



VILLA MARIA COLLEGE

ESTABLISHED 1918

PROSPECTUS

“LEARN TO
PRIZE WHAT,
IS OF VALUE”

WELCOME



“LEARN TO PRIZE WHAT IS OF VALUE”

Tena koutou katoa! Talofa lava, Malo e lelei!

Welcome to Villa Maria College. We appreciate your interest in our College and our community. The education Villa Maria offers is of the very highest quality with excellent academic results and a varied co-curricular programme. Girls are cared for and nurtured in the Mercy charism, thus providing for spiritual and personal development.

Our pastoral care systems ensure that all girls are supported throughout their schooling from Year 7 to 13. Our girls are placed into small Vertical groups which form larger House groups. Villa has six Houses and many activities throughout the year to build amazing House spirit.

It is the vision of Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy that is implemented, tested and challenged in our education at Villa Maria. That means there is an emphasis on service to others and the community. Girls are educated in Catholic social teachings, and this Catholic character is evident in everything that we do.

We greatly value the different cultural backgrounds our students bring to Villa Maria College and work to ensure this is acknowledged and celebrated. It is our aim that Māori students will succeed as Māori and Pasifika be able to succeed as Pasifika also. Parent support is vital for all students.

We pride ourselves on our whole school learning community, where all teachers engage in professional learning and undertake specific inquiry projects each year so that we are engaged in continuous improvement as a staff. Our girls are encouraged to set themselves 'stretch goals' and to review these regularly as they strive to exceed their own targets.

Our girls develop from Villa girls into Mercy women, with an academic, service, co-curricular and spiritual programme of development.

We look forward to welcoming you into the Villa community in the future.

DEBORAH BROSNAHAN
PRINCIPAL



OUR JOURNEY

Villa Maria College is a state integrated Catholic secondary school for girls in Years 7 - 13. Situated near the University of Canterbury in Upper Riccarton, Christchurch, Villa Maria College has been providing excellent education under the guidance of the Sisters of Mercy since 18 February 1918.

Villa Maria began serving the district as a parish school when boys were admitted in 1921. Later, the boys were transferred to St Teresa's and from 1941 the school reverted to being a school for girls.

The College roll continued to grow due to housing developments in the area and additional building was undertaken to keep pace with growth. This included

accommodation for boarders. The Boarding School was maintained until 1979 when Villa Maria once again became a day school.

In 1981 Villa Maria College was integrated into the New Zealand state school system.

In 1995 the Sisters gifted the Villa Maria convent buildings to the College for use as classrooms.

Photographs and further information about the College history may be found at: www.villa.school.nz



OUR SPECIAL CHARACTER

Villa Maria College is a Roman Catholic School in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its religious instruction and observations, 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 Roman Catholic Church, as determined by the Roman 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 Catholic 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 disadvantaged

Concern for justice

The Religious Studies programme, which is compulsory for all students, is founded on belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the intrinsic worth of the living Catholic tradition, the sacredness, uniqueness and developing nature of the human person and the value of a community of staff, students and parents, searching together to integrate culture with faith, and faith with everyday living.

OUR MISSION

Empowering each young woman to determine her potential, live Gospel values, confidently embrace life-long learning and as a Mercy woman be inspired to make a difference.



OUR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

We are extremely proud of our academic record. Ministry of Education data shows that Villa Maria College students consistently perform well above the national averages for all New Zealand schools, including other girls' schools.

There are many reasons why we achieve so well academically; our College culture, our staff and our class sizes all contribute to this success.

- Striving for excellence is part of the Villa culture and our girls are guided and supported to set goals to achieve their potential.
- Our smaller class numbers are a significant advantage to both girls and staff who enjoy close working relationships with their students.
- Villa Maria College teachers are specialists in their field and passionate about educating girls. Our culture of excellence begins with our appointment of the finest teachers who impart their knowledge with flair.

LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

At Villa Maria College we do our utmost to bring out the best in all girls; to engage them in areas they have interest or talent in. They are encouraged to apply themselves and develop an appreciation for life-long learning.

CONFIDENT LEARNERS

Villa girls are encouraged to be confident learners and value their abilities. Academic successes are celebrated along with hardworking students who pursue their goals with purpose. We offer a broad curriculum base that fosters a community of independent learners who explore ideas and enjoy problem solving.

SUPPORTING OUR LEARNERS

As part of our commitment to nurturing each girl and her academic needs, The Villa Maria Learning Support Department works alongside teachers to provide opportunities for all students with specific educational needs. Our staff undergo professional development to be better equipped to meet diverse needs, improve outcomes and raise achievement. Teachers differentiate classroom programmes and make adjustments to their teaching practices to ensure students with specific learning needs have the opportunity to achieve their potential. The Learning Support Department works in partnership with parents, caregivers and whanau to identify students in need of special assistance and remove barriers to learning. The Department is staffed by a SENCO and two teacher aides; it is part of the Pastoral Care team of the College.

GIFTED AND TALENTED

It is our aim to identify and cultivate the gifts and talents of students. Each College faculty is committed to providing opportunities for students with specific gifts and talents. According to individual circumstances and needs, students may be offered altered programmes such as acceleration through year levels and curriculum acceleration in specific subjects. In addition, girls are encouraged to take part in the many co-curricular and extra-curricular extension activities offered at Villa Maria College.



FACULTIES AND SUBJECTS AT VILLA MARIA COLLEGE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies is at the heart of everything we do at Villa Maria College. It is compulsory at all levels.

Students study a wide range of topics. In the senior school Religious Studies is a full NCEA subject.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology encompasses Computing, Digital Technologies, Textile Technology, Home Economics, Hospitality, Business and Enterprise.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

This is a very varied subject area. It is compulsory for all students in Years 7-10.

In the senior school it encompasses Accounting, Classical Studies, Economics, Geography and History.

THE ARTS

Subjects offered include: Art, Art Design, Art History, Art Sculpture, Drama and Music.

An Arts programme is compulsory from Years 7-9 and offered as an optional subject from Years 10-13.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

This is compulsory for all students to Year 10. Physical Education and Health are taught as two separate programmes.

In the senior school students can select Physical Education as one of their option subjects.

The College has excellent facilities including a full size gymnasium, an outdoor swimming pool, astro turf and a range of playing fields and sports courts.

SCIENCE

Science is compulsory for students up to Year 11.

From here it separates into the specialist areas of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

The College opened six refurbished labs in 2011.

ENGLISH

English is compulsory for all students up to Year 12.

Topics covered range from Shakespeare to Grammar, Seminars to Film Studies, Creative and Formal Writing and all types of literature.

At Years 12 and 13 Media Studies is also offered as an optional subject.

LANGUAGES TE TARI O NGĀ REO

Villa Maria College currently offers compulsory Te Reo Maori for intermediate students.

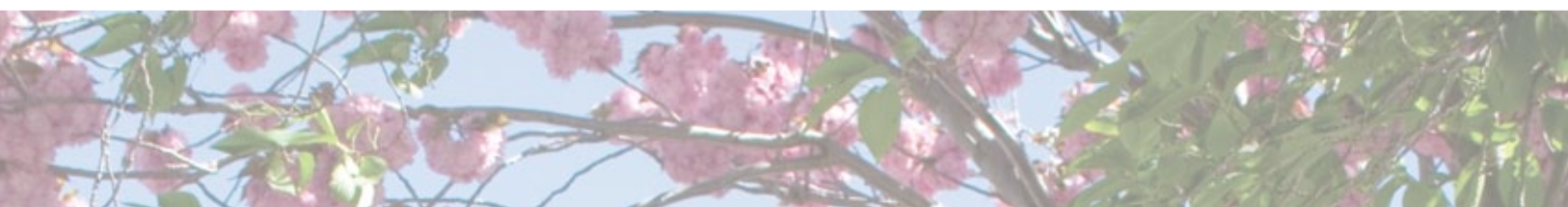
Other students can study French, German, Japanese or Te Reo.

MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS

This is a compulsory subject for students up to Year 11.

Students can then select from Mathematics with Calculus and/or Mathematics with Statistics.

For more detailed information please refer to the College website.



OUR MERCY SPIRIT



Villa Girls are known for their integrity, self-assurance and compassion.

The spirit of Mercy is brought to life at Villa Maria College. It shapes all that we do and makes our College a very special place. The traditions of Villa Maria's founders, the Sisters of Mercy, continue to inspire us and influence all aspects of College life.

PASTORAL CARE

There is a real sense of family at Villa Maria College. Villa girls are encouraged to look after each other and give something back to the life of the College.

We pride ourselves on the holistic support we offer our girls which encompasses spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing. If girls are experiencing difficulties or stressful phases, we have comprehensive support systems and expert staff to offer assistance. In addition, small class sizes and a culture of mutual respect between staff and students provide strong safety nets for girls when they need them. Working together with families completes our holistic approach in which we emphasise regular and open communication at all times.

THE HOUSE SYSTEM

On arrival at Villa Maria College, girls are placed in one of our six 'Houses'. The Houses are designed to encourage camaraderie and a sense of belonging between students across all year levels. Each House is led by a staff member known as the 'Head of House' who oversees the pastoral care of the girls.

THE VERTICAL GROUP

Girls in each House are divided into Vertical Groups which consist of four or five members of each year level and are led by a staff member. Vertical Groups meet daily for prayer, roll check and notices.

PEER TUTORING

Another way we build community at Villa is through the Peer Tutoring system. Girls from Year 13 have the opportunity to give something back by sharing knowledge of their chosen subjects with younger students.

PEER SUPPORT

At the very start of Year 12, selected students attend a training day to learn how to be Peer Support Leaders. The purpose of this scheme is to help Year 9 students settle into Villa and to provide leadership opportunities for Year 12 girls.

THE GUIDANCE NETWORK

The entire staff work in a caring fashion to help girls through their teenage years. The Guidance Counsellor is happy to help any student who is having personal, social or behavioural problems. The Careers Advisor is based in a well-equipped Careers Centre and assists students in their vocational and educational choices.



OUR MERCY SPIRIT

We live-out the Mercy charism through promoting social justice, showing compassion, giving to others through acts of service and showing care and concern for the poor and vulnerable in our world. Some of the practical ways we develop the Mercy spirit follow...

SERVICE CAPTAINS

Each of the six Houses at Villa Maria College has a dedicated Service Captain. Their role is to support their House groups through their leadership, encouragement in faith and action and reaching out into the community.

MERCY DAY

Mercy Day is always celebrated at Villa Maria College; it is a tradition that honours and commemorates the school's founder, Catherine McAuley. On this day in 1827 she opened the House of Mercy in Dublin.

We too open our doors on this day to a group of very special guests from around Christchurch. Children from special-needs units are invited to spend a day with Villa girls and staff.

MISSION EFFORTS

Girls are encouraged to raise money for 'Mission Efforts' throughout the year. College Vertical Groups and Mercy Action Groups find innovative ways to raise funds for Caritas Aotearoa (the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' agency for justice, peace and development), and our sister school in Tonga.

HAVING A BALL

Each year, our Head Service Captain and a team of Villa girls help to organise the Ball for the Disabled. In conjunction with The Special Events Trust, Villa girls play a key role in making this event happen. The Ball provides an opportunity for its special guests to come together and have fun, while also allowing Villa girls to be part of creating joy for others.



OUR OPPORTUNITIES

Taking part in co-curricular activities is part of the Villa culture; the many opportunities we offer fit seamlessly into the day-to-day life of the College. These activities provide students with valuable opportunities to practise life skills that include leadership, teamwork, persistence, resilience and commitment.

SPORTS

We have a dedicated Sports Director who manages the delivery of over 30 sports. It is not surprising that we have extremely high participation levels along with impressive regional and national successes. The College has excellent sports facilities including a modern gymnasium and well-equipped weights room. Outdoors there are large sports fields, a swimming pool, tennis, netball courts, and an astro-turfed hockey facility.

The College holds Athletics, Swimming Sports and Cross Country competitions each year. A much anticipated event on the College calendar is the House Sports Day; a unique, fun-filled day with everyone dressing in House colours and contesting for the honour of being the top House.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

We offer our girls opportunities to discover more about themselves through our Education Outside the Classroom programme.

On alternate years, girls from Year 7 have an over night camp and experience a variety of outdoor activities. On the non-camp year a programme that includes surfing and a visit to Adrenaline Forest is offered.

In Year 10, the girls go to the Boyle River Lodge where they experience an over night camp-out, orienteering, high ropes and tramping.



OUR MĀORI AND PASIFIKA STUDENTS

We acknowledge the crucial role we play in the education of our Māori and Pasifika students and are committed to strengthening the partnership that students, families and their communities have with teachers, principals, tertiary providers and local and central government.

MĀORI

Toku reo toku ohoo

My language, my awakening.

Villa Maria College is committed to honoring the principals of Te Tiriti O Waitangi. Te Reo Māori is a compulsory part of our Years 7/8 curriculum and an optional subject through to Year 13. The Villa Maria Kaumatua and Whanau Komiti work to support our Māori students and build strong connections with their whanau. A Māori mentor provides additional support for girls in their development as Māori leaders. We recognise outstanding academic success of our Māori students with our annual Iho Pūmanawa Award.



Maiā Matthews, 2013 Iho Pūmanawa Award recipient

THE IHO PŪMANAWA AWARD

This Award is one of the ways we recognise the high academic achievement of our Māori students. The taonga awarded to the top academic student was gifted to the College by Te Kaiwhakahaere o Ngai Tahu, Mark Solomon. Senior staff, including the College kaumatua, assesses students' academic results and interview high achievers to determine the Iho Pūmanawa Award recipient each year.

KAPA HAKA

Villa Maria College Kapa Haka group have performed at regional competitions with expert training and support from staff, parents and whanau. Kapa Haka at Villa Maria provides leadership opportunities for our students as well as the exploration and expression of Māori culture through song and dance.

PASIFIKA

Taloha ni, Kia orana, Malo e lelei, Fakaalofa atu, Ni sa bula, Kia ora, Talofa lava, Greetings

The College values and embraces its Pasifika students. The Villa Maria Pasifika Cultural Group encompasses Year 9 to 13 girls and provides a wealth of opportunities for friendships, support and leadership roles. An annual fixture for the group is their participation and performance at the Christchurch Secondary Schools Pacific Island Festival, sPACIFICally PACIFIC. Pasifika parents are regularly consulted and meet together to support the College.



Catherine Petaia was awarded the SUPREME AWARD and was named as the top female academic in all of Canterbury at the sPACIFICally Pacific event.

OUR CULTURE

MUSIC

Villa Maria College has a proud history of Musical excellence. Our Music Department nurtures talent and produces students of nationally recognised calibre. There are numerous opportunities for girls to take part in musical groups including the Vivace choir which continues to be one of the top secondary school choirs in New Zealand, recently winning GOLD at the National Big Sing Competition. The school now boasts four choirs: the prep choir (Years 7-8) the junior choir (Years 9-10), Con Brio, which is our senior choir, and the newly named Vivace which is our elite performance choir. Girls also have the opportunity to join the, Jazz Combo, Instrumental Ensembles, Rock Band, Orchestra and trainee Orchestra.

Group tuition is offered to students free of charge in singing, string, woodwind and brass instruments. For a low charge, students may also have tuition in drums/percussion and keyboards. There are various opportunities to perform in festivals and competitions.

ART

The Villa Maria College Visual Arts Department is a vibrant and successful part of the Arts Faculty. Our skilled staff are renowned for their ability to work with students to consistently gain impressive NCEA results. Girls from Villa gain entry into prestigious Fine Arts schools around the country. Our modern visual arts facility encompasses a large open studio/teaching space and a dedicated exhibition room.



PERFORMING ARTS

Villa Maria College offers girls rich opportunities in the field of performing arts. Each year students have the opportunity to take part in a major production, which is produced in conjunction with St Thomas of Canterbury College.

In alternate years, senior girls take a leadership role in planning, choreographing and managing an entry into the regional Stage Challenge© competition. Villa is consistently one of the top performing schools scooping five Awards for our most recent Stage Challenge© entry.

Girls also have the option of taking Drama as an academic subject for NCEA. Each year, as part of their assessment, Year 13 girls produce and perform a piece for the College community. These performances are renowned for their polished finishes and mature interpretations.



DEBATING/PUBLIC SPEAKING

Villa Maria College has a reputation for crafting confident young women who are adept at public speaking. At all levels, girls are encouraged to take part in classroom, school-wide and regional speech and debating opportunities. Villa Maria College enters numerous competitions including the highly contested Catholic Schools' Bishop Lyons' Shield.



OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A WARM KIWI WELCOME AWAITS YOU...

Villa Maria College's reputation as a quality institution with high academic achievement is well renowned both in New Zealand and internationally. A recent survey showed that most of our International Students come because of recommendations from a current or past International student.

Villa Maria College strives to create a family-like atmosphere for its International Students. We have a team of three dedicated staff who expertly care for the girls' academic and social needs. We also have our very own 'Buddy Programme' which sees each International Student teamed up with a kiwi student who takes a special interest in their lives.

All College staff members are committed to creating a supportive atmosphere for students. Qualified ESOL teachers are appointed to address English language needs and students are also given curriculum assistance from the International Assistant, appointed to look after the specific needs of students during the school day.

The fact that Villa Maria College is a girls-only College is very appealing to International Students.

Villa Maria College has agreed to observe and be bound by the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students published by the Ministry of Education.

Take a virtual tour of Villa.
Visit: www.villa.school.nz



OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Antonia Zwiener - Germany

My time in New Zealand so far has been awesome. The lifestyle is really different to the German one but I like it. I really love school here and have felt so comfortable ever since the first day. The staff are friendly and helpful and encourage us to get involved. I've tried many types of New Zealand food like L&P, pineapple lumps, lollie cake and hokey-pokey ice-cream. It all tastes so nice, especially the lollie cake!

While I have been in New Zealand I have been lucky enough to do some sightseeing and I am amazed at how beautiful this country is.



Haruka Kataoka - Japan

My home country is Japan. I visited Villa Maria College and knew straight away that this was where I wanted to be for my education. The teachers are so friendly and the students make me feel very welcome. I like the way that this school is only for girls; it is a safe and kind place. I also like the way we are taught moral values through the Catholic religion of the College. There are many opportunities for us; I like trying all the different sports here at Villa. I have achieved very well in my studies with my favourite subjects being social studies and music. New Zealand is a beautiful country and I love the green grass and snowy mountains.



Jinah Park – South Korea

I came to Villa Maria College when I was 14 years old and spoke very little English. One of the reasons my parents and I chose Villa was because it has a history of high academic results. I have been very happy here; my teachers are so helpful and always support me. I have had many great experiences here like going on the Villa camp in Year 10. We had fun and it gave me a chance to really get to know my classmates. I also like the way we are put into House groups for different activities. Houses are made up of girls from all different Year levels so you feel like it is one big family. I am looking forward to going to University when I finish Villa Maria College.

VILLA MARIA COLLEGE

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