Mitcham Girls High School

Teaching and Learning Philosophy

Our Vision

Mitcham Girls High School is a professional, progressive learning community dedicated to providing outstanding educational opportunities for girls.

Mitcham Girls High School tries to meet the needs of all students and to help them attain their potential so that they may make a positive contribution to the world.

Our Principles

At Mitcham Girls High School we value and promote:

P1   Respect
P2   Positive Working Relationships
P3   Diversity
P4   Individuality
P5   Fairness
P6   Excellence
P7   World Citizenship

Our Goals*

Our girls will be:

1. *Successful* Learners	2. *Confident* Individuals	3. *Active, Responsible and Informed* Citizens
They will	They will	They will
1.1 develop their capacity to learn and take an increasingly *active* role *in* their *own learning* **1.2** be able to *solve problems* in creative and innovative ways **1.3** be able to *think critically* and *logically* **1.4** have the essential skills in *literacy* and *numeracy* **1.5** be confident and productive *users* of *technology* **1.6** be able to plan and *work independently* and in *teams* **1.7** understand the processes and events that have *shaped global communities* **1.8** *strive* for excellence **1.9** be *motivated* to reach their full potential	**2.1** have a sense of *self-worth*, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to *manage* their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical *well-being* **2.2** have a *sense of optimism* about their lives and the future **2.3** develop *values* and qualities such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others **2.4** have the *confidence* and capability to explore and pursue any future options **2.5** have an awareness of the role *gender* has played in past and contemporary societies **2.6** *question* gender stereotypes **2.7** develop effective *interpersonal skills* **2.8** embrace opportunities, make *rational and informed decisions* about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions	**3.1** appreciate *Australia's* social, cultural, linguistic and religious *diversity* **3.2** have an *understanding* of *Australia's* system of *government, history and culture* **3.3** acknowledge *indigenous cultures* and the importance of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians **3.4** be committed to *democracy, human rights, equity and justice* **3.5** participate in Australian *civic* and *community* life **3.6** become *internationally minded* and able to communicate across cultures **3.7** balance the *interests of self*, the *community* and the planet

* Adapted from the *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Your Australians*, December 2008

Introduction/Rationale

At Mitcham Girls High School our teaching and learning policy enacts the School's Vision, Principles and Goals. Our Principles are intertwined with the goals we have for our students, that they are successful and confident learners, who are active, responsible and informed citizens. The following document explains explicitly our approach approach to teaching and learning to ensure our vision, principles and goals are addressed in our day to day work.

The Central Focus of Teaching and Learning at Mitcham Girls High School

The key focus of teaching and learning at Mitcham Girls High School is the relationships between the teacher and the student. Underpinning this is what we teach and how we teach. The content of our units of work are prescribed for Year 8, 9 and 10 by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority and for Year 11 and 12 by the SACE Board These essential elements of how we teach are expressed definitively in the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) documentation and within the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST).

Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) describes four broad categories which focus on the nexus between the teacher, the task and the student. These domains are embedded into our curriculum where appropriate and include:-

Domain #1 – Learning for Effective Teaching	Domain #2 – Create Safe Conditions for Rigorous Learning
1.1 Understand how self and other learn. **1.2** Develop deep pedagogical and content knowledge. **1.3** Participate in professional learning communities and networks. **1.4** Engage with the community. **1.5** Discuss educational purpose and policy. **1.6** Design, plan and organise for teaching and learning.	**2.1** Develop democratic relationships. **2.2** Build a community of learners. **2.3** Negotiate learning. **2.4** Support and challenge students to achieve high standards.
Domain #3 – Develop Expert Learners	Domain #4 – Personalise and Connect Learning
3.1 Teach students how to learn. **3.2** Foster deep understanding and skilful action. **3.3** Explore the construction of knowledge. **3.4** Promote dialogue as a means of learning.	**4.1** Build on learner's understandings. **4.2** Connect learning to student's lives and aspirations. **4.3** Apply and assess learning in authentic contexts. **4.4** Communicate learning in multiple modes.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) describes three broad categories which focus on the nexus between the teacher, the task, the student and the community. These categories are embedded into our curriculum where appropriate and include:-

APST#1 – Professional Knowledge	**1.** Know students and how they learn. **2.** Know the content and how to teach it.
APST#2 – Professional Practice	**3.** Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning. **4.** Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments. **5.** Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning.
APST#3 – Professional Engagement	**6.** Engage in professional learning **7.** Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

While this document is predominantly for teachers, it has students as its focus and teacher/student relationships for learning as its central theme.

What our Vision, Principles and Goals mean for Teaching and Learning

Our Vision

Mitcham Girls High School is a *professional, progressive learning community* dedicated to providing *outstanding educational opportunities* for girls by providing the following:-

Professional
- An organised, structured environment in which high professional standards are expected
- Opportunities for staff to engage with current professional learning opportunities and pedagogical research
- Staff are provided with opportunities to engage in whole school improvement strategies
- Staff are provided with opportunities to reflect on practice through informal and formal processes to improve teaching and learning

Progressive Learning Community
- A cohesive and collaborative community in which teacher and peer support structures are available
- A community of teachers developed by Professional Learning Community groups and meetings
- Acknowledgment and use of staff expertise where appropriate
- Student leadership opportunities
- Staff leadership opportunities
- Opportunities to link with the wider community for a variety of educational and post school options.
- Current and relevant resources to support the delivery of the curriculum
- Staff and students equipped with current technology and the skills to use it to enhance the curriculum.
- Implementing new initiatives in educational theory and practice
- Deprivatising classroom practice through lesson observations
- Sharing practice intentionally and in international forums

Outstanding Educational Opportunities for Girls
- Classes that are diverse, adaptable, engaging and have opportunities for choice and challenge
- Adequate support and scaffolding to provide a safe environment for taking risks
- A curriculum that builds on student skills
- Teaching styles and methodologies that focus on the way girls learn
- Teaching approaches that cater for different learning styles
- An engaging curriculum that provides opportunities to build skills for use beyond school in personal and professional lives
- Opportunities for following a variety of opportunities and pathways

Mitcham Girls High School tries to *meet the needs of all students* and to *help them attain their potential* so that they may *make a positive contribution to the world* by providing the following:-

Meet the needs of all students
- Opportunities for students to be successful in a range of subject offerings
- Pastoral care, counselling, mentoring and support through an effective Care Group program.
- Opportunities to involve parents in their child's education
- Structures to enable students to access teachers out of lesson time
- Access to parent/caregiver approved professionals and support programs outside of the school

Help them attain their potential
- Alternative programs, learning support programs, scaffolding, differentiation, Gifted and Talented programs and co-curricular activities
- Opportunities to build student confidence
- Opportunities for risk taking within safe and secure learning environments
- Leadership opportunities in a variety of areas of expertise
- Skills to build resilience and strategies to deal with issues and challenges.
- Critical and creative thinking strategies
- Understanding of social, legal and ethical issues
- Encouragement for self expression within the parameters of the Student Code of Conduct

Make a positive contribution to the world
- Opportunities to engage with the world through global activities and citizenship programs
- Opportunities to demonstrate citizenship by encouraging involvement
- Global and intercultural understanding embedded within the curriculum
- Community activity days with a focus on special events, charities, issues or groups.
- Community links locally, nationally and internationally through curricular and co-curricular programs

Our Principles

At Mitcham Girls High School we value and promote *respect*, *positive working relationships*, *diversity*, *individuality*, *fairness* and *excellence*.

Respect
- Showing respect for yourself and others
- Respecting equipment, resources and the school environment
- Modelling our values within the community
- Valuing others and their opinions
- Modelling respect in how you speak to, listen to and treat others
- Treating others with courtesy
- Adhering to the code of conduct and DECD code of ethics
- Developing and maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment
- Demonstrate professionalism at all times

Positive Working Relationships
- Displaying cooperation
- Having a shared purpose and common expectations
- Being approachable
- Learning names
- Modelling positive working relationships
- Providing and listening to constructive feedback
- Developing and enacting Classroom Management Plans
- Engaging in respectful interactions with all members of the school community
- Showing empathy and understanding of different perspectives

Diversity
- Recognising, acknowledging, accepting, valuing and catering for differences
- Respecting others and their backgrounds, attitudes, beliefs and values
- Embedding intercultural understanding into curriculum to promote individual cultural expression
- Catering for different learning preferences and needs
- Critically examining and challenging stereotypes and traditional roles in society
- Using curriculum resources that celebrate diversity
- Developing global citizenship and international mindedness

Individuality
- Respecting and acknowledging all individuals as members of the school community
- Building individuality through the development of confidence and resilience
- Valuing and nurturing creativity
- Developing a positive sense of self

Fairness
- Being fair and just
- Being non-judgmental and socially aware
- Having clear and consistent expectations and consequences
- Treating people in a way that doesn't lower or elevate anyone's status unfairly
- Being aware how our actions can affect others
- Being honest in dealing with others
- Using different strategies with different people in order to achieve the same outcome
- Allocating time and resources equitably
- Participating in sport with consideration and a sense of fair play
- Promoting negotiation
- Making decisions which do not disadvantage, or give unfair advantage, to individuals and/or groups

Excellence
- Encouraging and expecting high standards
- Providing increasingly challenging curriculum and associated tasks
- Acknowledging genuine individual achievements
- Encouraging improvement and progression towards excellence
- Providing realistic assessment of student progress
- Developing the thinking skills and personal qualities needed to achieve excellence
- Embedding and promoting critical and creative thinking
- Giving positive encouragement and constructive feedback
- Improving teacher practice through group and individual learning processes
- Teaching and modelling the importance of life long learning

World Citizenship
- Raising awareness and funds for global charities
- Having an awareness of what is happening around the world
- Being aware that world events may affect the people we know and work with
- Promoting multiculturalism and intercultural understanding
- Embedding current world issues, political issues, events and trends into the curriculum
- Developing a sense of self within a global context
- Understanding the role technology plays in making the world a more connected place
- Actively participating in global issues and events

Our Goals #1 – Successful Learners

To be a successful learner at Mitcham Girls High School teachers will support students to:.

develop their capacity to learn and take an increasingly active role in their own learning by:-
- developing students confidence to negotiate with the teacher any differentiation of the curriculum
- developing students capacity to use organisational tools effectively
- developing students skill and ability to work with others
- supporting students to participate in the construction of learning tasks
- supporting students to identify, reflect and build on their strengths and weaknesses in relation to their learning
- supporting students to make informed choices regarding subject selection and pathways

be able to solve problems in creative and innovative ways by:
- ensuring students have the skills and capacity to identify problems in order to solve them
- using small group and class discussion as an opportunity to develop a variety of strategies to solve problems
- exposing students to a variety of problem solving methods which promote processes and results
- promoting student resilience and adaptability when encountering difficulties
- ensuring critical and creative thinking are embedded in curriculum and task design

be able to think critically and logically by:
- instructing, modelling and explicitly teaching strategies for critical and creative thinking
- using evaluation, review, self-evaluation and self-reflection tools and processes
- developing the ability to analyse in a broader context
- encouraging debate and the development of skills to form a coherent and plausible argument
- using structures and process to analyse and solve problems
- developing the ability to plan, create and evaluate in a sequential and logical way

have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy by:
- explicitly and deliberately using texts for specific contexts
- communicating understanding and knowledge in a variety of contexts and styles which suit the purpose
- developing the students ability to write for a particular context or genre
- relating and applying the skills learnt to real life contexts
- embedding literacy and numeracy into the curriculum through the use of authentic content and tasks

be confident and productive users of technology by:
- explicitly teaching the critical use of the Internet and search engines
- modelling and promoting the use of appropriate technologies to create, develop and present work
- being aware of emerging trends in order to integrate contemporary technologies in the classroom
- using electronic communication to connect with students and parents within the boundaries of Social Media Guidelines and the Cybersafety Agreement

be able to plan and work independently and in teams by:
- assisting students to take responsibility for their learning
- ensuring students are aware of the roles and responsibilities in group work and teams
- providing opportunities for students to work individually and within a variety of different groupings and teams
- ensuring that students have the skills to fulfil different roles within different groups or teams
- ensuring students have the organisation and time management skills for individual and group tasks

understand the processes and events that have shaped global communities by:
- embedding historical, economic and political references into the curriculum where appropriate and authentic
- providing real life connections and references to abstract problems or topics
- encouraging students to know about the impacts of current local, national and global events

strive for excellence by:

- ensuring enough time to complete tasks to a high standard both in and out of the classroom
- providing opportunities for gradual improvement through a process of drafts, checkpoints and deadlines
- ensuring expectations are clear and transparent for all levels of success
- ensuring students understand what excellence is in relation to the task through the use of examples and rubrics
- modelling work standards, processes and outcomes
- providing opportunities to enable students to achieve at their highest level
- proving specific, detailed, timely and constructive feedback
- assessing work accurately against explicit criteria

be motivated to reach their full potential by:

- modelling enthusiasm, curiosity, interest about learning
- expecting high achievement
- ensuring tasks are achievable but also challenging
- encouraging risk taking to achieve at the next level and their personal best
- building on individual student strengths
- setting tasks that are relevant and relate to real life experiences
- ensuring all students have the opportunity to experience success
- showing students that mistakes are a part of the learning process
- ensuring students set goals for their learning and results

Our Goals #2 – Confident Individuals

To be a confident individual at Mitcham Girls High School our teachers will support students to:

have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical well-being by:

- acknowledging and praising all students' genuine efforts so that they may develop self confidence
- encouraging sharing in class through a safe, structured environment
- providing skills and strategies to develop resilience
- encouraging students to ask for help
- delivering a curriculum where all students have the chance to problem solve and achieve some success
- providing constructive feedback
- connecting tasks to students lives, interests and aspirations
- acknowledging and celebrating difference

have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future by:

- exposing students to influential figures who have made a difference, or have overcome challenges
- ensuring students see the relevance of school by connecting it to their own experiences and pathways
- giving appropriate and useful feedback to ensure students have the knowledge and skills to improve
- ensuring students have the skills to set short, medium and long term goals that are achievable

develop values and qualities such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others by:

- identifying what these qualities are and what they look like
- connecting students own values, qualities and beliefs to the curriculum content where appropriate
- developing group, team building, listening and audience skills
- modelling these qualities at all times
- embedding these qualities into the Classroom Management Plan

have the confidence and capability to explore and pursue any future options by:

- encouraging students to take advantage of work experience and VET opportunities in their chosen field of interest
- providing support and relevant and timely information to assist students in pursuing a preferred pathway
- providing relevant and timely information regarding courses, patterns and pathways
- developing awareness in students of their strengths and limitations in order to make informed choices

have an awareness of the role gender has played in past and contemporary societies by:

- incorporating studies of gender within appropriate curriculum contexts
- promoting the study of strong, successful or important women in a variety of fields
- focussing on the importance and themes of International Women's Day within the curriculum where appropriate

question gender stereotypes by:

- explicitly choosing texts and resources that address gender stereotypes
- encouraging a challenging disposition when confronted with issues of gender stereotypes
- questioning the role of male and females within certain roles in society
- promote and encourage non-traditional pathways where appropriate

develop effective interpersonal skills by:

- ensuring that students are aware of the different roles within a group or team
- teaching and modelling appropriate language, tone and body language acceptable in group situations
- ensuring students develop the effective skills to present to a group
- developing the ability to communicate in a variety of forms depending on the context
- encouraging working with and for others in the community
- developing effective aural and oral communication skills

embrace opportunities, make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions by:

- promoting adherence to deadlines and the deadline policy
- guiding students to understand and adhere to the Code of Conduct
- encouraging students to seek support through extra tuition, reviewing drafts, lunchtime and holiday lessons
- supporting students to make good , of not, popular decisions
- ensuring that students know that they can ask for advice in order to make informed decisions
- increasing student awareness of the consequences that poor judgement or bad decision making may have
- developing students' skills to address issues themselves wherever possible

Our Goals #3 – Active, Responsible and Informed Citizens

To be an active, responsible and informed citizen at Mitcham Girls High School teachers will support students to:

appreciate Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity by:
- using socially, culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse texts
- embedding the use of Australian texts, culture and arts into the curriculum
- engaging with media and current issues that relate to Australian multi-cultural society
- developing a realistic and empathetic view of Australian society through discussion and debate

have an understanding of Australia's system of government, history and culture by:
- embedding aspects of government, history, culture and the first Australians into various curriculum areas
- equipping students to make informed personal political decisions now and in the future

acknowledge indigenous cultures and the importance of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians by:
- using indigenous teaching methods within the learning environment
- embedding indigenous texts, films, poetry, novels, stories, songs, dance and documentaries into the curriculum
- developing an understanding of indigenous cultures and histories
- developing and implementing cross-curricula units of work focussing on reconciliation

be committed to democracy, human rights, equity and justice by:
- engaging students in real life, meaningful tasks so that they can become advocates for change
- encouraging students to be active citizens in groups in and out of school
- embedding the values of democracy, human rights, equity and justice into the curriculum where appropriate
- developing processes where community involvement is recognised and celebrated

participate in Australian civic and community life by:
- encouraging students to be involved in school and community based projects, activities and groups
- developing opportunities for students to network with community leaders
- developing a sense of community in students
- promoting the school, its curriculum, and its students through engaging with and performing in the community

become internationally minded and able to communicate across cultures by:
- encouraging the study of languages
- ensuring students are aware of a global community through exposure to appropriate and current resources
- hosting and taking part in student exchanges
- organisation of celebrations including International Women's Day and Harmony Day
- explicitly teaching materials from a range of cross cultural perspectives

balance the interests of self, the community and the planet by:
- developing an awareness of sustainability as it relates to students own lives
- developing students perspectives about local, national and global interests
- developing community based learning which links local and global issues
- making considered choice in relation to sustainability

Structures and Processes that Support Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Educating Girls

Mitcham Girls High School is successful in its education of girls as it recognises the complexity of life for young women today, and is responsive to this. We provide girls with learning experiences and educational opportunities that best suit their particular needs, allowing them to develop the attributes and personal characteristics identified in the school's Vision, Principles and Goals.

At the curriculum level, the school actively engages students not only through providing collaborative learning opportunities, embedded formative assessment and negotiated assessment tasks with a personal focus, but through using resources and teaching methods that are girl specific. Students are provided with opportunities and an environment in which to safely challenge stereotypical and conventional views of women's abilities and aspirations. This is complemented an emphasis on strong female role models in and out of the school, as well as opportunities to be involved in a variety of targeted leadership opportunities.

The school has in place a range of effective programs that educate girls about bullying, health, cybersafety and social media, as these have been identified as areas of concern for young women. Staff are informed about the current issues facing adolescent girls.

Improving Teaching and Learning

Teachers are supported to review and modify their practice and ensure they meet the needs of our diverse student cohort. To ensure teaching and learning programs reflect and respond to ever changing needs, teachers' skills are developed to:-

- understand how they and others learn (TfEL Domain 1)
- develop deep pedagogical and content knowledge (TfEL Domain 1)
- participate and engage in professional learning communities and networks (TfEL Domain 1)
- engage with students, parents and the wider community (TfEL Domain 1)
- discuss educational purpose and policy with colleagues (TfEL Domain 1)
- design, plan and organise for teaching and learning (TfEL Domain 1)
- engage in a Performance and Development program which incorporates input from students and colleagues
- observe others and be observed in the classroom with clear and transparent criteria and processes

Through teacher engagement in a program of continual improvement, the outcomes for students develop and improve. Mitcham Girls High School provides teachers with timely and appropriate professional learning opportunities in line with the school's strategic directions. Teachers also have a responsibility to participate in professional learning relevant to the school's strategic directions and their own subject area and interests.

Student/Teacher Working Relationship

At the heart of learning at Mitcham Girls High School is the working relationship between the student and the teacher. The development of positive student/teacher relationships is critical in the creation of a learning environment conducive to learning. Effective learning takes place when the student has trust and confidence in the teacher's ability to create and maintain supportive and safe conditions for rigorous learning. Teachers aim to:-

- develop democratic relationships (TfEL Domain 2)
- build a community of learners (TfEL Domain 2)
- incorporate the opportunity for students to negotiate their own learning (TfEL Domain 2)
- challenge students to achieve and maintain high standards with appropriate supports (TfEL Domain 2)
- know their students and how they learn (APST Standard 1)
- know their subject content and how to teach it (APST Standard 2)
- plan and implement effective teaching and learning sequences (APST Standard 3)
- provide students with timely and effective feedback and report on student learning (APST Standard 4)

As these aspects of good student/teacher working relationships are formed and maintained, with a focus on how girls learn best, our students are more likely to successfully engage in the learning process.

Progress, Assessment and Reporting

We deliver a curriculum that offers students the opportunity to build on their knowledge in a safe and challenging environment.

Assessment is based on Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards for Years 8, 9 and 10. For Students in Years 10, 11 and 12, teaching and learning is based on Performance Standards developed and assessed by the SACE Board of South Australia. Senior students studying the SACE are made aware of the assessment tools used in classes so that they can comprehend the depth of knowledge and understanding that is expected through the assessment rubrics from each curriculum document. This ensures that all students know where they are on the continuum, where they could be and how to progress to the next level.

Teachers report to parents through informal contact and various formal processes during the year. Teachers ensure that student assessment commentary indicates student achievement and identifies strengths and areas to improve. Written reports and parent teacher interview evenings follow the timeline below:-

- End of Term 1 – Written Reports – Comments for Year 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12
- Start of Term 2 – Parent/Student/Teacher Interviews – For families who make an appointment with the teacher
- End of Term 2 – Written Reports – Summary Reports for Year 8, 9, 10 and 11. Comments for Year 12
- Mid Term 3 – Written Report - Year 12 Exam Results
- End of Term 3 – Written Reports – Comments for Year 8, 9, 10 and 11. Summary Reports for Year 12
- End of Term 4 – Written Reports – Summary Reports for Year 8, 9, 10 and 11. No Reports for Year 12

Informal parent contact regarding progress occurs when necessary and can include phone calls and/or emails, non-submission letters, parent meetings, behaviour referral letters, parent evenings/information sessions and contact via the student diary.

Recognising Achievement

Achievement and leadership are seen as positive attributes and are acknowledged by the school community. Students are encouraged to strive to reach their potential. Achievement is recognised in the classroom on a daily basis, but more formal processes are in place to acknowledge continued, high level performance or involvement. At the end of each assessment period, Academic Excellence Certificates are presented to students who have achieved a high standard in each of their subjects. Academic Endeavour Awards are awarded to those students who have achieved a good standard of work and shown measurable improvement. These awards are presented at Middle School and Senior School Assemblies.

Other assemblies recognise community oriented successes, or academic success in co-curricular activities. We also recognise strong leadership and invite families to participate in the recognition of students who have been successful in a leadership role.

At the end of each year, success is formally recognised through the presentation of year level awards to those students who have excelled academically, or were involved in numerous school and non-school based activities, groups, teams and community endeavours. The successes of our graduating Year 12 students are acknowledged at Presentation Night, an evening that brings the entire school community together. The recipients of all awards are further recognised via the school's honour board and via our website.

Subject Selections and the Timetable

The school's timetable is developed in order to maximise student choice. A broad range of subjects are offered which are documented in the Course Handbook, both as a hard copy and in digital form. We have developed processes and procedures to ensure that student choice dictates decisions about timetable construction. Subject selections are completed electronically at the end of an in depth course counselling process. This begins with the Care Group program at all year levels, class discussions, the Personal Learning Plan (PLP is a compulsory SACE Subject at Year 10), assemblies and information sessions, counsellor input, and culminates with the course counselling night/day. Each senior student attends a meeting with their parents, to discuss their subject selections for the following year and their pathway beyond school.

Subsequent changes to subject choices are discussed with the students and parents through a documented and endorsed subject change process.

The school is also able to extend student choice through an agreement between local schools to share curriculum as part of the Mitcham Plains Alliance. Senior students from either school can undertake curriculum offerings not supported by their host school. The Alliance also allows for greater flexibility with subject combinations that cannot be accommodated by the host school. This is a reciprocal arrangement that benefits all schools and their students equally.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum has been developed for Year 8, 9 and 10 using the Australian Curriculum and for Year 11 and 12 from the SACE Subject Outlines. Deeper understanding is achieved through Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, which occur for 2 hours each Wednesday afternoon or on Student Free Days (SFD). With the recent implementation of new curriculum at all year levels, there has been a strong emphasis on development of curriculum documentation, unit development and clarification of links to various capabilities and skills described within curriculum documents.

A web based system for curriculum development and documentation (Unit Planner) is used to ensure consistency of recording across subjects and year levels. Electronic documentation also allows us to review our catalogue of units to identify strengths and weaknesses within the deliverable curriculum.

This software helps teachers identify areas where capabilities and differentiation can be embedded into a unit of work where the content is genuine and achievable. Teaching and learning is strengthened through the embedding of TfEL Domains 2, 3 and 4 into the software. As part of our commitment to developing units of work that cater for all students using the mandated curriculum content, staff are given scheduled time to develop units of work through Unit Planner.

The amount of time given to the development and documentation of curriculum ensures we are teaching relevant, purposeful, current and interesting content to ensure maximum engagement to improve academic success.

Professional Learning

All Professional Learning opportunities for staff and students are based on the schools Vision, Principles, Goals and Strategic Directions. By focussing on a small number of areas and developing these well, we allow teachers to focus on curriculum content and improving pedagogy, ensuring better outcomes for all students.

Whole school professional learning experiences are documented and recorded to ensure teachers meet the Teachers' Registration Board requirements of having 60 hours of Professional Learning over the 3 year registration period linked to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST).

Professional Learning time is accommodated within the weekly timetable and meeting structure.

Performance and Development

Teaching practice is improved when the classroom is de-privatised creating opportunities for safe, genuine feedback about pedagogy. Our Performance and Development processes are based on the TfEL Domains and the APST Standards which ensure that teachers are familiar with these teaching and learning frameworks. We use a multi-faceted approach to ensure that teachers and leaders receive feedback from a variety of sources including students, colleagues, teachers, leaders and line managers. Our processes include:-

Teachers
> Pre-Observation Meeting
> Lesson observation by 2 observers
> Post Observation Meeting
> Student Surveys from at least 2 classes
> Teacher Self Reflection Survey
> Teacher Self Analysis of APST level
> Line Manager Feedback meeting

Leaders
> Teacher surveys from all staff from area of expertise
> Leader Self Reflection survey
> Leader Self Analysis of APST level
> Line manager feedback and meeting

Managing Students in the Learning Environment

Mitcham Girls High School applies a democratic process to the development of Classroom Management Plans (CMP), that are documented and distributed to class members. Students have input into the way the classroom is managed so that expectations and consequences are clear to all. This ensures that the focus in the classroom is on teaching and learning and not behavioural issues. All CMPs are stored centrally and are used to support a resolution, where necessary.

In the case of behavioural concerns that are ongoing and particularly challenging, the Focus Room is used. If directed to the Focus Room, students reflect on their behaviour and undertake negotiation with their teacher. At this stage parents are also informed.

Student Well Being

Student well being is the initial responsibility of the Care Group Teacher. The development of the student/teacher relationship within the Care Group Program, and links between the Care Group Teacher and parents ensures Care Group Teachers are best placed to monitor and support student well being throughout the year.

The Middle School and Senior School Management Teams meet regularly to discuss and monitor students, programs, pathways and academic success. These teams work in a pro-active manner by liaising with teachers, to identify issues early, and to intervene with strategies to support student learning. They access centrally held data to identify students of concern. Members of these teams work closely with the Care Group Teachers to ensure strategies are in place to support students.

The Daymap Learner Management System has been implemented to assist in documenting evidence of student issues, concerns, bullying and harassment and behavioural concerns. Having information readily available to staff enhances our ability to work with students to ensure their educational and emotional needs are met, while still maintaining a strong and rigorous teaching and learning program. It also allows us to better cater for students at risk, and those students who choose to take alternative educational pathways that may be non-school based.

Leadership Opportunities

There is a strong desire amongst our students to be exposed to leadership opportunities. Mitcham Girls High School strives to offer genuine leadership roles in and out of the school. Our students thrive on responsibility, as evidenced by large range of opportunities to strengthen leadership skills that are taken up by a wide range of students. Leadership opportunities occur in a variety of areas, giving the maximum number of students the opportunity to excel and provide leadership in their areas of expertise and strength.

Leadership programs are also used to build confidence and resilience and provide opportunities for lateral thinking and problem solving whilst working in a school context. Involvement in leadership opportunities has positive impacts on the teaching and learning in the classroom, and the responsibilities given help students find their voice and contribute positively to the class and the community.

Programs and Co-Curricular Activities to Strengthen Student/Teacher Relationships and Support Teaching and Learning

Mitcham Girls High School's focus on positive working relationships is strengthened by the co-curricular programs and activities on offer to all students. These activities include teachers helping teachers, teachers helping students and students helping students. Community based activities also provide teachers and students the opportunity to work together in a variety of settings and contexts.

Recognising days of significance on the calendar for our students and the school community also allows staff and students to work together outside the classroom.

The teaching and learning program is also strengthened by support programs designed to address needs of students with learning difficulties. All curriculum areas provide support in a variety of ways and teachers are readily available during lessons, lunchtimes and school holidays. The school has also implemented programs to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills. These programs are supported by current staff and volunteers.

These programs strengthen the relationships between our staff and students and create a culture whereby students know that teachers are readily accessible for assistance or advice. Teachers ensure availability to improve teaching and learning and give each student the best chance for success. The teaching and learning environment is also enhanced by having improved working relationships built on trust, respect and a sense of community.

Analysing Data to Improve Teaching and Learning

Early detection is the key to providing timely and appropriate interventions for students at risk. Data provided through various systems such as SACE, NAPLAN, Assessment and Reporting, Student Data Warehouse and Daymap are used to analyse and address problems and implement strategies to help ensure success on a variety of levels.

External data is analysed to ensure that teaching and learning practices are modified to address group and individual needs.

Administration, curriculum areas, Middle School and Senior School Teams all analyse data and develop strategies to improve aspects of the school. Data is also used as a means to recognise group and individual achievement in all aspects of schooling. Positive recognition does have an impact on students.