

COR UNUM

OUR LIVING HERITAGE: FOR THE SAKE OF ONE CHILD

Steeped within its rich Sacred Heart charism and traditions stemming from 1800, there is much that sets our school, Sacré Cœur, apart. Our past provides the foundations for and richly informs our present. Together, our past and present illuminate our future, offering hope along with challenge and choice through caring relationships underscored by the active pursuit of excellence.

Our keystone is the fundamental conviction of our iconic Foundress, St Madeleine Sophie Barat, that she would have established the Society for “the sake of one child”. Her staunch dedication and unwavering commitment to the formation of children and passionate belief in their education were the guiding principles of her mission – a mission dedicated to communicating the love of the Heart of Jesus. For Sophie, “education was never the end. The end was to rebuild the fractured world around her in hope: the means was forming young people to intelligent faith, compassionate action and courageous hope.” (www.sacredheartusc.education)

A Sacré Cœur education offers a transformative experience and is linked to a nurturing, supportive community in which Christian values are authentically embedded, lived and shared by all in the School. The experience is inclusive of all dimensions of a whole person – the spiritual, academic, social-emotional, physical, psychological, aesthetic, and ethical. As Janet Reberdy, RSCJ says, *“character formation, methods of preparing the soil to enable students to become whole people, preparation for greatness, inculcating the awareness and love of sincerity and authenticity as a means of forming character and the critical role of teacher, as a person, in the educational process”* (<http://intranet.cshgreenwich.org/pdf/journeyOfTheHeart--Historical.pdf>) are key.

This narrative is firmly anchored across all facets of Sacred Heart schooling in an explicit and shared understanding of who we are and the things for which we stand. Our students are firmly placed at the centre of all which is undertaken. To this end, as Janet Erskine Stuart notes, *“the system converges to this as the compelling purpose is to:*

- *give personal worth to each child*
- *a worth of character*
- *strength of principle*
- *and anchorage of faith.”*

At Sacré Cœur, *“relationships of the most exacting standards ... among us and with others can be a clear expression of the charism and they are a way of making it visible. The quality of our relationships reveals the presence of the love of God among us.”* (<https://rscj-anz.org/tag/patricia-garcia-de-quevedo-rscj/>). We strive to make this palpable in our school at every level and through all interactions, both within our walls and with those outside our gates. Our exemplary educators – skilled, passionate and committed to the vocation of teaching, specifically, young women, and aligned with the tenets of Sacred Heart education – cultivate heads, hearts and hands to create well-rounded individuals whose individual academic and social needs as well as their particular interests are nurtured. This ensures that there is a focus on tailoring approaches which will foster the strengths of the individual through a wide range of opportunities which provide support for holistic growth, which in turn supports and promotes academic progress. In this way, wellbeing and learning are two halves of the same coin: *“they feed each other in a way that success begets success...wellbeing is learning”* (M Fullan, *The right drivers for whole system success*, February 2021).

In each of our students and educators, we nurture a strong sense of belonging and identity. We are each an integral part of a very rich narrative that spans over 130 years and which connects us to the global Sacred Heart network, comprising over 150 schools across 42 countries. Upon

our students graduating, they move forward, connected to, and identifying with, and belonging to something infinitely bigger than themselves. Sacré Cœur students and alumnae have, and will continue to have, a discernible impact on our world. They seek to be people of integrity and positive influence – from RSCJ to artists and scientists to, most recently, the first Australian woman (and one of only five female judges in total) to be elected to the United Nations International Court of Justice.

Our living heritage is intricate, undeniably powerful and magnetic in its capacity to affect our purpose for each of our students, as Madeleine Sophie Barat said herself they might cultivate” *courage and confidence, even to [move] mountains if need be, [by ensuring that] your example, even more than your words, will be an eloquent lesson to the world.*”

OUR PURPOSE: COR UNUM

We are of one heart and one mind in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our School represents the coming together of faith and reason, of passion and intellect, of care and growth. For us, Cor Unum is a formidable combination that makes sense and creates meaning. It calls us together in community for the sake of one child who becomes transformed with a sense of hope to shape society through compassion, courage, discernment and justice. We give expression to our commitment and excellence in the spirit of Cor Unum through living out our five Sacred Heart Goals:

1. A personal and active faith in God → IDENTITY

Sacré Cœur is a Catholic school, in the Sacred Heart tradition. The foundation of the identity of Sacré Cœur is rooted in the message of Jesus Christ and the vision of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat. Christian love imbues life into Sacré Cœur, and its spirit is one of courage and generosity. Through the inspiration of Madeleine Sophie who believed faith could only be active if it is informed, a Sacred Heart Education nurtures the heart and the mind in communion. A personal and active faith in God serves as the foundation for the development of community within the School. To educate students to actively participate in their spiritual lives, the School creates an infrastructure that nurtures a sense of belonging and an ethos of hope. It locates every community member in a relational web of the attributes of Christ’s Heart – compassion, love, respect, forgiveness, gratitude, faith and a sense of justice. Prayer has a special place at Sacré Cœur, for in prayer, we find stillness, open our hearts, and listen and speak with God. Through contemplation and action, we experience God’s love and greet the face of God in one another; we cultivate equity and inclusivity with intention. We educate students to interiority, reflection, self-awareness and discernment so that their lives will be transformed and they may act in accordance with their faith both within our community and beyond.

2. A deep respect for intellectual values → LEARNING

Teaching and learning at Sacré Cœur seeks to instil a love of learning, which encourages staff and students to aspire to personal excellence inspired by both ethical and aesthetic values within a curriculum that is pertinent and challenging. In our Sacred Heart School, we nurture and celebrate the wholeness and diversity of each learner. We recognise our students need to use reflection, analysis, synthesis and imagination to navigate a complex world. We value **authenticity** in learning which is relevant and applicable to the students’ world. When we plan for **mastery**, we design learning which allows for the sequential development of knowledge, skills, character and attitudes. Student voice and choice are critical in helping to shape learning and teaching that promotes **agency**. And **connection** to our local and global community, between students, staff and parents, and between disciplines is vital to render meaning in learning.

3. A social awareness that impels to action → SERVICE

At Sacré Cœur, we want our students to make a life-long commitment to serving the common good. Our curriculum, policies and practices affords our students opportunities to develop a mature voice and civic agency informed by critical consciousness on a local, national and global level. Their Sacred Heart education supports them to practise active discernment so that they can challenge and reform social structures, practices and values that perpetuate a range of injustices. We value and accept responsibility for the care of God's creation through maintaining an awareness of ecological issues and accepting accountability for effective stewardship of people and the earth's resources. Ultimately, we want all to embrace the challenge of acting as capable and confident leaders who can make a difference and transform our world.

4. The building of community as a Christian value → BELONGING

We seek to educate all members of the community in the charism, mission and heritage of our Sacred Heart School and the wider Catholic Church. We value and strive for relationships that are characterised by a profound sense of belonging, inclusion and mutual respect within our school and with Sacred Heart Schools in our geographical region and in the wider world. We place great importance on socio-economic and cultural diversity in our school. We welcome and support community members to engage with one another in love and to contribute to their family, school and the broader community through the richness and strength of their competencies. For Madeleine Sophie, the way to community is one relationship at a time.

5. Personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom → DISCERNMENT

Our school recognises the importance of developing the whole person. We encourage all of our members to grow towards wholeness through realising their individual potential. We assist them to identify, understand and cultivate their own distinctive strengths. We challenge both students and adults to reflect upon their own personal integrity. Growing in wise freedom requires a reciprocity between freedom and accountability, as individuals and in relationships. Our school policies and practices seek to enable members to grow in their own autonomy and initiative by taking responsibility for their own lives and decisions with empathy, creativity, agility, and resilience. We provide opportunities for practising motivational, inspirational and transformational leadership grounded in informed and ethical decision-making and accountability.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF LEARNING AT SACRÉ CŒUR: PURPOSE AND MEANING

St Madeleine Sophie Barat and the other Wisdom Women were visionary and highly progressive. The Society was established to endure through time and their ongoing legacy is strong. As such, Sacré Cœur was, indeed, built for the future. According to our Mother Janet Stuart, RSCJ, our imperative is to *“bring up the children for the future, not for the present ... epochs of transition must keep us on alert. They ask us to keep our eyes open upon the distant horizons, our minds listening to seize every indication that can enlighten us; reading, reflection, searching, must never stop; the mind must keep flexible in order to lose nothing.”* She urges further that educators must unequivocally commit to striving for some higher excellence. Those who educate *“must believe in the possibility of every mind and character to be lifted to something better than it has already attained; they must themselves be striving for some higher excellence”.* (*The Education of Catholic Girls*). Janet Stuart's words are as true today as they were in the 1900s.

We know that change is going to be rapid and continuous on both personal and societal levels. We also know that purpose and meaning are critical to how we can support students to thrive in their world to become “future fit”. This insight helps us to recognise that, while schools have and will always be communities of learning and achievement ostensibly based upon the cultivation of relationship, there is in our times a compelling need to anticipate *“the conditions in which young Australians will need to function when they complete their schooling ... and will*

need to critically engage with edutech, ensuring that practice meets theory for the benefit one's learning and growth and in order to respond to the changing ways in which young people learn.” (B Lucas, Rethinking assessment in education: The case for change, April 2021)

What does a future oriented education look like? Do we need to reimagine our physical spaces, rework pedagogy to engage and inspire, and incorporate digital transformative technologies in order to “future proof” our young women. Yes, we do.

At Sacré Cœur, we choose to embrace three contemporary Rs of education from the 2018 Asia-Pacific Leading Learning Environments Conference include

“Reflection: Seeking to acknowledge the past. There is much to learn from those who have gone before.

Relevance: What do learners need now and into their future to prepare them for a world that requires a new set of skills such as innovative thinking, collaboration and creativity?

Revolution: Are there things that we need to challenge today so that we are ready for tomorrow? Revolution can see a future that others can't even imagine.”

These 3Rs of the Exponential Age redirect our thinking and practice as a learning community where each of us is inspired to become an active model of lifelong learning, eager to reflect on and receive feedback while constantly seeking to improve how we learn. As well we support the learning of others so that they might be profoundly relational in the pursuit of excellence through our five goals of Identity, Learning, Service, Belonging and Discernment.

Absolutely critical to this is the quality of our support for our teachers. Key to our students' Sacred Heart education will be educators who continue, in the words of the late Sir Ken Robinson, to *“engage, enable and expect [what is] possible, plausible, probable and preferred, with experimentation, innovation and knowledge exchange”* (K Robinson, *Creative Schools: Revolutionising Education from the Ground Up*, 2015) This will be fundamental in assisting our students to develop the sense of purpose and meaning that will enable them to be positive agents of change who are anchored in the knowledge of God's love for each of them.

We will build parallel cultures of learning that focus on our staff as it does our students. We will commit to enabling teachers to navigate and interpret a digital future that encourages collaboration and is supported through school structures and professional development that build their confidence and give them scope to take measured risks in order to prepare students for the now, as well as the future. And, if learning and wellbeing are two sides of the same coin for students, the same holds true for staff for whom a demonstrated regard for their wellbeing is important for they are *“springtime workers ... they are planters and growers who plant value, meaning and grace in the lives of students.”* (C Gleeson, SJ, *Releasing the Angel - Saluting All Who Strive to Teach*, fourth printing 2014)

We will continue to be the school of choice for families within our broader community who seek a visionary and future-focused Catholic education for their daughters in the spirit of Cor Unum: one heart and one mind in the Sacred Heart of Jesus in order that all members of our community can live out our five Sacred Heart Goals with confidence and pride, Sacré Cœur will ensure continuous review of diligent governance practices and effective and efficient management of resources that support the achievement of strategic, operational and financial objectives. A secure and inspiring learning environment for our students and staff is in keeping with our vision for future-focused education. We look forward to exercising our responsible stewardship in partnership with our families.

At the culmination of a young woman's time at Sacré Cœur, our hope is that each student will graduate, understanding that lifelong learning is the norm and the education they received at Sacre Coeur is generative. As such we pray that each of our students, through all that she has experienced will seize this gift as an opportunity to add to both our living heritage and our purpose.

In the words of our Principal, Adelina Melia-Douvos:

“At Sacré Cœur, we are educating our students to be leaders – not denoted simply by the acquisition of a formal leadership role, but rather through being invested with the knowledge, skills, character and attitudes of leadership – so that they will be thriving members of and active contributors to society. Each of our students is nurtured and individually supported to grow in a dynamic learning environment which fosters courage and confidence, along with the development of the skills and attributes necessary to actively raise awareness and affect change. I want them to debate and challenge unacceptable social constructs and mores, and to actively influence positive change. Indeed, I call upon each of our students, to look forward with clarity about her responsibilities, and to be prepared to assert her rights by shining a light on destructive power dynamics, by debating and challenging unacceptable social constructs and mores, and by pressing for equality and mutual respect on behalf of themselves and those who are less privileged.

*None of us could be in a position of leadership within and beyond our dynamic and outstanding educational community, if it were not for those individuals, who intersected with our lives at different junctures and imbued in us an inextinguishable passion for life and for learning. I can attest to the gift that my education has been – it has been transformative, aimed at the formation of character through the shaping of my heart, mind, will and soul – for a higher purpose. I am so grateful to have received an education which, in the words of Oscar Romero, deeply embedded in me “the aspiration **not to have more, but to be more**”. Hence, I have harboured for the generations of students I have taught and led over many years a life-long vocation of desiring **to be more**. I want each of our young women to be and feel eminently empowered, drawing from a profound strength emanating from self-belief, so that they have the freedom to choose their path and how they will live their life.*

I am excited and confident that we are preparing our students to take their place in a world in which automation, technology and globalisation will bring about a variety of novel approaches to life and thought. I want us to be leaders of hope who deal in possibility. I want us to learn how to create a future of sustainability, inclusiveness and wellbeing, all flowing from the wellspring of the profoundly relational and the excellent: the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Cor Unum.”