

VILLA MARIA COLLEGE

ESTABLISHED 1918



To learn to prize what is of value
Ako kit e whakanui I ngā mea e whai hua ana





Welcome

Tēnā koutou katoa, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei!
Welcome to Villa Maria College.

We are proudly a state integrated Catholic secondary school for girls in Years 7 – 13. The foundation for everything we do is our Catholic faith, which we express through our Mercy charism. Villa Maria College offers spiritual formation and pastoral care in the tradition of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy who established the College in 1918.

The spirit of Mercy is the very heart of our College, and there is an emphasis on service to others and the community. Girls are educated in Catholic teachings, and this Catholic character is evident throughout the College.

The education Villa Maria College offers is of the highest quality, and we are proud of our excellent academic results. Girls are encouraged to stretch themselves and work towards individual goals, so they fulfil their potential. A good education has balance. Our strong academic programme is combined with varied co-curricular activities, encompassing sport, cultural and musical programmes.

Our pastoral care systems ensure that all girls are supported throughout their schooling. Girls learn best in an environment that is compassionate and engaging, and allows them to participate fully in all aspects of College life.

We greatly value the different cultural backgrounds our students bring to Villa Maria College and this is acknowledged and celebrated in many ways.

With a full and vibrant College experience, balancing academic study and the many co-curricular activities on offer, it is a pleasure to watch our students develop from Villa girls into confident and caring young Mercy women.

We look forward to welcoming you into the Villa community.

Deborah Brosnahan
Principal

Special character

Villa Maria College is a Roman Catholic school, in which the whole community exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Catholic Church, as determined by the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese.

The Mercy charism is an integral part of Villa Maria College. It pervades all aspects of College life. The College aims to offer spiritual formation and pastoral care in the tradition of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.

At the heart of the College are the attributes of Mercy:

- Education that is grounded in the Gospel
- Respect for the dignity, worth and potential of every human being
- Concern for the poor and the disadvantaged
- Concern for justice

All students take part in Religious Education and the religious life of the College through prayer, Mass and community service.





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Our journey

Villa Maria College was established by the Sisters of Mercy over 100 years ago, opening its doors to the first pupils in February 1918.

Villa Maria College served the district as a parish school, and in its early days, boys were also admitted to attend. When another Catholic school, St. Teresa's, opened nearby, boys were transferred from Villa and by 1941, Villa reverted to being a College for girls.

In its infancy, Villa Maria College was considered "out in the countryside", surrounded by farmland and rural bush. As the city of Christchurch grew and evolved, the school grew with

it. This included accommodation for boarders, who came from all over the South Island to live and learn at Villa. The boarding school was phased out by the Sisters from 1979.

In 1981, the College was integrated into the New Zealand state school system, and in 1992, the last Sister of Mercy Principal resigned and the first lay Principal was appointed.

The Sisters gifted the Villa Maria convent buildings to the College for use as classrooms in 1995, and in February 2018, the whole Villa community celebrated the College's 100th birthday, a milestone of which we are very proud.



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of the College. ”



Raising Mercy Women

It is the Mercy character that makes Villa Maria College special. We seek to live the Gospel values and infuse a culture of Mercy throughout all aspects of College life.

As a Mercy College, we offer clear guidance to students for acceptable behaviour and self-discipline. We provide a structured environment where girls are exposed to good role models in an atmosphere which affirms Gospel and family values. We also celebrate uniqueness and diversity and encourage participation and leadership at all levels.

The benefit of an all girls' College is that the teachers can match their teaching to the way girls learn, and develop their courses to meet girls' needs. In an all girls' environment, girls are taken seriously. They can work through the challenges of adolescence safely and they thrive and excel with strong female and male role models to inspire them.

The family atmosphere at Villa Maria College is no accident. Students are encouraged to look after each other and give back to the life of the College. All students are placed in one of our six Houses, designed to encourage camaraderie and a sense of belonging between students across all year levels. Each House is led by a Head of House who oversees the pastoral care of the students.

The entire staff work in a caring fashion to help students through their teenage years. There are also qualified guidance professionals available to the students. It is this deliberate focus on the whole person that makes Villa Maria College a safe and secure place of learning, and sees the girls develop into Mercy women.



Learning

We are committed to creating life-long learners, and nurture each girl and her academic needs.

We are extremely proud of our academic success. NZQA data shows that Villa Maria College students consistently perform well above the national average for all New Zealand schools.

Striving for excellence is part of the College culture, and girls are guided and supported to set goals and achieve their potential. Our smaller class sizes are a significant advantage, and our teachers are specialists in their field and passionate about educating girls.

Villa girls are taught to be confident learners and engage in areas they have interest or talent in. Girls are encouraged to apply themselves and successes are celebrated. We offer a

broad curriculum base that fosters a community of independent thinkers who explore ideas and enjoy problem solving.

As part of our commitment to each girl's academic needs, the Villa Learning Support Department works alongside teaching staff to provide opportunities for all students with specific educational needs. The Department engages with parents, caregivers and whānau to identify students in need of assistance, and to remove barriers to learning.

It is also our aim to identify and cultivate the gifted and talented students. Villa can provide opportunities for these girls, such as accelerated learning programmes.

At Villa Maria College, we bring out the very best in all our students.







Our culture

Cultural opportunities play a significant role in the life of a Villa girl. We offer a vibrant cultural programme, where girls can seize opportunities. This is central to our inclusive philosophy at Villa Maria College.

Māori

Tōku reo tōku ohooho
My language, my awakening

Villa Maria College honours the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Te Reo Māori is part of our curriculum and the Villa Maria Kaumātua and Whānau Komiti work to support our Māori students and their whānau. We recognise outstanding academic success of our Māori students with our annual Iho Pūmanawa Award.

The College has an active Kapa Haka group that performs at regional competitions. This provides leadership opportunities for our girls, as well as the exploration of Māori culture through song and dance.

Pasifika

Taloha ni, Kia orana, Mālō e leilei, Fakaalofa atu, Ni sa bula,
Kia ora, Talofa lava, Greetings

Villa Maria College values and embraces its Pasifika students. Students are encouraged to learn about and celebrate Pasifika culture, and this includes involvement in the College Pasifika Group, providing a wealth of support and leadership opportunities.

Each year, one Pasifika student is named the Top Pasifika Student, and celebrated at a special assembly.







Music and Performing Arts

Villa Maria College is renowned for its musical and performing arts excellence. Girls are given the opportunity to develop and nurture talents, and the College is excited to produce students of nationally recognised calibre.

There are numerous opportunities for girls to explore and develop their skills, including our choirs – Prima Voce, Con Brio and Vivace. Girls can also join one of the music groups, learn an instrument and take part in major music festivals.

Villa girls are encouraged to be involved in the performing arts, and the College is well known for its annual musical production, produced in conjunction with St Thomas of Canterbury College.

Girls are also given opportunities to be involved in debating and public speaking. Villa Maria College takes part in the annual Bishop Lyons' Shield – a competition between Catholic schools that includes debating, prepared and impromptu speeches and Scripture readings.

Villa Maria College has a team of specialised music and performing arts teachers, and girls with an interest in this area are encouraged to cultivate their talents.

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Sport

Sport is an important part of the Villa Maria College experience. Sport at Villa is not just about achieving individual success, but about participating, having fun, forming friendships and being involved.

We encourage all girls to embrace a fit and healthy lifestyle, and have a positive attitude that flows on to other areas of the girls' lives.

We support the girls who strive to become elite athletes, while also giving opportunities to all girls who want to develop and reap the benefits of being involved in a sport of their

choice. Students compete at local, national and international levels, and we celebrate the successes of our girls at regular assemblies, and at the end of year prizegiving ceremonies.

There is a wide range of sports on offer at Villa, from hockey, cycling and netball, to rowing, equestrian, rugby and basketball, and everything in between, there is a sport for every girl to have a go!

Our facilities include large playing fields, a full sized and well equipped gymnasium, hockey turf, netball courts and an outdoor swimming pool.





International students

Villa Maria College's reputation as a quality institution with high academic achievement is renowned both in New Zealand and internationally. As a College, we welcome our international students warmly, and strive to create a family-like atmosphere for those visiting for a short, or long term stay.

We have a dedicated team of staff who expertly care for the girls' academic and social needs. Girls are offered English language and curriculum assistance and paired with a buddy to help them settle into the Villa family.

Our international students are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of College life, and give back to our Kiwi students by sharing their own culture and language.

The experience is rewarding for both the international students and the wider Villa community.



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www.villa.school.nz