



Girls Education is a Specialised Field

Academic Advantages

Santa Maria College has a proud academic tradition with outstanding results in both the vocational and university pathways. Research has shown that girls in all girls' schools achieve significantly stronger academic results than any other group in Australia. A [2017 study of Years 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN data](#) found that when socio-economic status was taken into account, Year 7 girls at single sex schools were 4.2 times ahead of co-ed students in reading and 2.8 terms ahead in mathematics (Dix, 2017). This is a telling statistic. We encourage and support our girls to pursue academic excellence in every area.

Role Models and Leadership

There are many leadership roles available at Santa Maria College for our girls; from the captain of the AFL team to the head of the student body; from the first violin in the school orchestra to the main part in the school play. In a co-educational school, leadership positions are often divided for gender representation, so there are fewer opportunities. At Santa Maria, our younger girls see these female leaders as role models and learn that girls can lead in any field.

A Tailored Curriculum

At Santa Maria College we understand that girls' education is a specialised field. We tailor our classes and curriculum specifically for girls. We plan according to the strengths and interests of girls and we look closely at their learning styles, which are often different to those of boys. This means that our girls are more likely to be engaged with the content and the method of delivery. There is no gender stereotyping with subject selection either. Our girls are encouraged and are able to explore a career of future in any area.

Counteracting Negative Influences

Our Mercy Wellbeing Program focuses on positive psychology in every year group to build resilience, manage stress, accept failure and promote the idea that it is normal not to be successful at everything. We run specific programs, which counteract negative body imagery and ideals of how girls and women are portrayed. Our teachers believe strongly in helping our girls to accept and be comfortable with 'who they are'.

Global Social Justice Issue

While all Catholic schools have a strong emphasis on Christian service and social justice, Santa Maria College extends this into the area of inequalities that exist in Australia and globally, with regard to the status of women. Girls-for-Girls Day raises awareness of the lack of educational opportunities that exist for girls in Third World countries, while Purple Bra day draws attention to the issue of breast cancer. Other areas Santa Maria focuses on are human trafficking, the plight of refugees and the inclusion of all marginalised individuals with a particular emphasis on Indigenous people.