

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre Annual Report 2023



About This Report

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre (SMFLC) is registered by NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the NSW Flexi Schools Network under the governance of Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Schools Ltd (EREA).

The Annual School Report to the Community for this year provides the SMFLC community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines information regarding school improvement initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year. Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and EREA.

This Report has been approved by EREA to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration. This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications.

Following its submission to NESA, the Report will be presented to the SMFLC community, and be available on the school's website by 30 June 2024.

Further information about the school or this Report may be obtained by contacting the school:

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Web: <https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/st-marys-flc/>

Message from Key School Bodies

Head of Campus Message:

2023 saw St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre complete its 9th year of operation as an Edmund Rice Education Australia school. This year saw changes in our governance structure as the Flexible Learning School's moved under a separate organisation to our EREA mainstream schools, while our NSW Flexi's moved apart from our joint NSW/Victoria Network to become our own network.

We welcomed two new Youth Workers, Jamal and Ethan into our staff team this year who have come to us from a variety of experiences spanning local primary schools and work in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and Western Australia outback. These Youth Workers have blended well into our school community and help to provide high levels of support for all Young People.

Each year, we lose a number of our experienced Young People but the advantage of this is that there are always others who then grow naturally into leaders of our school space, providing support for their peers as well as taking ownership to improve the learning and activity spaces in our school. Some students have helped us this year to initiate whole school activities including a Halloween celebration and a Family Fun Day.

Our school remains in high demand, and we continue to have a waiting list to manage enrolments. We continue to actively search for a new site that could accommodate larger numbers and have commenced negotiations with some properties with the aim of finding an opportunity that would allow us to expand and reduce these waiting times to meet the needs of the community.

Engaging with families been a focus of our year with the aim of providing a meaningful way for families to connect with our school community in every term. Term 1 was a Family Fun Day at our Flexi with arts and crafts, a dunk tank and face painting. In Term 2, we held a Presentation Day to acknowledge the wonderful work that our students had been completed in the first half of the year. Term 3 was a Family Day at Werrington Lakes including a volleyball match and treasure hunt. We finished the year with our Annual End of Year Presentation with whole school and class awards as well as a full Christmas Lunch for all staff, students, families and community members.

Some highlights from our curriculum work this year included our water and environment unit where Stage 5 classes each had to build a raft to carry them across water. Stage 5 classes also analysed alcohol and safety, showcasing the effects of a Coward Punch. In our 'Deadly Nations' unit, students painted their own designs on a range of boomerangs, clapsticks, basketballs and footballs. Our Stage 4 class have been very practical with their learning. They built a prototype 'Trash Interceptor' when investigating the impact of rubbish in our waterways. While exploring energy solutions, they also constructed miniature houses with solar panels. Additionally, we have had multiple students complete a Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways. We also chose to continue to use Essential Assessment as a main program to support the literacy and numeracy development of Young People.

We continued with our outdoor education program that we commenced last year by undertaking another two camping trips open to all students. You can read more about them further in this document.

Michael Loudoun - Head of Campus

School Context

SMFLC is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Schools Networks (EREAFSN) and is conducted in accordance with EREAFSN philosophy and principles. SMFLC commenced operation as a registered Non-Government School in 2015 and is part of a national association (EREA) of over fifty schools which included, in 2022, twenty-two Flexible Learning Centres.

The philosophy of SMFLC draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia and is grounded in the Edmund Rice Education Australia Charter document (see <https://www.erea.edu.au/about-us-the-charter/>). The document has a clear commitment to social justice, inclusive communities, liberating education and gospel spirituality, and stands in solidarity with disenfranchised Young People of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds. The philosophy also has a practical focus, based in the application of four core principles of “Respect” (for self, others and environment), “Safe and Legal” environment, “Participation” (have a go) and “Honesty” (being fair dinkum) among all participants of the SMFLC. This is evident in the ways the organisational culture and practices are shaped through the application of these principles. In essence, the principles establish a “common ground” among staff, Young People and parents, a collective forum, where the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences are modelled and explored, both within the group individually, and as members of the broader community.

The 2019 Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration outlines a vision for education which “encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face”. To this end, SMFLC works in close partnership with Young People, families, carers, government and non-government bodies in committing to:

- empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to reach their potential and to ensuring the education community works to ‘close the gap’ for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- ensuring the education community works to provide equality of opportunity and educational outcomes for all students at risk of educational disadvantage.
- helping young Australians navigate the choices they will need to make for their education, training and employment by providing guidance and streamlining transitions.

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration on the Education Goals for Young Australians calls for improved educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged Australians, and states:

“Australian Governments commit to working with all school sectors to

- *‘close the gap’ for young Indigenous Australians*
- *provide targeted support to disadvantaged students*
- *focus on school improvement in low socioeconomic areas”*

(Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. 2008, p.15)

SMFLC works with Young People who are vulnerable and experience a complexity of inter-related needs. Participation, engagement and retention are key elements in the philosophy of SMFLC, and the development of moral reasoning through the application of the four principles prepares Young People for responsible citizenship. The learning experiences also build self-confidence and esteem in Young People, promote an optimistic view of their potential and future, and assists them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life.

SMFLC offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to Young People, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education. Young People are enrolled from all gender identities, from a variety of language, cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to First Nations culture, and from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage. Young People are exposed to learning experiences that develop understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultural values that constitute Australian society and specifically addresses the needs of Young People and families from the Western Sydney Nepean region. Importantly Young People are encouraged to participate in decision making processes that affect the school community, their own lives and the society in which they live. Learning is focused around the individual needs of Young People and progress is carefully documented and monitored. Young people, in conjunction with their teachers and youth workers, draft learning plans with articulated education pathways that are reviewed and extended upon throughout each school year.

Each of our classes function as a small community led by a teacher and a youth worker who operate as a partnership to facilitate learning options and support Young People's wellbeing and social development.

EREAFSN Foundation Statement

EREAFSN seeks to respond to the needs of Young People disenfranchised and disengaged from education. EREAFSN provides a place and an opportunity to re-engage in a suitable, flexible learning environment.

EREAFSN seeks to build honest and authentic relationships with Young People, their families and communities, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each person. We are guided by the vision of Edmund Rice about the empowering service of education, to achieve personal and community liberation through educational experiences that enable transformation.

Operation by Principles and Common Ground – (Actions taken by the school to promote respect and responsibility)

The concept of '*common ground*' applies to all who choose to participate in our services. Adults and Young People alike commit to participate in a learning environment that is democratic, relational and operates through key principles.

Relationships at our services are based on a respect for personal dignity and recognition of difference. An emphasis is placed on the peaceful resolution of conflict and spirituality is recognised as a universal human experience. Rather than being rule governed, the school uses principles, which are agreed upon (established common ground) as a basis for respectful social engagement amongst the community including Young People, parents and staff. The principles are:

**RESPECT,
PARTICIPATION,
SAFE and LEGAL, and
HONESTY**

These principles are used to guide group relationships. They represent broad directions for group practice and establish a common ethical framework which promotes appropriate learning and personal relationships.

The consequence of operating within a common ground set of principles is that all group participants, whether they are staff, Young People or parents, are responsible and accountable for their behaviour, while allowing everyone to have a voice. Within this framework emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for the articulation of issues and their resolution. Considerable time, sensitivity and skill are often required to allow for briefing, challenge and registration of on-going expectations. Honest and open communication enables Young People, parents/carers and staff to demonstrate their satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the school.

Parent and Carer Support and Involvement

SMFLC recognises that parents/carers are the primary educators of their Young People, while remaining sensitive to the fact that many Young People live independently of their families. We recognise our critical role in educating parents and carers, and being the link between Young People and their carers in times of stress and crisis.

Particular reference is made to recognition of First Nations Culture through integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes in our curriculum and recognising National Days and Celebrations as well as increasing use of local Darug language including in all class names and weekly interaction with a Deadly Dreaming program.

Class Staff (teacher and youth worker) have regular contact with parents and carers via phone conversations and catch-ups that happen almost daily. The importance of this informal contact cannot be overestimated. Parents and carers often phone wellbeing staff or the Head of Campus to share information or to ask for advice, and most particularly seek and share strategies and supports in times of crisis.

Parents and carers are invited into Operation by Principle as participants in Collaborative Problem Solving meetings with staff and Young People. Staff seek the input of parents and carers in negotiating a way forward with Young People. Staff often conduct home visits to encourage Young Person engagement through outreach and participation in on-site classes.

St Mary's FLC supports and encourages this role of parents/carers through: presentation ceremonies, newsletters, cultural and social celebrations, parents/carer meetings and home visits. Families and out of home care facilities are viewed as partners in their children's educational experience. While family circumstances may be related to Young People's alienation, the importance of building positive family relationships is a priority. We also have a network transition staff member who makes check in calls with families after a Young Person has left our school to track pathways and determine if they would benefit from any further support.

Individualised Education Program and Learning Plans

Curriculum plans are attuned to the individual Young Person by an assessment of need and delivery within a supportive environment that will re-engage the Young Person with learning and encourage a sense of community. Personal Learning Plans are developed by the class staff partnership and negotiated with Young People to form an integral part of daily learning programs. Personal Learning Plans are informed by diagnostic testing in literacy and numeracy also, providing a snapshot of the Young Person's current needs and future aspirations.

Through this living document, Young People articulate their learning, social, emotional and personal needs and goals. They are dynamic documents that respond to the changing contexts of Young People as they progress through stages of life, and importantly the achievement of goals and milestones are celebrated. The Personal Learning Plans are revisited and adjusted frequently throughout the year. Teachers use this information to make learning and environmental adjustments for each Young Person, which they apply from a trauma-informed practice.

Diagnostic Testing

Usually a Young Person enrolling in the program comes with little or no documented educational history and therefore it can be difficult to ascertain their current educational ability and needs. To ensure that a Young Person is getting appropriate learning material we undertake a literacy and numeracy assessment of their current ability. This is initially completed using the Essential Assessment online assessment tool. Essential Assessment is able to provide a formative and summative assessment which is differentiated to the needs of each Young Person. It links literacy and numeracy outcomes to content across the Australian and NSW Curricula.

All Year 7 and 9 students are invited to participate in the NAPLAN testing. In consultation with our Young People and their families, we support all students whether they choose to participate in NAPLAN or not. As a Special Assistance School, there is insufficient NAPLAN data available to provide meaningful analysis.

Rhythm, Routine and Ritual

Structure and predictability help Young People who have experienced trauma to feel safe and enables them to take safe risks and to develop. SMFLC has built routine and ritual into daily practice in order to create a calm and predictable learning environment for Young People. This also produces positive outcomes in Young People's ability to negotiate and communicate, to think critically, to make decisions and to build their social capability.

Each day the community conducts an extended check-in session at the beginning of the day, based on the First Nations cultural practice of yarning circles. Yarning circles "encourage responsible, respectful and honest interactions between participants, building trusting relationships, foster accountability

and provide a safe place to be heard and to respond, [and] promote interactions and community connections” (2017, <https://www.yarning.com.au/what-is-yarning>). This session allows Young People to share issues of concern, address problems, air grievances and communicate openly with staff. It also allows days of significance to be marked, celebrated and discussed, for example Easter and Youth Week festivities.

Each learning session or activity begins with a Working Agreement, in which staff negotiate with Young People the ways in which Common Ground will be expressed through the Four Principles within the time period.

First Nations Perspectives

We at St Mary’s Flexi acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters on which our schools are located. The Dharawal peoples. We honour and respect the cultural heritage, customs and beliefs of all First Nations’ people. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have spiritual, social, and cultural connections with these traditional lands and waters. We give thanks for the contribution these diverse cultures and identities have made to our community. We recognise that these lands and waters have never been ceded, no treaty has ever been recognised and that WE ARE ON STOLEN LAND.

Through collaborative and respectful partnerships, staff and students of St Mary’s Flexi are committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming and sustaining environment, and a culturally enriching education for all children and Young People. First Nations People are celebrated within the school community and many rituals and daily practices are centred around First Nations culture. We use circle time often, and we create dynamic working agreements to support individual needs and ways of working. We have a presence within the wider community as a safe and radically inclusive school that works closely with our Young People’s family and community to best support their attendance and learning goals at school. We intentionally incorporate the 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning into our classroom practice and ensure our staffing team is leading in cultural competencies. This year our Young People participated in Deadly Dreaming workshops, and Aboriginal art and dance classes lead by local First Nations facilitators. Young People researched their own cultural background, learned the history of the didgeridoo and clap sticks (bullroarers) and painted a life dreaming on a didgeridoo or bullroarers incorporating their ancestral past. These programs also provided opportunities for Young People to explore musical endeavours such as learning how to create music beats, lyric writing, learning about the history of hip hop, trying skills in mixing music tracks and creating a music track reflecting culture.

Learning Choices

The school’s educational approach includes flexible timetabling, smaller learning groups, and relevant curriculum. This enables the delivery of creative responses to the learning needs of the individual Young Person, incorporating their cultural and spiritual backgrounds and history of trauma.

The school’s learning programs comply with NESA Mandatory Course requirements for Stage 4 and 5 of schooling, with a strong emphasis on providing meaningful and engaging learning through individual adjustments and personal learning plans.

In 2023, our school continued to work with the EREA Registered Training Organisation which exists to assist our Flexible Learning Centre's nationwide to provide more future pathways for our Young People. The Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways is our primary course and is integral in providing access pathways for any of our Young People who wish to pursue further education options including TAFE courses. It has an added benefit that many of the required and elective units are directly related to a range of workplace skills. This helps to prepare our students for the workforce and can show employers that our Young People have the specific skills that they require. In 2023, we had 6 Young People complete the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways and another 21 Young People obtain a certificate of attainment for partial completion. We are actively assisting these students to progress into work or further TAFE studies as they finish their Certificate.

Encouraging students learning outside of the classroom is a large part of our plan to engage our at-risk Young People. Each class undertakes regular outings as well as having whole school excursions. These include physical activity outings which may involve swimming or bushwalking as well as trips to learn about local history anywhere from Sydney City to the Blue Mountains. In 2023, we tried some new venues including playing and watching golf, a few art galleries and Lake Parramatta. We find that these opportunities allow for social, emotional and educational growth in Young People.

Multi-Disciplinary Teams

Team members use a multi-disciplinary approach to provide health, educational, cultural, social and emotional support for Young People. Educational, community and allied health professionals are encouraged to collaborate closely to provide wrap around care for the Young Person. Information is shared and expertise is respected. The youth workers on staff, led by the Head of Wellbeing work holistically to develop links with external support agencies such as Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Family and Community Services, Drug & Alcohol support services, housing and accommodation services, Drug Rehabilitation and Juvenile Justice.

Young Person Support

Each Young Person at SMFLC belongs to a class which is facilitated in partnership by a teacher and youth worker called key workers. The role of the staff partnerships is to establish a close relationship to the Young Person, collaborate with them to develop a Personal Learning Plan, monitor their progress, advocate on their behalf, provide advice, support and direct referrals in times of acute distress, and to support the Young Person to achieve their stated personal and educational goals. Staff receive regular training in de-escalation and teaching from a trauma-informed education model. As part of our multi-faceted approach to supporting the health and wellbeing of our Young People, we run a kitchen which provides 3 meals a day. We have continued to encourage Young People to learn coffee making barista skills to add to their resumes and to support them accessing external industry recognised barista qualifications.

Curriculum

SMFLC provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of Young People, and promotes their emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and academic development. Learning programs are developed with the intention to:

- empower Young People to take personal responsibility for their learning

- support Young People to become independent learners
- address deficits or gaps in literacy and numeracy
- develop in Young People the skills and dispositions of twenty first century learners including collaboration, innovation and knowledge creation,
- recognise and celebrate the skills and knowledge of Young People,
- enable Young People to experience challenge within a safe and supportive learning environment
- provide a sense of achievement that is relevant and authentic to the real world

Learning experiences address NESA Mandatory Courses for years 7 to 10 with a strong focus on Literacy and Numeracy. Courses offered appear below.

NESA Mandatory Courses	
Stage 4	English, Mathematics, Science, Personal Development Health and Physical Education, Geography, History
Stage 5	English, Mathematics, Science, Personal Development Health and Physical Education, Geography, History

Community Engagement and Wellbeing Programs

Community and Team Building

Sport and outdoor activities continue to make up a large part of the timetable SMFLC, and help us to build a positive community within our school. This included sport and recreation bookings with PCYC Shalvey and Penrith, Don Bosco Youth Centre and St Mary’s Indoor Sports Centre. SMFLC participated in the Sporting Schools NSW program which focuses which enabled us to purchase additional sporting equipment including netball posts and a new basketball backboard.

Youth Workshops

Our school continued to host and attend a variety of workshops over the year. These workshops have been designed for our Young People to gain knowledge and skills in areas of personal growth and development that aren’t part of the usual school curriculum. We have been fortunate to have many community organisations offer their expertise and to give their time to our students. Workshops offered throughout 2023 included Walk the Talk where we learnt about the prevalence and effects of domestic violence with our YP able to make gifts to donate to a local women’s shelter. We also had the local police liaison youth officer in to discuss social media and online bullying with students. The Western Area Adolescent Health Team from Mt Druitt came out to discuss sexual health issues with both males and females in separate groups.

Live Theatre

We had an option for all YP to attend a play at Casual Powerhouse called 13 Suitcases. This play was performed by a group of recent refugees to tell real life stories that fitted in well with a unit of learning that classes were undertaking. Our Badu class also arranged a formal evening out at the theatre to

finish their school year. They watched Beauty and the Beast at the Capital Theatre in Sydney after an evening meal at a nearby restaurant.

Cultural Group

In 2023, we continued to work closely with Indigenous workers from Street Uni run by the Ted Noffs foundation. This provided us with fortnightly lessons and workshops about local Indigenous history as well as an opportunity to learn and develop DJ music skills at the Street Uni, Mt Druitt site. We also invited a locally based Aboriginal artist and elder, Walangari Karntawarra into our community to complete a weekly program during Term 4 with our Young People to support our teaching of Aboriginal culture, dance and music.

Holiday Activities

As we have done every year, our Young People were engaged in a range of holiday activities where we have opened up the school for food, games, cooking and conversations as well as organised outings to pools, laser tag, movies and lunches.

Outdoor Adventure Camps

This year we offered the option for Young People to come on two outdoor adventure camps. The first trip was a 3 day, 2 night trip to Coledale Beach Campground, near Wollongong. Young People slept in tents with mattresses and helped to cook meals. We met up with some Wollongong Flexi students and staff at Lake Illawarra and did some kayaking and fishing. The second trip was for 2 nights also at Killalea Regional Park. We took a day trip to Jamberoo Action Park. These trips have been tremendously successful, with new Young People coming along each time we go.

Transition to Work Opportunities

Transition to Work is offered as an elective-type program at St Marys Flexi, whereby Young People self-refer when necessary. We have a Transition to Work Officer within the staffing team. They support Young People to explore further education, training, work experience and work as a connector to the workforce for our community. This year, the Young People at St Marys Flexi were highly engaged in the Transition to Work space, across the school cohort the following programs and TAFE visits took place:

NSW White Card- Construction Induction

Girls Can Do- This was a full week program where female young people were given the opportunity to explore several traditionally male-dominated trades. These included Plumbing, Construction, Electrical, Engineering and Automotive. They were provided with entry level skills and at the completion of the week attended a presentation and awarded a certificate of attainment.

Trade Readiness Programs- Introduction to Plumbing, Introduction to Carpentry, Introduction to Civil Construction.

Work Readiness Program- Resumes and cover letters, job hunting journey, job interviews, appropriate workplace behaviour.

Social Media and Content Creation Workshop- This workshop taught highly desirable and transferrable employability skills, in a time where almost everyone needs to have social media and content creation skills. Young people were taught how to use social media as a business tool and were taken through the career opportunities in this industry. They then created their own digital media advertisement.

NTS Site Visit- NTS telecommunications are a St Marys based family-owned company with over 30 employees. Students were shown around, explained what the business does and what the career opportunities are. They did some hands-on/practical activities to further explore the careers.

Western Sydney Career Expo

TAFE Hair and Beauty Taster- Participants got to experience firsthand cutting and styling techniques used in the hairdressing industry.

CPR and 1st Aid Course

Picnic Table Project- Table constructed by Young People was placed in a community area with a plaque on it to commemorate the process and those involved.

Young Person Enrolments

2023 Young Person Enrolments	
Male	42
Female	38
Other	2
Total	82
Indigenous	44
LBOTE	0

Characteristics of the Student Body

The Young People represent a diverse population of indigenous (51%) and non-indigenous males and females of secondary school age, up to 19 years. The Young People who attend SMFLC have typically experienced significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations which demand unique responses. Some Young People present with diagnosed disabilities but many show signs of learning difficulties, and undiagnosed conduct disorders or unstable mental health. The support for our Young People is embedded within an educational framework but also typically involve medical, multidisciplinary, legal and/or social support personnel and systems.

2023 Enrolment by Gender and Attendance

These attendance figures are higher than typical for our setting due to the COVID-19 pandemic and dual learning options from school or home.

2023 Young People Enrolment by Gender and Attendance Rates by Year Level					
YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	Other Gender	TOTAL	ATTENDANCE RATES
7	2	4	0	6	60%
8	6	4	0	10	65%

9	12	7	0	19	47%
10	21	24	2	47	45%
TOTAL	41	39	2	82	49%

School Management of Non-Attendance

Attendance requirements are established to maximise the Young Person's learning opportunities and performance. All enrolled Young People are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent. Parents/carers have a responsibility to assist the Young Person to attend school regularly and a further responsibility to contact the school explaining why absence has occurred when the Young Person is domiciled with them. The particular circumstances of each Young Person are considered in the context of this policy. SMFLC is open to support any arrangements that suit family and student needs to help to improve and encourage higher attendance rates. These include but are not limited to providing plans with reduced days and/or times to be at school, phone calls home to students and parents, off-site and home visits to students and parents and provision of work through booklets and online learning.

Post School Destinations

Many Young People from 2023 are expected to return to the school in 2024. We also have many Young People join and leave us throughout the year so we typically have a large number of Young People move on in the course of a year. Of those that left we have students enrolled into Certificate III courses in TAFE and others returning to mainstream secondary school to complete the HSC as well as several moving into part time or full time work.

Destination	Number of Young People
Employment	6
Other Secondary School	12
TAFE Courses	2
Unknown	21

Professional Learning

SMFLC is committed to the ongoing professional development and formation of staff. This continues to enrich the educational opportunities provided for our Young People and models to our Young People the modern reality of lifelong learning. In 2023 staff participated in the following:

- Individual Reflective Supervision
- NSW Flexi Network Conference
- EREAFSN Network New Staff Induction: New Staff
- EREA Child Protection Training
- Technology of Participation Days
- EREA Identity Leaders Meeting: Head of Campus
- Berry Street Education Model: New Staff
- First Aid and Resuscitation – Annually
- Fire Safety Training
- Foundation Skills Training
- ASIST – Suicide Prevention Training

Teaching Staff Details

Accreditation Status	Number of Teachers
Proficient	5
Provisional	0
Conditional	0

Workforce Composition

Teachers	5
Youth Workers	6
Support Staff	2
Workers Identifying as Indigenous	0
Total number of staff	13

Feedback

Informal feedback from parents throughout the year indicated satisfaction towards the school and processes particularly in the flexible way that school could respond to individual student circumstances with transport support as well as wellbeing support. Parents also appreciated the familial support in encouraging parents to be a part of collaborative problem solving but being flexible when they were unavailable and also the additional familial support in providing food packages as required. Student feedback indicated appreciation of our school holiday program allowing people the opportunity to stay connected during holidays. Informal staff feedback indicated staff appreciation at the level of flexibility and involvement that the school is able to provide due to our small size. Indirect feedback in relation to high retention rates in both students and staff indicate majority levels of strong satisfaction from all parties.

School Policies

The following gives a summary of some of the school policies in use. Copies of all policies are available from the school office. Policies required to be available publicly are available via the school website below:

<https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/st-marys-flc/>

Enrolment Policy Summary

Full text available at

<https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Student-Welfare-Enrolment-and-Attendance-Compliance-Policy.pdf>

SMFLC offers a non-fee paying, inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to Young People, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education. Young People are enrolled from both genders, from a variety of language, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture, and from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage.

The Young People enrolled have typically experienced one or more significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations which demand unique responses as Young People who are at risk or have disengaged: Young People in out of home care, Aboriginal Young People, young offenders, Young People affected by homelessness, newly arrived and refugee Young People, young parents and carers, Young People with disabilities and Young People with mental health concerns.

This policy complies with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws. Enrolment interviews are conducted to assess a Young Person's needs in the light of the above criteria and to assess the Flexible Learning Centre's ability and resources to meet those needs.

For informal care arrangements, where a student is not living with a parent/guardian but is living in an informal care arrangement, the school may accept an enrolment form signed by the informal carer if the carer provides a signed Informal Relative Carer's Statutory Declaration to the school. The informal carer may be a relative, significant friend or a person within the child's extended social network.

Student Welfare Policy

Full text available at <https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SMFLC-Safe-and-Supportive-Environment-%E2%80%93-Student-Welfare-Policy-Section-4.1.6.2.pdf>

SMFLC seeks to provide quality education for all Young People, taking account of their age, background, ability and interests, to assist them to become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and for the wider community.

Young People are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy, therefore, Young People welfare is the responsibility of all staff working in a whole school context. Student learning cannot be separated from welfare. Helping Young People to learn effectively and to develop

positive attitudes and behaviours are goals of the St SMFLC community. This requires that each Young Person is educated in an environment which provides for their individual development. SMFLC Welfare Policy including anti-bullying policies, procedure and responsibilities that define bullying, outlines the responsibilities of staff members and sets out clear procedures that the school will take to act on any instance of bullying.

Discipline and Suspension/Expulsion Policies

Full texts available at <https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SMFLC-Suspension-Expulsion-Exclusion-Procedures.pdf>

SMFLC aims to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every person has a right to enjoy their time at school. Respect for others is expected.

When inappropriate behaviour occurs, the following dimensions will be considered in the light of operation by principle

- student behaviour education and pastoral care
- pastoral care for the whole school community
- student connectedness and engagement
- Restorative Practice approaches
- operation by principle as the framework for negotiation (Collaborative Problem Solving)

While SMFLC would always seek to find solutions before moving to suspension or expulsion, there are provisions for these to occur in line with the full policy available at the above link.

Complaints and Grievances Policy Full text available at <https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ComplaintsHandlingGuide-SMFLC.pdf>

SMFLC respects the right of all members of the community to have access to a process, which will give full and fair consideration to any grievance that may arise. All grievances and actions taken will be recorded in a School Complaints Register. The process endeavours to hear in a timely and equitable manner any grievance raised to ensure that the principles of natural justice are followed.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to SMFLC in respect to any action, policy, process or situation relevant to the running of the School by:

- a member of the School community
- any member of the public
- any legal identity

Comment on 2023 Priority Areas

- We have investigated several local sites with the view to find a larger area for the school. We will continue to wait until we find a suitable location.
- We have had multiple staff undertake visits to Flexi's across NSW and also down to Hobart. We also had 2 days where we met with Wollongong Flexi and YP played sports with them. Additionally, we took 4 YP and 2 staff on a trip to Pambula Beach Flexi for a week.
- While we haven't moved forward with a new school or network logo, we did purchase new hoodies and water bottles for all students at school.
- We organised one day each term as an opportunity to bring families together into our school community. We are pleased with the progress and will look to continue that next year.
- We provided a range of leadership opportunities for Young People including sessions where they could sit with staff to discuss positives about the school as well as improvement opportunities. Young People have had the opportunity to be on an interview panel for a new staff member
- We used some additional grant funding to revitalise the space outside the back classroom. It now has new tables and seating as well as outdoor blinds and heating. We also put a shelter over the tables at the front of the school.

Priority Areas for Improvement for 2024

- Continued search for more suitable premises to meet the needs of more Young People in our community who have been excluded from mainstream schooling
- Increasing Staff and Young People opportunities to interact with other EREA Flexi schools
- Increase sense of school connection with YP assisting to create logo which can be used to provide apparel such as shirts and water bottles
- Increase connection with families by providing multiple opportunities for families to join the school throughout the year
- Continue to provide leadership growth opportunities for Young People through conversations and actions
- Revitalise school spaces to make them welcoming, friendly and supportive of learning and relationship building
- Increase engagement in First Nations community services locally to foster recruitment processes to include First Nations staff at St Marys Flexi

St Mary's FLC
Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
REVENUE AND INCOME	2	4,934,605	4,245,057
EXPENSES			
Administration		314,913	308,221
Boarding		-	-
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	3	115,927	70,999
Employee benefits	3	1,703,934	1,625,783
Faculties and co-curricular		121,999	78,790
Finance costs	3	-	1,336
Insurance		40,866	22,668
Operating lease rentals	3	-	-
Maintenance and utility		90,166	76,326
Other expenses from ordinary activities	3	-	-
Trading activities - expenditure	3	-	-
Other significant expenses	3	-	-
Total Expenses		2,387,805	2,184,123
Profit/(Loss) for the year		2,546,800	2,060,934
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Net gain or loss on financial assets measured at fair value through other comprehensive income		-	-
Total other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		2,546,800	2,060,934

Conclusion

SMFLC continues to offer an education option for those who through marginalisation cannot access a standardised education. SMFLC maintains authenticity as an inclusive community and works to provide care, hope and socialisation skills as well as an academic learning program under the governance of NESAs, Catholic Schools NSW and Edmund Rice Education Australia.



Michael Loudoun

Head of Campus

St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre



Adam Richter

Principal

Eastern Region

Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Schools' Networks