 7, 9 and 12 levels. They are compulsory because they are considered to be an integral part of the program at Avila.

## **Public Transport**

Avila College is situated near Mount Waverley train station and is well served by trains and buses. Further details are available from the office or the Met.

# AVILA COLLEGE BOARD

The College is managed by the Avila College Board, under delegation from the Canonical Administrators, and in accordance with the Constitution which is approved by the Archbishop of the Melbourne Diocese.

Membership of the College Board comprises:

- a Parish Priest to represent member parishes
- the Principal of the College
- the two Vice Principals
- a teacher elected by College staff
- two elected students
- a representative from each of the member parishes
- three members appointed by the Board

All parents and students are invited to become involved in Avila committees and subcommittees. Such participation enhances the relationship between parents, students and staff which helps provide the solid foundations for a rich and rewarding educational experience at Avila College.

*Avila College is a place where we:*

*Model and explore our Catholic faith*

*Promote realisation of individual potential*

*Work as a team to form one vision*

*Encourage individual openness*

*Share a caring Christian environment*

*Take pride in our efforts and achievements*

*Believe that girls can do anything*