

Strategic Plan

of St Thomas Aquinas College

2019 - 2024



Honor Excellentiae Debetur



Saint Thomas Aquinas College

1 Tynong Road, Tynong, P.O. Box 500, Vic 3813
ABN: 54 090 811 911
Reg. No. 1966

A Message from the Principal

“To form in each youth the true and perfect Catholic” is the vision of our College. These words greet me every morning as I drive through the main gate of the school, as I enter the main school foyer, as I kneel prayer at the College chapel and as I witness its gradual realisation in our students.



To form in each youth the true and perfect Catholic is a very high deal. It is in fact the highest of all educational ideals because it is a divine ideal. It is the ideal of God the Father who wishes to form every soul in the image of his Divine Son, Jesus Christ. It ought to be the ideal of every Catholic parent as they share in God the father’s work. It is primarily the work of God through the Holy Mother Church, and it is the glory of St Thomas Aquinas College to be an instrument in the hands of the Divine artist dedicated to this work. For this work to succeed a school must possess the necessary channels of grace like the daily Mass, the abiding presence of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, the daily teaching of the Catholic Faith, the daily prayers and sacrifices of priests and lay staff, which alone will equip it with divine means to nurture the supernatural life of grace in souls “to form in every youth the true and perfect Catholic.”

In line with our vision our strategic plan targets specific goals in the areas of Faith development, curriculum and student. For example, a thorough review of the College’s Humanities and Science coursed in the light of the Catholic faith is being undertaken; pastoral and leadership programmes are being enhanced to help form leaders and above all leaders in the faith; current student welfare issues and improved student resilience programmes will be taught throughout religious classes to help equip students for the pressures of modern life.

We are also very aware of the need to provide our students with an education which is not only Catholic but wholistic. We wish for them to have access to the subjects that will provide the vocational pathways and skills sets they will need for life and for the workforce. For this reason, we are developing partnerships with local educational providers to offer our students access to a formation in trades, hospitality, technology and more. We will also be enhancing the general wellbeing of our students by targeted educational experiences beyond the classroom: House camps, excursions, inter-house and interschool competitions, and international trips.

“To form in each youth the true and perfect Catholic” is the shared vision of our community. If God were not with us we could never be so bold as to aim our targets so high. By help of God’ grace may we be ever mindful of it and ever ready to sacrifice ourselves to achieve it.

Our aim is to form in each youth, the true and perfect Catholic

“It is absurd and a detestable shame, that we should suffer these traditions to be changed which we have received from the fathers of old.”

St Thomas Aquinas

About St Thomas Aquinas College

THE COLLEGE

St Thomas Aquinas College Ltd is a Company limited by guarantee which was formally incorporated in June 1999. The role of STAC Ltd is to provide educational services to Primary and Secondary age students from areas to the south east of Melbourne around Tynong.

STAC Ltd's registered address is at 1 Tynong Road, Tynong VIC 3813.

VISION

The aim of the College is to form in each youth, the true and perfect Catholic.

MISSION

To achieve the Vision, the College will provide a complete education taking in the whole of human life:

- spiritual and physical;
- intellectual & moral;
- individual, domestic and social;

in accordance with the example and teachings of Christ.

OUR VALUES

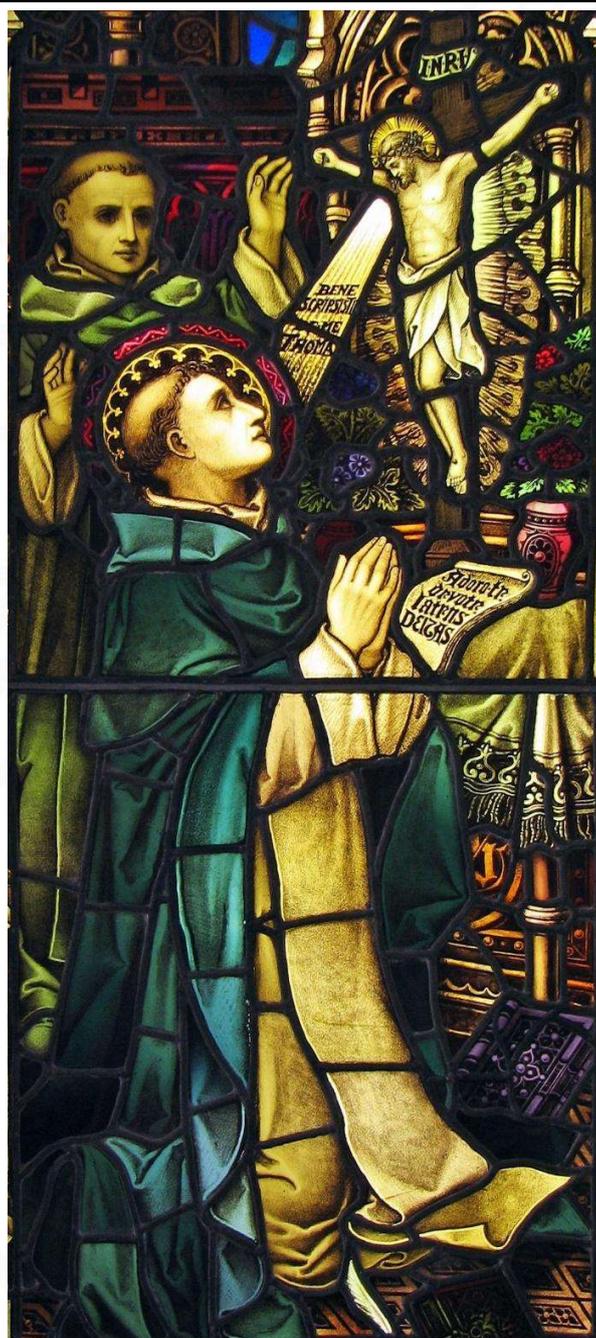
- Faith: To firmly believe in God and all He has revealed to us through His Holy Catholic Church.
- Hope: To trust in God; His infinite power, His goodness and His promises.
- Charity: To love God above all things; and neighbour as self for the love of God.
- Prudence: To form a calm and well-balanced judgement, capable of discerning between truth and error, good and evil, justice and its opposite, then to act in accordance with that judgement.
- Justice: To give to God and to give to man what is strictly owing to them.
- Fortitude: To undertake & endure difficulties, and to show resolve and constancy in doing good.
- Temperance: To show self-restraint in the face of temptation or desire, even in some things that are permitted, so that reason governs passion.

About St Thomas Aquinas College (Cont...)

OUR PRINCIPLES

To achieve our vision and our mission, and in keeping with our values, the College will strive to:

- co-operate with Divine Grace to ensure souls are ultimately returned to God, their ultimate destiny;
- develop people with a strong Catholic character, ones who will live by principles, and who have a deep understanding of the Catholic faith and a true love for Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother;
- foster a love of the traditional liturgy and the perennial devotions of the Catholic faith;
- provide an atmosphere of nobility motivated by a love of God, a love of neighbour and a love of self;
- ensure that all teachers, syllabi and textbooks be regulated by the Catholic spirit under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church;
- provide a safe and happy environment, following the example of the home of the Holy Family;
- rigorously challenge but not overburden the student;
- provide an education that challenges students to develop their qualities and their God given talent so they may reach their full potential in their spiritual & moral development, and in their academic, cultural, sporting, creative and social growth;
- promote the acquisition of knowledge in a spirit of academic excellence, with a desire to continue to learn and to continue to excel throughout their life;
- develop people with common sense and simplicity based on the eternal principles of justice;
- ensure our teachers possess a strong interior life, with moral strength and a sense of duty so they are faithful to their vocation and to the dignity of their profession;
- develop people with true affability, respect and good manners, with a constant readiness to oblige;
- promote self responsibility, self determination and self discipline;
- encourage love, obedience, devotion and duty to parents and family;
- guide parents and co-operate with them in the formation of the student;
- equip our students to become productive members of the Church and society and to willingly perform their religious and civil duty;



- help our students turn their hearts and souls to what makes life worth living, to what is true, good, great and beautiful.

About St Thomas Aquinas College (Cont...)

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

- God
- The Church
- The Society of St Pius X
- Dominican Sisters of Wanganui
- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Friends & benefactors
- The local community

PHILOSOPHY OF THE COLLEGE

Each school has something that makes it different from another. Why are parents more inclined to send their children to one particular school rather than another? Because of what it offers, its way of teaching, its way of life. In one word: its philosophy.

What is the philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas College? Its philosophy could be illustrated by the example of the great Englishman that was Saint Thomas More. Saint Thomas is a model of a perfect father who works in the best interest of his family and children. Indeed, with his children, Saint Thomas made sure that they received a complete education, religious as well as profane, an education that helps them to develop all their potential. Loving father that he was, he drew the best out of his children for their own personal achievement and happiness.

Our College has the same goal. It is committed to helping the students to develop all their qualities and God-given talents. By this means, it is also committed to assisting the parents in their work of education which is nothing else than preparing their children to be serious and responsible adults.

When a student leaves St Thomas Aquinas College, these are the qualities which should be found in them:

- Deep understanding of their faith and true love for Our Lord Jesus Christ and His holy Mother
- True affability, respect and good manners
- Constant readiness to oblige
- Taste for studies
- Common sense and simplicity

With the grace of God and a sincere collaboration between parents and teacher, we hope we achieve this goal and help our pupils to turn their hearts and souls to what makes life worth living, to what is True, Wise, Good, Great and Beautiful.



About St Thomas Aquinas College (Cont...)

PROMOTING THE PRINCIPLES OF AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY

In accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* the programs of, and teaching at St Thomas Aquinas College, support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- Elected government.
- The rule of law.
- Equal rights for all before the law.
- Freedom of religion.
- Freedom of speech and association.
- The values of openness and tolerance.

Why has the Government included the principles of 'democracy' in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*?

Australian society is defined, among other aspects, by a belief in elected Government; by a commitment to the rule of law, to equal rights for all before the law; and by a belief in freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of association. Our society is also tolerant of a range of religious, political, social and cultural beliefs and values in the context of the fundamental principles of our democracy.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* requires all education providers to operate in a manner consistent with this set of Australian democratic principles.

Government has an obligation to foster adherence to the principles of Australian democracy by all education providers. Identifying this framework through legislation reminds all Victorians not only of the values we hold in common, but also of our shared responsibilities in promoting these values.



About St Thomas Aquinas College (Cont...)

PROMOTING STRONG VALUES

The supreme law of the Church is the eternal salvation of souls. This is the reason for the existence of Saint Thomas Aquinas College. The primary concern of the College is then the spiritual welfare of the students.

To effectively seek this eternal welfare the College strives to do the following:

- Instill a profound love for the traditional Catholic faith by religious instruction, fostering devotion to and the understanding of the sacred liturgy of Holy Church, helping collegians to develop a well-balanced spiritual life through the practice of Catholic devotions
- Instill an understanding of one's responsibilities to society at large and setting a good example that the light of Christ's social reign can shine forth.



The College concerns itself also with the temporal welfare of its students in offering an environment that fosters excellence in all areas of education.

Through a breadth of general knowledge, the College seeks to equip its students for the challenges of their life in the world and help them choose the way of life to which they are best suited. That they become productive members of their families, the wider community and Australia as a whole is the goal of St Thomas Aquinas College.

The College seeks to assist parents as well in their God-given mission of developing character in their children. Realising that the family, as an imperfect society, is not sufficient of itself to completely develop in their children their God-given talents, the College provides the parents with the means to help their children realise their full potential thus avoiding the Gospel's condemnation reserved for those who "bury" their talents.

The teaching staff of the College is committed to these goals. Realising that "perfect schools are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers" (Pope Pius XII), the College is committed to providing qualified staff members dedicated to uphold the mission of the College. Their insightful communication with parents facilitated by their accessibility makes the teaching staff a real help to parents in the fulfilment of their sublime task.

In order to reach the goal set by our Mission Statement, the Principal of Saint Thomas Aquinas College is committing himself to the following duties:

- At each general staff meeting held at the beginning of a new Term, the Principal addresses the teachers and reminds them of the responsibilities their position at the College entails.
- Every Tuesday, the Principal addresses the general assembly of all teachers and students; following which the flag is raised and the National Anthem is sung.

In order to foster strong moral values the College provides other opportunities such as:

- Every week at least three periods are consecrated to the teaching of the Catholic faith in each grade providing the students with invaluable ethical and spiritual principles in order to go through life with high standards of morality.
- Counselling by priests is also available daily for all the students who wish to use their services.
- Priests working at the College regularly visit the families at their homes so as to follow up on issues discussed at school or in order to foster a good relationship between them and the College.
- Sunday Mass which nearly all the parents and students of the College attend is also a great means to keep the College community in touch with the Catholic ideal of education.

About St Thomas Aquinas College (Cont...)

PROMOTING STRONG VALUES (Cont...)

One of the main responsibilities for the Principal is to make sure that the working conditions of both teachers and students are conducive to excellence in an atmosphere of harmony and conviviality.

As for the moral results of our teaching, the testimonies given by all those who are in contact with our students never cease to praise their dedication, work ethic, friendliness and good manners.

All this lets us believe that Saint Thomas Aquinas College is achieving the purpose for which it has been created namely forming outstanding Catholics and citizens who take pride in serving both the Church and their country.

HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE

In 1993, the District Superior of the Society of St Pius X in Australia, Rev. Fr François Laisney, purchased 16 acres of land in Tynong for the development of a Traditional Catholic school. Originally the intention was to have a primary school. A school in rural Victoria was in fact a central location to the majority of families who attended the Hampton Church, Melbourne, and had school age children. The land was quickly paid off and the dream of a school was not too far in the distant future.

March 7th, 1996 saw the acquisition of ex-Government school buildings and these were moved from Greythorn to Tynong. Eight classrooms, a library and an administration block were moved and some of these remain on an adjacent paddock to the school in skeleton form.

By January 28th, 1997 we had our beginning. Some of the buildings from Greythorn were in place, bricked in and looking brilliant. The asphalt was laid the morning of the opening. The opening ceremony was a memorable occasion with 40 students, 7 teachers on staff, parents and many parishioners present; the then District Superior, Rev. Fr Jean Violette, opened the school and blessed all the rooms. Father Angele, an American priest, was our first Principal. It is thanks to his hard work that the project of the building of the school reached perfect completion.

This College is now co-institutional (boys and girls from Preparatory to Year 12) and offers a wonderful learning environment for the students. Located in a semi-rural area seventy-six kilometres from the centre of Melbourne, it caters for a student population drawn from a wide geographical area. Situated on Tynong Rd, the College is well serviced by public transport.

St Thomas Aquinas College seeks the very best for its students by striving to develop within them a strong character, based upon the timeless teachings of the Catholic Church whose supreme law is the salvation of souls.

The College develops this character by fostering a profound knowledge of our culture and a deep taste for studies in an atmosphere of discipline motivated by fraternal charity. A spirit of academic excellence will equip the students to become valuable members of the Church and the society in which they live. Their joy will be to serve the community, following the example of the Divine Master: "The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20: 28).

By these means the College is committed to assisting the parents in their work of education which is nothing else than preparing their children to be serious and responsible adults.

About St Thomas Aquinas College (Cont...)

EXPLANATION OF THE COLLEGE CREST

The gold sun in splendour refers to God the Father through Whose divine inspiration Saint Thomas Aquinas accomplished his great theological work, "The Summa Theologica", and other works. Hence, the gold sun in splendour on a black field is the symbol of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

The lion rampant on a gold field is taken from the Coat of Arms of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the Society of Saint Pius X.

The Holy Ghost, giver of Wisdom, is depicted on a green field, green being the colour of Hope.

On a field of royal blue is the monogram of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The letters of the name Maria are evident in this ancient symbol.



EXPLANATION OF THE COLLEGE MOTTO

The College motto is: Honor Excellentiae Debetur (Honour is owed to excellence). This phrase is taken from Saint Thomas Aquinas' luminous work, "The Summa Theologica" (IIa IIae, Q 142, a4, c).

EXPLANATION OF THE COLLEGE FLAG

The yellow represents the immortal glory of Heaven which will one day be ours, but it is overlaid by the sufferings and sacrifices of this world (signified by the black and red crosses) which must first be passed through.

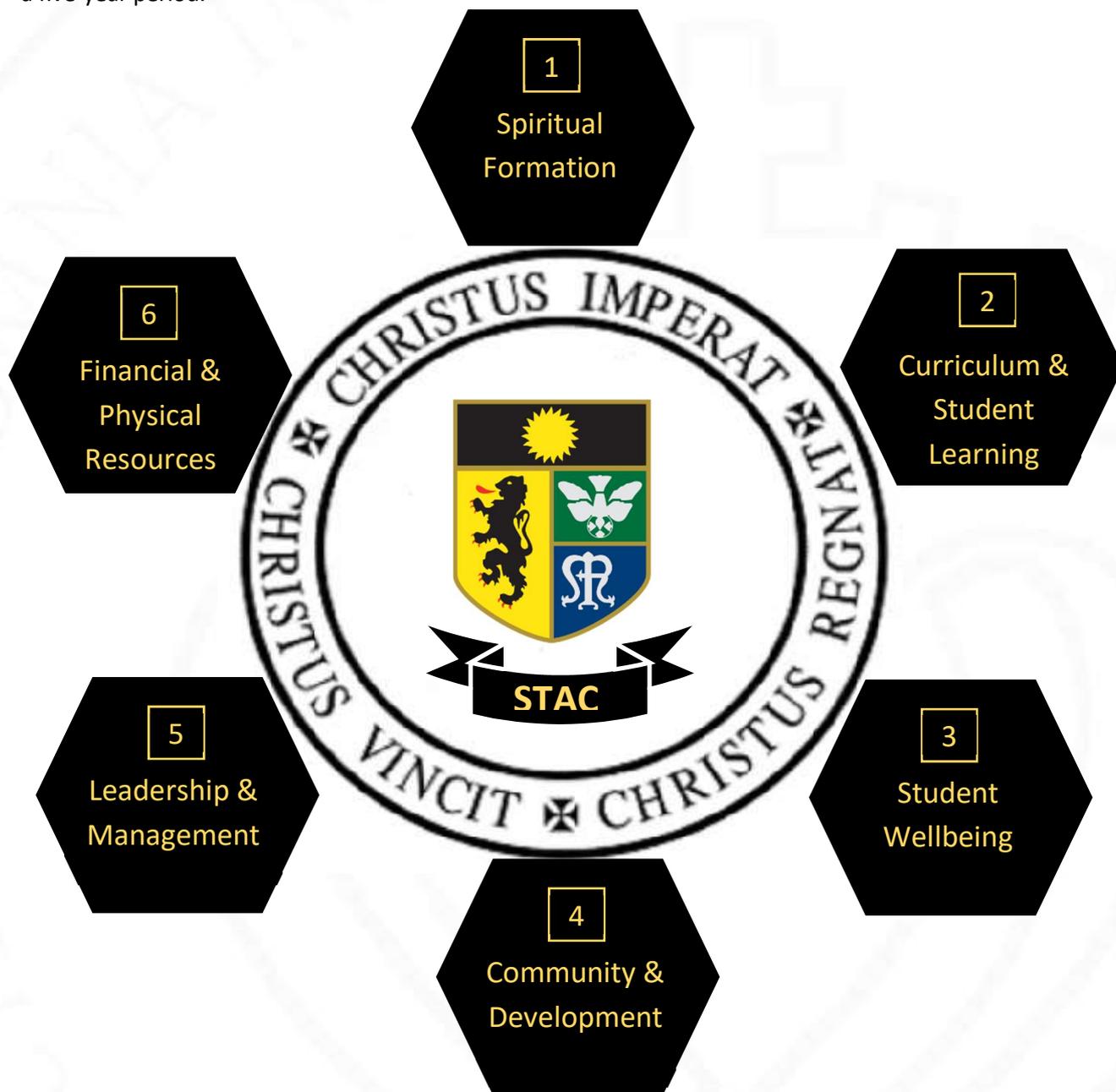
The Holy Ghost and our Lady (represented by the dove and the blue stars respectively) together produce a wonderful fruitfulness, that is, firstly, the Fruit, Our Lord Jesus Christ and His most efficacious work of our Redemption and, thereafter, all Christians in whom Jesus Christ lives, miniature Christs. This fruitfulness which is, in itself, a sign of life, is signified by the green oval.

The design of the dove is taken from the Vatican stained-glass window, and serves as a reminder of our Romanitas.



Strategic Priorities

Between 2019 and 2024, St Thomas Aquinas College will undertake the following six strategic priorities as it strives to continue to meet its vision and mission. The implementation of these strategic priorities is phased over a five-year period.



Honor Excellentiae Debetur

“Honour is due to God and to persons of great excellence as a sign of attestation of excellence already existing; not that honour makes them excellent.”

St Thomas Aquinas



Strategy 1: Traditional Catholic Faith Formation

Goals (2019-2024)

Curriculum

- 1.1 To ensure all curriculum taught within the College is consistently aligned to the perennial teachings of the Catholic. This will include providing supporting documentation and staff training for relevant faculties.
- 1.2 To enhance the role of the College Chaplains in the spiritual and moral formation of our students and to separate the role from the disciplinary role associated with a Dean of Students.
- 1.3 To provide ongoing professional development for our staff on the ethos and values of the College to ensure all our staff are informed of and conform to the expectations of the Catholic Church associated with working at St Thomas Aquinas College.
- 1.4 To revise the 7-12 Religion Curriculum to ensure an integrated and complete course of Catechism, Bible and Church History is taught.

"If you are looking for the way by which you should go take Christ because he himself is the way."

St Thomas Aquinas



Honor Excellentiae Debetur

"Grant us, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you, faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you. Amen."

St Thomas Aquinas



Strategy 2: Curriculum and Student Learning

Goals (2019-2024)

- 2.1 To review all educational programs within the College to ensure the delivery of a challenging, relevant and contemporary education in a seamless manner for students from Primary age through to the beginning of tertiary education.
- 2.2 To ensure all curriculum taught within the College has appropriately documented high level and associated curriculum documentation at all levels.
- 2.3 To improve the delivery of the nine areas of schooling (including Religion) within the College to encourage greater creativity and student engagement.
- 2.4 To continue to develop our three sub-Schools (Primary, 7-12 Girls, 7-12 Boys) to enhance the opportunities provided to our students.
- 2.5 To continue to develop the co-curricular programs of the College including its inter-House competitions, camps and excursions.
- 2.6 To develop individual electronic student learner profiles using our College Administration Platform.
- 2.7 To continue to strive to improve student learning outcomes through a thorough annual analysis of NAPLAN, ACER, VCE, Semester and class-based assessments.
- 2.8 To further develop the College's online reporting and communications through Tassweb online Parents' Lounge.



Honor Excellentiae Debetur

"The study of truth requires a considerable effort - which is why few are willing to undertake it out of love of knowledge - despite the fact that God has implanted a natural appetite for such knowledge in the minds of men."

St Thomas Aquinas



*"Love follows
knowledge"*

*St Thomas
Aquinas*

Strategy 3: Student Wellbeing

Goals (2019-2024)

Students

- 3.1 To develop the College's House System as a Pastoral Care mechanism that will provide positive discipline, combat bullying, develop Christian leadership and extend education beyond the classroom.
- 3.2 To develop the roles of Dean of Students and Chaplain to better support the wellbeing of our students.
- 3.3 To develop the excursion, incursion and Camps program of the College to provide students with more exciting opportunities which engage them and improve their wellbeing.
- 3.4 To re-develop the current Discipline framework of the College to ensure it meets the needs of the College.
- 3.5 To strive to celebrate student successes more through the Newsletter and Assembly structures of the College.

The College places the student at the centre of its educational programs.

"Man has free choice, or otherwise counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards and punishments would be in vain."

St Thomas Aquinas



Honor Excellentiae Debetur

"Friendship is the source of the greatest pleasures, and without friends even the most agreeable pursuits become tedious."

St Thomas Aquinas



Strategy 4: School Community and Development

Goals (2019-2024)

- 4.1 To develop an induction programme for parents who are new to the College.
- 4.2 To improve the opportunities for parents to participate in the life and growth of the College.
- 4.3 To further develop a Careers and Guidance programme to support students and parents in career decision making.
- 4.4 To increase public relations and marketing opportunities by being a strong advocate for improving internal communications and developing a strong educational voice.
- 4.5 To develop a vibrant Alumni Association.



The School will maintain our traditions and enhance our position in the local, national and international markets and increase communication with our parents, Old Scholars and other important stakeholders.

“It’s better to illuminate than to merely shine.”

St Thomas Aquinas



Honor Excellentiae Debetur

“I would rather feel compassion than know the meaning of it. I would hope to act with compassion without thinking of personal gain.”

St Thomas Aquinas



Strategy 5: Leadership and Management

Goals (2019-2024)

- 5.1 To increase of opportunities for students to have leadership roles in the College.
- 5.2 To improve the student leadership programs within the College including those associated with the liturgy, Homerooms and Houses.
- 5.3 To develop the capacity of staff: that is Deans of Students, Heads of Faculty, Homeroom Teachers.
- 5.4 To re-engage with the Leadership and Development programme run for staff development.
- 5.5 To engage our parent body as volunteers within the College especially through renewed development of the P&F.
- 5.6 To develop a staff appraisal system and associated structures to provide staff with feedback and opportunities to grow.

The College will continue to develop its human resources – staff, students and parents – to promote strong links within the College.

“New in matters of action the reason directs all things in view of the end.”

St Thomas Aquinas



Honor Excellentiae Debetur

“Shepherds of the flock should . . . seek the good of their flock, and every ruler the good of the people subject to him.”

St Thomas Aquinas



Strategy 6: Financial and Physical Resources

Goals (2019-2024)

- 6.1 To maintain fiscally responsible planning controls to provide the required programs, facilities and services for all students and staff within the College.
- 6.2 To finalise a complete risk matrix ensuring all associated policies and procedures are complete and up-to-date.
- 6.3 To develop additional income streams from trading activities (e.g. Facilities hire, Cottage rental).
- 6.4 To develop the physical facilities of the College to better service the College and the broader community.
- 6.5 To review and upgrade the ICT capabilities of the College to more appropriately reflect the realities of modern teaching and learning.
- 6.6 To engage in a programme of 'Digital Transformation' from paper-based systems to more efficient online processes. To develop more efficient digital work processes to enable this.
- 6.7 To keep abreast of all new technological devices, software, applications and trends as they move into the market place.

The College will have the services, infrastructure, resources and financial capacity to deliver our strategic goals.

"To love is to will the good of others."

St Thomas Aquinas



Honor Excellentiae Debetur

"Man should not consider his material possession his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need."

St Thomas Aquinas

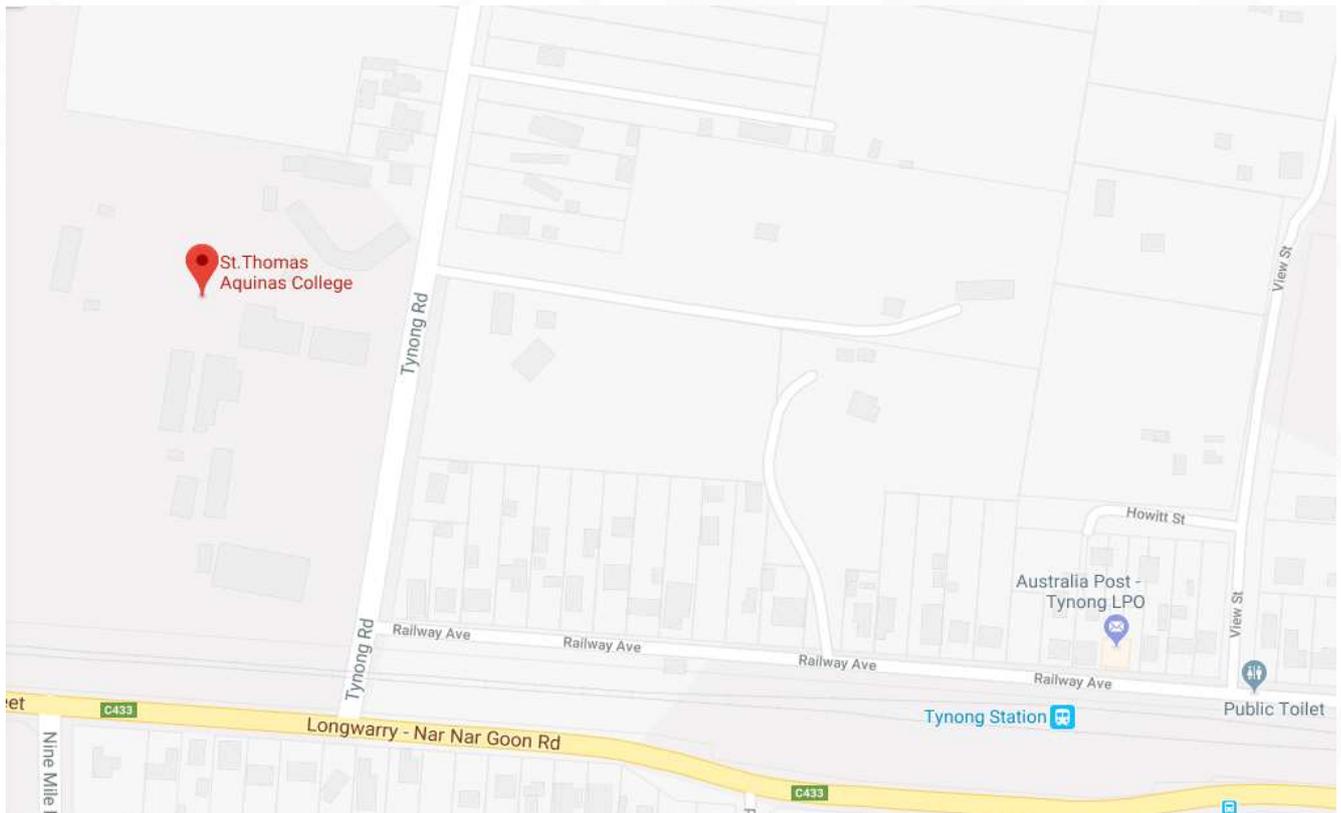


Our Location

Our St Thomas Aquinas College campus is located at:

1 Tynong Road
Tynong 3813
Victoria

The nearest train stop will be the Tynong Station and it will take about 4 minutes to walk from the station to the Campus. Please contact us for further information at +61 3 5629 2500.





St Thomas Aquinas College

Address: 1 Tynong Road Tynong VIC 3813

Phone: +61 3 5629 2500

Email: info@stac.vic.edu.au

Website: www.stac.vic.edu.au