



Appointment of

Deputy Principal (Primary campus) **St Mark's College, Port Pirie, South Australia**

in the Diocese of Port Pirie



Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie

Diocesan Director's Welcome

On behalf of the Catholic education community of the Diocese of Port Pirie, I would like to welcome you.

From the earliest days of the diocese, Bishop John O'Reilly saw the need for a strong Catholic school system. Today, Bishop Karol Kulczycki SDS has pledged to continue this same vision. The Port Pirie Diocesan community is united in the belief that every child entrusted to us is a gift and deserves a quality Catholic education...this is our Good News.

Supported by our Bishop and priests, Catholic education shares in the ecclesial mission of the Church in the Port Pirie Diocese. Our Catholic schools are sacramental communities, in that they look for ways to help students find meaning and enable them to discover God in everyday happenings.

Principals across our 14 schools in the Diocese of Port Pirie work collaboratively within a culture of professional trust, respect and shared mission.

We are distanced, yet not distant, from one another.

We are a professional community supporting and sharing our successes and opportunities.

With students at the centre, Principals lead student and staff in key areas:

- Catholic Identity and Mission
- Teaching, Learning and Wellbeing
- Community Partnerships
- Stewardship (people, capital, financial).

I wish you well in your consideration of this highly regarded and privileged leadership opportunity.



- Nichii Mardon



Welcome

We are committed to welcome, inclusion and growth.

St Mark's College has been built on a tradition of hospitality. All are welcome here and are embraced for everything they bring to our community. Students and staff feel safe and flourish in their friendships, their learning and wellbeing.

I warmly invite you to consider joining our school community. Port Pirie, just over two hours from Adelaide, is a friendly country town and an easy place to live and work. St Mark's College is welcoming and supportive, with a strong sense of community and collaboration. We embrace change and have strength in working together to maintain a positive culture and commitment to professional growth and improving learning outcomes for our students.

Dr Sandra Hewson
Principal

Context Statement

St Mark's is a Catholic, co-educational, Reception to Year 12 rural regional College for approximately 970 students following steady enrolment growth. Set on 100 hectares on the outskirts of Port Pirie, St Mark's College enjoys the confidence of the Port Pirie community and has a deep and important relationship with the Cathedral parish. It exists under the shadow of the Flinders Ranges and is surrounded by wheat and sheep farming. The industry in Port Pirie contributes strongly to the economy. St Mark's families are closely connected to the important smelting production. Port Pirie is called the 'city of friendly people' and this is reflected at St Mark's in the lifestyle and community cohesion.

St Mark's traditions can be traced back to 1890. We connect with the charisms of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and the Salesians of Don Bosco. As a diocesan school, St Mark's is governed through the Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie, under Bishop Karol Kulczycki's stewardship, with delegated support provided through Director Mrs Nichi Mardon and the Catholic Education Office of the local Port Pirie Diocese.

St Mark's College strives to be a welcoming and supportive Christian community that empowers young people to respect everyone as a part of God's creation and to acknowledge their part in God's world. These values find expression in liturgy, the Pastoral Care programme, relationships and formation processes on both campuses. At St Mark's each person is encouraged to genuinely respect others and to demonstrate that respect by their actions. All school policies are underpinned by these essential Gospel values.

Our primary campus, which is named Benedict, is led by its own Deputy Principal and is a well-resourced campus with modern facilities. The learning experience is collaborative and engaging, secure in its traditions, flexible and aligned with

our understanding of learning and the needs of children. The secondary campus, that we call Bosco, is also administered by its own Deputy Principal. It is similarly well placed to provide a varied curriculum. As an R-12 College, there are opportunities throughout the year for staff and students to come together, reflecting the richness of our community.

The senior classes of recent years have distinguished themselves by very good results, and we support and celebrate the diverse pathways that students follow including tertiary study, apprenticeships and employment. A broad range of subject offerings support student interests and pathways and are taught in modern facilities such as the STEM Centre. Sport is very popular in Port Pirie and at St Mark's College. The school is unique for having its own sporting teams compete in the local associations. Students play soccer, hockey, football, tennis and netball against local under-age sides.

McNally Farm, with its 80 ha of crops, its machinery, sheep, cattle, goats, cattle yards, bee hives, 400 metres of grapevine and shearing facilities, provides large scale agricultural educational experiences involving conservation and land management as well as horticulture and viticulture. Our relationship with local rural producers is strong and an annual BBQ expresses our thanks to industry and farming communities that support our students.

St Mark's has been providing boarding for students from the Mid North and Flinders Ranges since 1986. During that time, boarders have made a valuable contribution to the academic, cultural and sporting life of the school. A new boarding facility was opened at the beginning of 2025, catering for boarders Sunday to Friday, enabling them to re-join their families and local communities on weekends. It provides a happy and safe environment for up to 33 students. Situated on the school grounds, boarders can access both town and school educational and recreational facilities.



Mission Statement

Following the appointment of a new Principal in 2022, Dr Sandra Hewson, extensive community consultation was facilitated to revise our Vision and Mission Statements to reflect a forward-thinking school preparing students for the future.

As a Catholic community founded in the traditions of the Salesians and Good Samaritan Sisters, we:

- Invite our community into an experience of faith and spirituality
- Celebrate diversity, inclusion, and the unique gifts of each person
- Foster a community based on respect, compassion, and service to others
- Provide a contemporary learning environment that promotes joyful learning enabling students to excel and thrive
- Value collegiality, collaboration and positive partnerships with students, families and our wider community.

Our strategic direction is centred on CESA's Living Learning Leading Framework, which prioritises:

- The highest quality of education for all
- A system orientation and action
- Strong leadership and action
- Evidence informed continuous improvement

Our Strategic Plan 2025-2027 maintains a sharp focus on continuous improvement aligned to the Strategic Directions emanating from the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) strategy: Towards 2027: Expanding Horizons and Deepening Practices. Our Annual School Improvement Plan is developed through this lens and is shaped by specific priorities and foci for improvement in the Diocese of Port Pirie.

Vision Statement

We want St Mark's College to be a lighthouse for Catholic Education in the mid north of South Australia. We offer opportunities for challenge, thinking, faith and fun. Students are nurtured to become all that parents would wish in an environment of cohesion and cooperation.

St Mark's College empowers students through excellent education to become curious, independent learners and just, compassionate global citizens.

St Mark's is an inspiring place. The students become "thriving people, capable learners and leaders for the world that God desires". The students embrace an environment of learning, an expectation of achievement, the fun of sport, the challenge of competition, the care of senior mentorship and the rituals and traditions that guide them into a citizenship.

St Mark's College Ethos & History

St Mark's School was first established in 1878. In 1890 the Sisters of the Good Samaritan arrived and established the school. The traditions of the Good Samaritan Sisters remain alive in the College through an expression of care for others and the legacy of Benedictine spirituality. The Sisters of the Good Samaritan have a continued presence in the Parish of St Mark's.

In 1956 the Salesians of Don Bosco arrived and established a boys' secondary college, Salesian College. In 1975 four Catholic school sites in Port Pirie amalgamated to form St Mark's College. This year we are celebrating our Golden Jubilee. The campus at Fatima finally closed in 2002 and the school came together as one in the 100 hectare area. The land upon which the College now stands was donated by the McNally family.

St Mark's College is an associate school of the Salesians of Don Bosco. There are ten schools around Australia who come together with a particular lens on the world and a particular viewpoint of education. There is mutual support and understanding about young people and their potential. The school develops through this shared charism and heritage of the Salesians of Don Bosco. In keeping with the spirit of St John Bosco, our "education is largely a matter of the heart".

In our community we believe that each young person has a deep spiritual dimension and that the community can help this inner life grow. The school is a place of faithfulness, exploration and beautiful ritual. There is an optimism and sense of fun that has been established over the life of the St Mark's experience. As a Catholic school, students from a range of faith backgrounds thrive here. The school shares Salesian principles within a network of Catholic schools, where we become:

- A home that welcomes
- A parish that evangelises
- A school that prepares for life
- A playground where friends meet and enjoy themselves





Spirit

The College has its foundations in a story of faith, and our charisms are deeply Christ-centred. Students and staff have many opportunities to deepen their understanding of faith and spirituality through curriculum, liturgical experiences, retreats, the Sacramental Program and a commitment to social justice and ecological sustainability. We make sense of this world through an understanding of the sacred in our lives and the traditions of the Catholic Church. We invite young people to be part of the search and the understanding of God in the world. We have a spirit of reverence and a determined hope in a story of faith.

Enrolment Data

Benedict Campus

	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Campus Total
2018	58	44	49	56	76	63	57	403
2019	67	49	45	47	55	77	66	406
2020	52	54	51	48	47	58	78	388
2021	74	38	55	50	47	46	61	371
2022	81	40	40	59	55	48	49	372
2023	89	65	47	44	58	56	54	413
2024	98	61	63	51	49	66	55	443
2025	78	86	57	66	51	54	72	464

Bosco Campus

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Campus Total	College Total
2018	78	73	104	86	83	70	494	897
2019	68	103	68	102	72	75	488	894
2020	85	88	101	66	105	64	509	897
2021	81	102	88	92	62	91	516	887
2022	91	91	101	88	90	52	513	885
2023	67	92	90	94	80	73	496	909
2024	86	70	91	96	97	72	512	955
2025	84	87	74	99	89	83	516	980

Student Community Profile Percentages

Data from 2025 (NCCD 2024)

	Percentage (%)	Number of Students
School Card	16%	158
EAL	3%	31
NCCD (SWD)	30% (2024)	286 (2024)
Indigenous Students	4%	41
Boarding students	3%	28

College Facilities

The College has extensive contemporary facilities on Benedict (primary) and Bosco (secondary) campuses.

As the information about Capital Development Projects demonstrates, there has been significant investment over the last ten years to provide the learning spaces required to enhance teaching and learning. The College is fortunate to have two extensive ovals and two gymnasiums to support health and physical education, and these spaces are supplemented by playgrounds and basketball courts and access to a hockey pitch during school hours.



Capital Development

The College is co-located on two adjacent sites: Benedict Campus (Years R-6) and Bosco Campus (Years 7-12). The grounds are expansive, with the agricultural science area located in the middle of the campuses. St Mark's has invested in some major refurbishments during the past ten years, with over \$30m spent on capital development. Projects have included;

Benedict Campus:

- New Year 3 and 4 Valdocco Centre opened in 2022
- New Reception precinct 'Magdalen Centre'
- New Year 1 and 2 precinct 'Fatima Centre'
- Refurbishment of transportable classrooms to create space for OSHC and our Little Lions transition program.
- Installation of new classrooms to accommodate mid-year Reception classes
- Purpose built access bathroom

Bosco Campus:

- New state of the art Boarding Facility opened in 2025
- Creation of a wellbeing hub – the Student Hub
- Double Court Gymnasium 'St Mark's Sports Centre'
- Science and STEM precinct 'John Mullin Science Centre'
- Trade Skills Centre
- Year 12 precinct 'Bosco Centre'
- Visual Arts building
- Shaded area with tables and seating
- Installation of new transportable classrooms to accommodate growth

The College has recently developed a new Master Plan for the next 15 years. The first development in planning stage will be a two storey building with Food Technology, Canteen and Cafeteria on the ground floor and a staffroom, staff workspaces and conference rooms on the first floor. Building is due to begin in 2026.

Leadership & Organisational Structure

Leadership Team

The College Executive comprises the:

- Principal
- Business Manager
- Deputy Principal Benedict Campus
- Deputy Principal Bosco Campus
- Assistant Principal Religious Identity and Mission (APRIM)

College Board

Our College Board provides support for the school through its advisory role and is responsible to Bishop Karol Kulczycki SDS and to the Director of Catholic Education in the Port Pirie Diocese. In consultation with the Principal, the College Board provides leadership and guidance in the areas associated with the College's Financial Management, Building Program and Master Plan, Risk Management and Strategic Vision.

Membership of the College Board includes:

Ex-Officio:

- Chairperson – Mr Daniel Lawler
- President / Diocese Representative - Fr Jimmy Pantin
- Principal - Dr Sandra Hewson
- Business Manager - Ms Jo Court

Nominated Members:

- Staff representative - Ms Ann Russack

Elected members:

D Lauder, M O'Shaughnessy, S Kelly, S David, E Lowe, A Taylor, E Garnaut, S Jacob

Appointed Members:

- Principal's Executive Assistant (Minutes)

The College Board has the following sub-committees in place:

- Finance / Building and Grounds

Other committees are formed as required to inform initiatives in the Strategic Plan.



Engagement

Parents are involved through the Parents and Friends Committee, the Learning Assistance Program and in the Parish, supporting the Sacramental Program. Stakeholder consultation is an important element of engaging families. After a year of planning and meetings with staff and community representatives, the College is in the final stages of development of a Reconciliation Action Plan .

Staffing

Staffing levels

- 74 Teaching staff
- 66.5 Full-time equivalent teaching staff
- 52 Non-teaching staff
- 35.7 Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff

Staff professional learning

The College allocates a significant budget to Staff Professional Learning. Staff meetings have a strong professional learning focus and are aligned to priorities in the Strategic Plan and Annual Improvement Plan. In recent years, the College has embedded understanding and practice from Dr Lyn Sharratt's work with CESA – 'Clarity – What Matters Most in Learning, Teaching and Leading', using data to inform decision-making, and evidence-based high impact teaching practices.

A significant area of professional development has been the implementation of PBIS across both campuses. Consistent explicit teaching and reinforcement of expectations contributes to the calm and productive learning environment at the College.

All staff engage in a professional development and review process, setting goals each year and gathering evidence for self-evaluation and professional review with their line manager or member of the Leadership Team.



Teaching and Learning at St Mark's College

Catholic Identity

St Mark's College is a Catholic School and, as such, its goal is the integration of our Catholic faith in the lives of our students, our staff and our parent body, and to be a witness to our society of the presence of Christ in our world.

St Mark's is committed to providing a quality education which embraces the full human growth and development of youth. The school commits itself to nourishing the faith of its students, hence imparting a deep and systematic knowledge of Christ and giving the opportunity of communion with Christ through the Sacramental life of the Christian Community.

Religious Education is seen as essential to the life of St Mark's, having an integral role as the school strives to realise its goals. It endeavours to make explicit the values which are found in the school environment and in all the activities of the school. Therefore, the Religious Education Program aims to:

- awaken, nourish and develop faith by a clear communication of the Christian Message, taught in a way which takes into account the readiness of the students and which makes use of the best principles of teaching
- provide opportunities for experiencing and expressing faith within a Christian Community
- impart a systematic knowledge of the person and teachings of Jesus Christ
- assist in the full personal growth of students
- help students understand the meaning of Church and to develop a sense of belonging to it
- nurture Christian morality in decision-making
- encourage students to give witness to their faith in the service of others
- encourage an understanding of the philosophy of Don Bosco in his approach to youth. The gift of the international Salesian society is through a theme or Strenna. Each Salesian school is motivated through this theme or strenna. This is combined with an annual theme in the Diocese of Port Pirie.

It is an element in our community formation.

We have a strong partnership with our parish and manage a sacramental program very successfully.

We have a strong foundation to further develop Catholic identity through faith formation of staff, and revitalisation of Religious Education teaching through the implementation of the Crossways Curriculum Framework. The Assistant Principal Religious Identity and Mission works with a secondary and a primary Religious Education Coordinator who lead staff in developing curriculum and liturgical and Retreat experiences.





Teaching and Learning at St Mark's College

At St Mark's College we emphasise the importance of providing learning experiences which facilitate lifelong skills. We encourage and nurture good relationships, wellbeing, curiosity and determination. Our kind of scholarship is transformative and creates outstanding citizens.

At St Mark's we recognise that each child is capable and unique and that they will flourish within a positive environment. We recognise that good relationships with families contribute to strengthening educational endeavour. We know that learning is interactive, creative, scientific, reflective and holistic. We believe that each child has a right to be actively involved.

At St Mark's College we believe that student learning is optimised when:

- the learning inspires imagination, passion, creativity and innovation
- students are 'known' by their teachers and experience positive relationships in and out of the classroom
- student learning is relevant, meaningful, authentic and transferable to everyday life
- students know what they are learning and why, and clearly understand the steps to achieve success
- the classroom environment and resources, including learning walls, act as the 'Third Teacher'
- there are activities planned and structured with differentiation to meet the needs of all students
- students are engaged and challenged within a safe and supportive learning environment
- students feel comfortable in seeking help and asking questions
- students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning in an environment that values knowledge and scholarship
- students receive quality feedback and have opportunities for reflection on how to use their feedback for improvement
- students work collaboratively with others as part of a team
- high expectations are embedded in teaching and learning
- there is a variety of data used to inform, direct and target effective planning for teaching of students.

Teaching and Learning at St Mark's College

Aligned with CESA's strategic priorities is the school's focus on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes. InitialLit has been implemented in R-2 and students are identified for early intervention. The Quality Performance Team consulted staff and worked with a System Coach in 2024 to develop Literacy and Numeracy Agreements across R-12.

Ochre resources for Mathematics are used in R-9, with daily reviews becoming common practice at Benedict campus. Collaborative work has been undertaken on assessment and moderation to foster consistency in working towards measurable, reliable outcomes.

There are Learning Leaders at each campus who work with teaching teams to implement evidence-based practices and measure their effectiveness through the collection and analysis of data.

In the Senior Years, an extensive range of subjects enables students to pursue their pathway to SACE completion. The school enjoys a reputation for providing an excellent academic education. Many students undertake further study at University or TAFE. Other teaching programs with Vocational Education and Training pathways, are tailored to students seeking trade and industry qualifications.

A team of Educational Support Officers work alongside students and teachers to support engagement and access to learning. Intervention for Literacy and Numeracy is a strong feature of this support from Reception to Year 9.



Wellbeing

Across the College, our aim is to empower each student to grow as a person, to lead, to achieve and to contribute to our community and the greater society. These values are underpinned by PBIS which is strongly aligned to The Preventative System of St John Bosco.

The Pastoral Care approach at St Mark's College draws its inspiration and guiding principles from the charisms of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and the Salesians of Don Bosco who strived to see God in all things and to reach out to those in need. St Mark's provides an environment which fosters the growth of the whole person.

Our Pastoral Care Program aims to help our students:

- be aware of themselves and their relationships with others
- develop skills in communication and conflict resolution
- build a positive self-concept and increase resilience
- develop effective decision-making skills
- develop personal responsibility for their behaviours and relationships
- set personal and academic goals

From R-12 we have timetabled Pastoral Care lessons to support the delivery of targeted programs, relevant to each year level. This is called the WRAP Program which stands for Wellbeing, Relationships, Agency and Personal Responsibility. The Child Protection Curriculum is embedded into WRAP, along with activities that build a sense of belonging, House identity and social, emotional learning.

There are two Counsellors working at the College. St Mark's also has an R-12 Wellbeing and Engagement Officer (a qualified, full time Social Worker) who supports students and families facing barriers to attendance and wellbeing.

Student support

Student support takes many forms, and positive relationships are at the heart of student learning and wellbeing. Learning Inclusion and Diversity Leaders on each site lead a team of Educational Support Officers to support students with additional learning needs, as identified through the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data. ESOs work closely with classroom teachers to determine the support required, and teachers are becoming skilled at making appropriate adjustments to accommodate diverse learning needs.



Co-curricular Activities

We are involved with St Vincent de Paul, and Fred's Van as well as activities in Project Compassion. There are significant fundraising efforts by the students. Students also participate in Retreats. The school experiences great success in SAPSASA and interschool competitions in a wide variety of sports and activities. We have an intercollegiate day against Xavier College. Sports Days are held at each campus and are wonderful community events. Other extra-curricular activities include a major School Musical, performed every two years, Benedict choir and a staff/student liturgical band. Each year students from Years 6 to 12 participate in a Camp Program. There are 'Blessing of the Fleet' and 'Debutante Ball' experiences which are quite remarkable.

The sports program aims to assist young people to acquire skills, maintain a healthy fitness level and create an understanding of teamwork, commitment and sportspersonship. The College seeks to achieve excellence through participation, the provision of a variety of sports options and active involvement in competition. Across the College, students are able to participate in a range of sports competing for St Mark's, including: tennis, hockey, soccer, netball and Australian Rules Football.

At St Mark's College we appreciate the value of sport and we encourage and recognise sporting ability. However, as excited as we get during grand finals or applauding individual excellence, we are more interested in ensuring that each and every student is given a chance to challenge themselves and participate.





Leadership

All students experience opportunities to lead – in the classroom, at liturgies and assemblies, through community activities and social justice initiatives.

There are thorough processes of discernment and training around student leadership. From Year 2, the Student Representative Council provides opportunities for student leadership and our School Captains participate annually in a Student Leadership Forum with other Salesian Captains. House Captains and Vice Captains are elected each year in Benedict and Bosco and there is a deeply powerful experience of care through a Buddy System at each campus. A highlight of this is the buddy relationship between Reception students and Year 12 students.



McNally Farm

Our McNally farm is a drawcard for enrolments, particularly in the senior years. Students can choose Agriculture as an elective from Year 8 to Agricultural Studies in Year 12. Primary students visit McNally farm and we welcome young students from local Kindergarten Centres every year.

St Mark's College Community Consultation

Community consultation was conducted as part of this recruitment process. This was via a survey of students and staff, and with the College Board. The consultation questions asked the community about the skills, qualities and attributes important in a leader, and sought information on what traditions and practices should be maintained and where a new Deputy Principal should focus attention on innovation and change.

Catholic Identity



St Mark's College Community Consultation

What is valued about the present and should continue at Benedict Campus?

The community would like to continue the focus on St Mark's being the school of choice for parents in Port Pirie. Teachers are knowledgeable and hard-working, and there is a great commitment putting children's needs first. The community values the supportive staff, the positive culture and the community spirit and feel of Benedict campus.

Staff ideas are considered and supported, and there has been considerable attention to research-based pedagogies, practices and innovation to support student learning outcomes. Strategic directions and decisions are informed by data, and work in Year Level Teams is valued for collaboration to strengthen curriculum planning, collate and respond to data and adapt teaching to meet students' needs.

St Mark's is an inclusive school that welcomes diversity, and intervention supports students in various ways, with some extension activities to support extending capable learners.

St Mark's has a safe learning environment, and wellbeing is supported through the implementation of PBIS, the Buddy Program, participation in events and activities and the ongoing Traditions of the College. Leadership prioritise Catholic values and open and transparent communication is appreciated. Achievement is celebrated.

What are the opportunities for growth, innovation and change?

As an inclusive school, there is scope for further focus on meeting students' needs across a learning continuum. There are opportunities to improve how we support students with disability, imputed and diagnosed, in inclusive classrooms. The community would welcome further emphasis on academic achievement and excellence, drawing on research-based methodologies, and providing opportunities for staff to contribute to whole school changes. Developing a focus on career pathways, university, and good learning habits in students would support high aspirations. There is scope for further innovation in the use of technologies to engage learners, and to provide further opportunities for extension for capable learners, beyond what is currently in place.

Good change management is needed to support staff in implementing new pedagogies or systems to support effective implementation and wellbeing. Parents and teachers would like to see more work on differentiation in practice to ensure that every student has opportunity to build on their learning. PBIS is contributing to a safe learning environment, and this would benefit from further innovation in social-emotional learning and supporting students to develop personal responsibility for their actions and addressing bullying behaviours. Parents are keen to ensure that classrooms are productive, safe and positive learning environments with minimal distractions.

What personal qualities are sought in a Deputy Principal for Benedict?

The community is seeking a leader who is friendly, approachable, consistent and motivated, someone who will grow with others. A strong personality is needed and capability to make difficult decisions. Listening to the voices of the community, students, staff and parents and responding to feedback is important in leading the school from a current position of strength to ongoing improvement. Empathy and positivity are requirements of a leader to understand and support everyone in the complexities and demands of teaching and learning.

Benedict campus seeks a leader who is visible in the parish and the community, as an active faith leader, strong educator and good communicator. A leader for Benedict Campus should be committed to student-centred learning, have a capacity for innovation and effective change management, and be able to work with staff openly, with knowledge, passion, integrity and humour. Experience in curriculum development, and evidence-informed teaching practices are viewed as essential, along with strong skills in decision-making and problem solving. A leader who recognises and celebrates achievement as a foundation for excellence would be welcomed.

