'We began with the dream and we end with it in the sure knowledge that we can imagine a better world, because we pledge ourselves to it as Dominicans, radiant with the light of Christ. Together we can make a difference."

Sr Sheila Flynn OP, 2013 Dominican Education Conference.
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Santa Sabina College. Independent Catholic School.
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Santa Sabina College is set in 8 hectares of leafy grounds in Strathfield, in Sydney’s vibrant and diverse Inner West. The College is 15 minutes from the centre of Sydney and easily accessed by public transport and private bus services.
Welcome to Santa Sabina College. As a past student, parent, and teacher of the College, my story has been deeply shaped by my Santa Sabina experiences. Although the faces have changed, the essence of a Santa Sabina education has not. The pursuit of personal excellence, the practice of social justice and the promotion of leadership are as integral to a Santa Sabina Dominican education today as they were when the school was established in 1894.

Our motto Veritas (truth) impels us to know what is true, and why it is so. We strive to be true to our values, acknowledge truth in others and to discern and promote truth in the wider world. The foresight and wisdom of the Dominican sisters has left us with a rich heritage. Their vision for education for justice, intellectual challenge and right relationships inspire us.

The journey to our 125th anniversary in 2019 is mapped by a strategic intent that honours our past and shapes our future. This strategy has three key themes: Identity and Culture; Discerning Scholarship; and Growing and Transforming.

Our identity and culture refers to our Christian Catholic faith, our particular Dominican expression of that faith, and what that means in the context of a school in the 21st century. It also refers to the holistic dimension of education. Students are encouraged to embrace the broader life of the College through active involvement in diverse music, sport, service and co-curricular opportunities.

The second theme, Discerning Scholarship, is about creating qualities of engagement in learning K-12, where curiosity, application, and tenacity are part of the endeavour. It is much more about attitudes and approaches to learning than simply the results of testing and measurement.

The third theme, Growing and Transforming, recognises the significance of strategic partnerships with community and professional bodies to enhance our students’ education. It also recognises that technology has dramatically changed the way we learn and communicate, and the possibilities this offers for flexible learning opportunities beyond traditional school structures and times. We are always mindful of our stewardship of the environment, and are committed to responsible use of all resources.

The strategic intent is reflected in the stories captured here from staff, students, parents and ex-students. There is a thread that unites all of these stories – and this is a genuine love and sense of belonging to Santa Sabina College.

We invite you to read, enjoy, and indeed to add the next chapter of our story.

Dr Maree Herrett
College Principal

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College Mission

Santa Sabina College, a Catholic school in the Dominican tradition, educates students to achieve personal excellence, act with justice and compassion, and embrace the future with an optimistic global vision.

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It is such a privilege to witness the beginnings of a child’s educational journey. The safe and nurturing environment of Santa Maria del Monte, our Primary School, provides a fantastic place for children to learn and grow. As Head of the Primary School, nothing excites me more than witnessing the joy that comes from boys and girls discovering, exploring and making meaning of their world.

We are excited to be recognised as a candidate school for the Primary Years Programme and pursuing authorisation as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy - a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that Santa Sabina believes is important for our students.

At Del Monte, learning happens everywhere. Whether it’s in the classrooms, on the playground or the sports field, our students are encouraged to question and experiment and they are given every opportunity to thrive. Technology is woven through the curriculum with students bringing their own device from Year 3. Specialist teachers encourage students to explore creative self-expression through music and drama, physical activity and language curriculum. Our gifted education program as well as Reading Recovery, ensures every child’s needs are catered for. Our students are supported by a community of teachers, students and parents and each one is made to feel they belong. Small class sizes and dedicated teachers encourage expansion of the regular curriculum. Programs such as Bright Start in Kindergarten as well as the Buddy System across all years, support the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of students. Families also have access to specialised health professionals who offer Speech and Occupational Therapy.

Our children can participate in a range of co-curricular activities including jujitsu, chess, and speech and drama, as well as an extensive array of sport and musical ensembles.

There is something for everyone and each child is encouraged to participate.

With an emphasis on individual strengths, a strong foundation is set with students learning how to learn. Children graduate from Del Monte well prepared to meet the exciting challenges awaiting them.

Sharon Portlock
Head of Primary

Early Foundations

IB learners we strive to be:

- inquirers
- thinkers
- communicators
- risk takers
- knowledgeable
- principled
- caring
- open-minded
- balanced
- reflective
At Santa Sabina we pursue personal excellence by developing student capacity to succeed; to succeed academically and succeed in having a sense of purpose and value. As a teacher in the College for over 20 years, my own attraction to a Santa Sabina education is that it empowers life-long learners with the knowledge, skill and faith to create a hope-filled view of the world. We view students as the active agents of their learning. I am immensely proud of the degree to which we know our students and enable their learning journey.

The College is committed to education that is grounded in academic research and fosters a culture of scholarly inquiry. The teachers of Santa Sabina College are committed to enhancing student learning, well-being and resilience through innovative pedagogies sympathetic to the developmental learning needs of students. We champion academic excellence across a breadth of courses and students have access to diverse learning pathways.

The learning culture of the College reflects our Dominican commitment to the education of each student to her full potential, by exercising discernment, the ability to know what you don’t know, ask good questions and make good judgments. Positive education underpins our approach to an integrated learning experience within curriculum, pastoral and co-curricular programs. Creative thinkers and independent learners are motivated to pursue learning. We strive to engage our students so that they develop the capacity and interest to take risks, to develop new skills and to pursue goals with determination and vitality.

Students are provided with opportunities and structures to create and promote strong and nourishing relationships. We strive to increase our positivity through friendships, strengthening social and emotional intelligence, developing resilience and teamwork and allowing a place for reflection and forgiveness. Homeroom and House groups are a place where students and staff serve each other with respect and support, developing meaningful relationships and experiencing the joy of celebration.

As Head of Students, I take great pride in the contribution of students, parents and teachers to know and grow students on their path to success. Santa Sabina College provides the freedom for individuals to flourish within a collaborative community which affirms and challenges.

Elizabeth Brooks
Head of Students 6-12

- The Middle School programs have been developed from research which identifies the learning needs and best practice in education for this stage of adolescent development.
- Students in Years 6-12 participate in a weekly mentoring session which assists students in goal setting and engagement.
Santa Sabina College is committed to education that is intellectually challenging and grounded in academic research.
I am a teacher because of the education I received at Santa Sabina – expansive, enabling and a gift of service. Every day at Santa Sabina, our students are presented with opportunities to develop their learning both in and beyond the classroom and that is one of the most exciting and dynamic elements of the College.

It is an education which challenges, stretches and enriches. Our students K-12 are nurtured to be their best self, to support each other and to grow our community and take their place in the world as global citizens.

The Dominican charism is dynamic and authentic. We live our College Mission by upholding the pillars of Community, Learning, Service and Prayer as the core values of the College. Students are encouraged to use the Gospel truth “Veritas” as the lens through which they look at the world and identify the needs of others. It is a constant challenge to live with integrity and authenticity, in relationship with God, with ourselves and with each other.

Contemplative and prayer experiences nurture all members of the community and students readily engage in liturgy, retreat experiences and service of others, modelling the values passed on to us by the Dominican sisters, acknowledging that we must always critically analyse our current environment. Catholic Social Teaching impels us to see what is around us, judge with an open mind and to act with compassion.

Our immersion experiences to South Africa and Central Australia educate mind, body and spirit. Social justice education and outreach opportunities develop empathy, courage, and a discerning world view. Reflection on experiences is integral to the life-changing learning that occurs.

In choosing a Santa Sabina education for my own daughter, I know she is in a supportive and challenging learning environment. She is known as an individual and is given a rich array of opportunities to enable her to grow and to become her best for the world.

Dominique Martinia
Head of Mission & Identity
My family is my world – having six children aged 4-15 years is a challenge and people think life must be so busy – well it is, but it’s made easier at Santa. Santa Sabina College is more than just a school. It is an extension of our family and each child feels part of a welcoming and nurturing community.

Having gone back to full time work this year, the convenience of Mary Bailey House Early Education Centre has never been more important. As it is located on the Primary School Campus, it makes that crazy morning drop off that much easier. Santa is one of the very few schools which offers long day care from 7am-6pm. Hugh enjoys the stimulating philosophy based on the highly regarded Reggio Emilia principles.

Del Monte is a co-ed junior school to year 4. It’s wonderful to be able to send my boys and girls to the same Primary School. Declan, Neve and Phoebe all enjoy the opportunities available to them. They are involved in anything they can get their hands on, music, sport, speech and drama. Having the extra-curricular activities conducted on site means that the kids can all be involved and I’m not spending afternoons as a taxi service.

Eloise has thrived in the Middle School. It is situated on the Secondary Campus, but nestled away in its own supportive and nurturing environment. Eloise’s transition to high school has been supported by this environment.

The close community of Year 6 and Year 7 students has fostered confidence and independence in Eloise and made her an enthusiastic, engaged and confident learner.

Chelsea loves being a Santa girl. The range of subjects available to her is great and she regularly spends afternoons in the library researching assignments. Having her own iPad means that she doesn’t have to share the family’s iPad and the new ICT facilities at the College means she is connected wherever she goes onsite.

Tallong, Santa Sabina’s Outdoor Education Centre holds a special place in the lives of my children. It is where they share in camps for school activities, from Music to Maths as well as outdoor education programs and spiritual retreats. The kids love participating in environmental studies, problem solving tasks, rope courses, orienteering, abseiling, rock climbing, bushwalks, canoeing, rafting and archery. The trained and experienced staff ensure that each trip to Tallong is a life-changing one for my children.

My husband, Robert, and I couldn’t be happier with our choice of school for our children. We know that the values we instil at home are reflected at Santa and that each and every one of our children’s unique talents and needs are nurtured, cherished and championed.

Lynette Trainor
Parent

The College boasts modern purpose-built facilities within the original heritage listed buildings and incorporates an Early Education Centre for children from 6 weeks to preschool, an OOSH centre for before and after school care and vacation programs and Tallong, an Outdoor Education and Retreat Centre in the beautiful Southern Highlands.

Exploring our Campuses
Leadership is more than a badge, more than simply fulfilling a role. It is an opportunity to wholeheartedly be of service to others. As a student of the College since Kindergarten, Santa Sabina has given me the opportunity to unlock my leadership potential, and prepared me for my role as a College Leader, an honour I accept confidently and capably.

I may not be the most talented sports person, musician or artist, but what I do know and have a strong belief in, is that I was born to serve those around me. This has been fostered, developed and nurtured by the fantastic leadership opportunities across the College starting at Del Monte and culminating with the year 10 Leadership Pillars Program.

To say leadership is a role understates its importance. It is delving beyond, not standing above others but amongst them. It is not loud. It is quiet. It is humble not boastful. A true leader, a leader Santa Sabina helps develop, is one that does not seek acknowledgement or recognition for her deeds, but gains joy from seeing the difference they make in the lives of others.

My vision for leadership at the College is to create a vibrant community where each student can come to school feeling accepted and respected – being confident in who they are and what they can bring to our school, a community that is testament to our strong Dominican foundations. In a world blinded by materialistic consumption and self-obsession, we can still grasp who we are. I want others to be inspired by Santa Sabina students and for us to set the world on fire.

Veritas is more than a label. It is a living reality. In this day and age where people are afraid to stand up for what is right, stand up for the truth, Santa Sabina students live and breathe it. Santa Sabina leaders aim to enlighten, empower and inspire students.

Bridget Elias
Year 12

- Student Leadership programs in the Primary, Middle and Secondary schools emphasise service, teamwork, taking initiative and developing responsibility. Students develop skills of independence, co-operation and problem solving.
When I first started at Santa Sabina as a Year 7 student, I had hoped I could continue playing sports and being active - I could never have imagined the other fantastic opportunities that were waiting for me here!

I love my teachers and my classes – but the best part of my days are the co-curricular activities I participate in. I have always loved the fact that I can be involved in so many different activities and I am encouraged by staff and students at Santa to give everything a go.

Living in the Sutherland Shire and catching the train to school means that I am sometimes time poor. As most of the training and a lot of the competitions are held on site, it means I can participate in activities without having to travel.

I love music; it lets me showcase my talents creatively. I play piano and violin and I was in the choir in younger years as well. At Santa, we have many opportunities to participate in different music ensembles and there are so many opportunities to perform. I’m even thinking of taking up taiko drumming which will let me be musical and active at the same time.

My brother would tell you I was born arguing, so nothing suits me more than being involved in debating. Confidence and the ability to think on my feet have been the greatest skills learnt. Some of my closest friends are girls I have met through debating and I look forward to continuing it in my senior years.

I was recently awarded my Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Bronze medal for outdoor education – this was a great achievement and I have loved the challenges and experiences of this program. I’ve learnt initiative, resilience and leadership - skills I can use in other areas of my life.

But I must say, I love nothing better than playing team sports. In summer I play basketball and in winter I participate in Aquathon. With over 20 sports to choose from, I was bound to find something I loved. I have made so many friends playing sport across the College and it’s a great balance to my study.

Bethany Burke
Year 11

Students participation in music, sport, service and co-curricular opportunities is such an essential part of their education. It is not just about the acquisition of new skills, but also about expanding students’ friendship and social circles, balancing the demands of academic life, and building resilience.
Graduating from school was bitter-sweet. I was excited at the promised life beyond the gates of Santa Sabina, but immensely sad to be leaving the comfort of the school community which had so lovingly embraced me since Kindergarten.

The camaraderie forged at Santa Sabina follows you for life; my Santa friends are still my best friends. And the school which waved me off all those years ago still welcomes me back with open arms today. The Alumni Association invites and welcomes ex-students to reunions, networking breakfasts, careers evenings, playgroups, Melbourne Cup lunches, St Dominic Day celebrations and the College Fair.

I've held a variety of enriching and challenging roles since finishing school - wife, mother, lawyer and business development writer to name a few. I recognise that I owe these titles in no small part to another one I wear with great honour – ‘Santa girl’. Santa Sabina affords its students much more than an education. It inspires. It empowers. It makes you see life and all it throws at you with a unique vision – one built upon a fierce sense of social justice, independence, loyalty and work ethic, regardless of what it is you call your work. Most significantly, it arms you with the tools a woman needs to succeed in the world and a burning desire to leave your mark in the world by striving in all aspects of your life to learn and to speak and to seek the truth – Veritas.

I am blessed with three beautiful children, including two girls, who will be the fourth generation of our family to attend Santa Sabina College. After considering the vast choice of options for our daughters’ secondary education, we made this decision because we are excited at the exceptional opportunities Santa will provide for our children, the lasting friendships it will enable them to form, and the values we know it will help us instill in them - integrity, justice and excellence.

Caitlin Catalano (nee Mackay)
Ex-student

The Dominican connection stretches across the world. Thousands of proud Alumni with remarkable achievements inspire our younger generations. They offer valuable contributions to the College and continue to enrich the Santa Sabina community - a community that they will belong to forever.
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