



"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."
 Marie Curie | Physicist and two-time Noble Prize recipient

Polaris | Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we changing?	<p>The case for educational change in Australia has been a hot topic for a number of years and not limited to just Marcellin College. The Gonski 2.0 Report has provided all schools with a blueprint for a re-imagined educational system in Australia.</p> <p>In 2018 the College worked in partnership with the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) Committed to Excellence program by commissioning a National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) Review into the provision of learning and teaching. The recommendations of this wide-ranging review into learning at Marcellin informed much of Polaris.</p> <p>The Polaris publication outlines a case for change, including a comprehensive list of guiding research documents and all VCE and NAPLAN data point to a clear mandate for transformation.</p>
What is it that we want to achieve?	<p>We wish to enable young men to develop with <i>character, confidence</i> and <i>competence</i> as good Christians and ethical global citizens for a new world environment and the changing world of work.</p> <p>It is to empower each young man to realise their possibility with a clear focus on self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, capability, relatedness and increased independence. A real-world focus will also support increased student empowerment and agency within Polaris courses.</p> <p>Polaris as an innovative learning ecosystem designed to also support the growth of all staff in our community.</p>
Will my son still belong to a House?	<p>Yes. We believe our entire Student Wellbeing Program and House system is fundamental in knowing each young man in our care.</p> <p>Details regarding this can be read on pages 25 to 32 in the recently published Polaris prospectus.</p>
How many periods per day across the 10-day cycle?	<p>Students will attend six periods across the day and a Pastoral period.</p> <p>The structure of the day is Period 1, 2 – Pastoral, Recess break, Period 3, 4 – Lunch break, Period 5, 6. The day commences at 8:35am and concludes at 3:26pm. Each period is 53 minutes in length. The period length will differ slightly on Day 3's. A Mass/Study period will remain every Thursday and a Student Wellbeing Period will occur every Day 1 and 5 during period 2.</p>
Will there be changes to co-curricular opportunities?	<p>No. Our comprehensive co-curricular opportunities that complement the academic program will not change.</p> <p>Details about <i>beyond the classroom</i> can be viewed on page 29 in the recently published Polaris prospectus.</p>
Will there be textbooks?	<p>We will commence a shift on the reliance on textbooks and move toward our dynamic online learning platform called MyMC. Via MyMC the College is committed to providing each young man a range of rich and interactive resources to maximise their understanding of necessary knowledge, skills and character attributes to excel in each course. Parents will also have access to their son/s learning progression across each course via MyMC.</p>
Is the College still committed to academic excellence, particularly at a VCE level?	<p>Absolutely. <u>This remains a priority.</u> In fact, the new learning and comprehensive support structures are all designed to enhance each young man's academic competence and better prepare them for VCE VET VCAL or SBAT pathways.</p>
What does this mean for College staffing?	<p>Our learning ecosystem is a holistic approach to education which includes our ongoing commitment to high-quality teaching. The College has a strong history of professional development of all staff to support young men in their growth and achievement. This includes opportunities to learn, unlearn and relearn.</p> <p>The Polaris publication outlines our commitment to high-quality teaching. Information regarding this can be read on page 10.</p>

Breadth Stage

What is the Breadth Stage of Polaris?	<p>The Breadth Stage is our Year 7&8 Program. The Breadth Stage of Polaris promotes a fully integrated interdisciplinary learning approach combining faith, learning and wellness. This is consistent with the expectations of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Curriculum Planning and Reporting Guidelines document states:</p> <p>31. In the Breadth Stage of schooling (Years 3–8) schools may choose to adopt a vertical structure, to include an elective structure or to design their curriculum around an integrated inquiry-based approach to learning.</p> <p>Details about the eight future-focused integrated Breadth Stage courses can be read (from page 16) in the recently published Polaris prospectus.</p>
What is the focus of the Breadth Stage of schooling?	<p>The Breadth Stage has a strong focus on developing the Polaris Skills for Life-Long Learning across all eight future-focused programs, over the two years:</p> <p>Foundational Literacies: What students know, understand and apply to everyday tasks (ways of knowing): Literacy, Numeracy, Science Thinking, Financial Literacy and Enterprise Thinking</p> <p>Capability Skills: How students apply their knowledge, skills and attributes to complex challenges (ways of thinking): Creativity, Collaboration, Communication & Presentation and Critical Thinking & Problem Solving</p> <p>Character Attributes: How students' approach and engage with their changing environment (ways of working): Initiative, Persistence & Grit, Curiosity & Adaptability, Leadership & Advocacy, Physical & Mental Wellness, Social & Cultural Awareness and Ethics</p>
Can my son study more than one Language across the Breadth Stage?	<p>Year 1 - each young man undertakes <i>two</i> Languages from the Culture Program options Year 2 - each young man undertakes <i>one</i> Language from the Culture Program options</p> <p>Each Language course attracts seven contact periods per 10-day cycle. In fact, all eight Breadth Stage courses have seven contact periods per cycle, ensuring everything has equal value.</p>

Depth Stage

What is the Depth Stage of Polaris?	The Depth Stage is our Year 9&10 Program . The Depth Stage of Polaris promotes the opportunity for each young man to begin to exercise total control over the structure and key elements of their personalised learning plan. This is consistent with the expectations of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Their Curriculum Planning and Reporting Guidelines document for Years 9-10 states: 88. The school curriculum plan should recognise that in these years of schooling some students begin to focus on areas of specialisation related to both their future schooling and intended pathways beyond school.
What is the focus of the Depth Stage of schooling?	The Depth Stage has a strong focus on deeper learning, academic competence, increased independence and application of the Polaris Skills for Life-Long Learning over the two years. At the Depth Stage young men elect from a range of <i>compulsory</i> and <i>open</i> courses, allowing for hyper specialisation, which includes stretch and extension opportunities. This is consistent with the expectations of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Their Curriculum Planning and Reporting Guidelines document for Years 9-10 states: 70. The challenge is to reconcile the twin demands of providing a learning program that maintains a focus on a common entitlement to core knowledge and skills and high expectations of every student while also allowing students opportunities to develop and pursue areas of individual interest and expertise. Information about the Depth Stage <i>compulsory</i> and <i>open</i> courses can be read (from page 20) in the recently published Polaris prospectus. For current families in Year 8 & 9 they will receive a comprehensive Depth Stage Program Guide during the program selection period in Term 3 that outlines details about each course and their explicit link to VCE and VCAL pathways.
Is there a possibility a student could study two Languages during Depth Stage?	Yes . Each young man can select up to twelve <i>open</i> courses from a range of learning disciplines. This is an increase from eight electives currently across Year 9&10. This includes from the Languages options of Chinese, Italian and Indonesian. A young man may wish to study two languages at the Depth Stage. Having said that because Languages is a full year program (covering two open course places) the study of two languages would limit a broader program choice.
Will they develop the appropriate skills and knowledge for VCE and VCAL?	All Depth Stage courses will assess all learning tasks against the prescribed VCAA Victorian Curriculum (Band 6) achievement standards , which are designed to be the foundation knowledge and skill step for all VCE or VCAL pathways. Each course across the Depth Stage has a total of seven contact periods (six fixed & one flexi) across a 10-day cycle. Ensuring frequency of contact and the opportunity to depth the necessary knowledge and skills. Each course will have one double period per cycle.
Will we have classes with 9s and 10s together?	The VCAA Victorian Curriculum requires all schools to assess knowledge and skills achievement standards across a Band of schooling. A Band is defined as two-years. Most courses will be made up of Year 9 and Year 10 boys, separately . Students will be learning in year level classes for the English and Maths <i>compulsory</i> courses. Having said that, to ensure more student course selections will run, <i>open</i> courses may have a combination of Year 9 and Year 10 students. (This is consistent with current arrangements for VCE acceleration, in that these classes are often comprised of students from Year 11 and 12.)
What are these "Available Periods" at the Depth Stage?	Polaris is about high (academic) expectations and high (wellbeing) support . At the Depth Stage and Pathways Stage students can choose how they would like to use their "Available Period" time. Options include services and support such as seeing a Learning Mentor (one-on-one) to review overall academic progression and organisational skills, work with their House Leader or Pastoral Leader, work with Learning Diversity staff, see a Student Counsellor for personalised wellbeing needs, create a Depth Stage, VCE, VET or VCAL study group, visit a Careers Practitioner to discuss course options and tertiary transition or complete a session with a Fitness Coach. Students can access the Brother Placidus Resource Centre and learning spaces throughout the Atrium and Hermitage area when undertaking their available periods.
Who will be my son/s Learning Mentor?	The College will be appointing a team of Learning Mentors throughout 2019. The Learning Mentors will participate in a professional learning program in preparation of their one-on-one support of each young man at the Depth Stage. Each student is required to see their Learning Mentor once every cycle during the Depth Stage.
Will my son be able to accelerate and do a VCE subject in Year 10?	Students can accelerate in VCE Mathematical Methods, via an academic selection process as set by the Mathematics Department. Any young man that undertakes VCE Mathematical Methods at the Year 10 level of the Depth Stage will only have four "available" periods as all VCE subjects receive eight contact periods per cycle. Once in Year 11 young men can apply to undertake a Unit 3&4 VCE subject consistent with our current Acceleration Application process.
Can students go home early or start late if they have an 'available period' at the end of the day?	Not at the Depth Stage. Every young man across Year 9 and 10 must be present for the entire school day.

Pathways Stage

What is the Pathways Stage of Polaris?	The Pathways Stage is our Year 11 & 12 Program . At the Pathways Stage of Polaris young men choose from forty Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) studies and work industriously towards optimising their post-school opportunities. Young men can undertake a Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) course, a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship (SBAT) and or selection from a range of Vocational Education and Training (VET) studies as part of their two-year program across the Pathways Stage.
What is the focus of the Pathways Stage of schooling?	The Pathways Stage is also time of greater independence with flexible arrangements for young men who are required to self-regulate and manage their time based on their personalised learning pathway. For current families in Year 10 & 11 they will receive a comprehensive Pathways Stage Program Guide during the program selection period in Term 3 that outlines details about each VCE, VET and VCAL subjects.
Can students accelerate in VCE?	Yes , at the Year 11 stage of Polaris young men can undertake a Unit 3&4 VCE study through an application process. Some may qualify to do two Unit 3&4 VCE studies in Year 11. Accelerated opportunities are built into the Pathways Stage, which may include the possible study of University subject at the Year 12 level should they fulfil the University subject requirements.
How many periods will a VCE VCAL student have per 10-day cycle?	Each VCE VCAL study across the Pathways Stage has a total of eight contact periods across a 10-day cycle.
Does the study of a VET contribute to my son's ATAR Score?	All VET studies are recognised within the VCE program and contribute to the Units of Study completed across the two-year VCE program. Some VET courses (E.g. Sport & Recreation) require the completion of scored assessments (which include a VCAA exam). These courses contribute directly to the ATAR score as with any other VCE subject. It is also important to note that score VET studies must be completed as a Unit 1-4 sequence.

	<p>Other VET courses (E.g. Building & Construction) do not complete score assessment and therefore will not generate a study score. These courses will contribute via an ATAR contribution as a fifth or sixth area of study only.</p> <p>Current families in Year 10 will receive a comprehensive Pathways Stage Program Guide during the program selection period in Term 3 that outlines details about each course. Any queries regarding specific VET can be directed to Fran Davey (VET Coordinator).</p>
Will Year 12 students be allowed to start later and finish earlier?	<p>This is the current practice, once agreed to in partnership with their parents. Pastoral moving before recess will help assist in this happening. This is a more structured way to build independence and ownership of their learning and time for our Year 12s and will serve to be another element of the holistic way we foster their preparedness for life beyond Marcellin.</p> <p>At this stage we have no plans to allow Year 11 students this privilege.</p>

Polaris | Glossary

- **Assessment for Performance Task** – Is a task/s where students demonstrate that they know why the knowledge and skills are important, and how to apply or transfer them in meaningful real-world applications.
- **"Available" Periods** – in this period, Depth Stage and Pathways Stage students can choose how they would like to use their time. Options include services and support such as seeing a Learning Mentor to review academic progression, see a House Leader, Pastoral Leader and or Student Counsellor for personalised wellbeing needs, create a Depth Stage, VCE, VET or VCAL study group, visit a Careers Practitioner to discuss course options and tertiary transition or complete a session with a Fitness Coach.
- **Breadth Stage (Year 7 & 8)** – the Breadth Stage of Polaris promotes a fully integrated interdisciplinary learning approach combining faith, learning and wellness. At the Breadth Stage each young man undertakes eight future-focused programs over the duration of two years. Each future-focused program is made up of four semester length courses. Each course at the Breadth Stage has seven periods per 10-day timetable cycle.
- **Capabilities** – the Victorian Curriculum F–10 includes *Capabilities*, which are a set of discrete future-focused knowledge and skills that are taught explicitly in and through the learning areas but are not fully defined by any of the learning areas or disciplines.: Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical, Intercultural and Personal & Social.
- **Capability Skills** (a Polaris Skill for Life-long Learning) – How students apply their knowledge, skills and attributes to complex challenges (ways of thinking): Creativity, Collaboration, Communication & Presentation and Critical Thinking & Problem Solving.
- **Character Attributes** (a Polaris Skill for Life-long Learning) – How students' approach and engage with their changing environment (ways of working): Initiative, Persistence & Grit, Curiosity & Adaptability, Leadership & Advocacy, Physical & Mental Wellness, Social & Cultural Awareness and Ethics.
- **Compulsory course** – is a course which *must* be undertaken across a two-year Polaris program. At the Depth Stage this includes a minimum of four studies, across the two-years, from Religious Education, English, Science Thinking and Mathematics.
- **Depth Stage (Year 9 & 10)** – Students shape their calendar according to the personalised learning goals and priorities they have established with a Learning Mentor. Five *available periods* throughout their individual 10-day timetable provides opportunity for students to access services. During different points throughout the Depth Stage each young man will have an opportunity to undertake a "program review" with their Learning Mentor to assess course changes. Each course at the Depth Stage has six *fixed* periods and one *flexi* period per 10-day timetable cycle. At the Depth Stage young men elect from a range of *compulsory* and *open* courses, allowing for hyper specialisation. Accelerated opportunities are built into the course infrastructure in Mathematics from Year 9. At the Depth Stage young men have opportunities for stretch or extension courses as well.
- **Direct instruction** – is a method of teaching the seeks to help all learners acquire factual information, knowledge and basic skills via explicit instruction.
- **Ecosystem** – an interconnected system.
- **Fixed periods** – during the six *fixed* periods, core knowledge, skills and capabilities are delivered in class and online via accessing learning resources on MyMC.
- **Flexi period** – during the one *flexi* period teachers have the opportunity to set stretch activities, additional tutorial support, provide formative feedback and master classes (large style lecture). The Flexi period is NOT part of the five "available periods".
- **Formative feedback** – ongoing assessment of a student's learning, by the teacher, within a particular course.
- **Foundational Literacies** (a Polaris Skill for Life-long Learning) – What students know, understand and apply to everyday tasks (ways of knowing): Literacy, Numeracy, Science Thinking, Financial Literacy and Enterprise Thinking.
- **Heutagogy** – otherwise known as *self-determined learning*, is a student-centred instructional strategy that emphasizes the development of autonomy, capacity, and capability.
- **Hyper specialisation** – in the Depth Stage, means an energetic (excited) interest or passion in an area of specialisation.
- **Interdisciplinary learning** – interdisciplinary means involving more than one academic discipline area combined to provide for real-world connections. For example, Global Perspectives combines Religious Education, History and English.
- **Learning Diversity** – Catholic education values the dignity, differences and infinite possibilities in each student, and their full flourishing is at the heart of all its endeavours. (Catholic Education Melbourne 2015).
- **Learning Mentor** – a Marcellin staff member who works one on one with students in the Depth Stage to enhance their ability to independently navigate their academic progress, program review, executive functioning and overall organisation.
- **Open course** – an elective course; a course you can choose to do. At the Depth Stage this may include Year 9 and 10 students combined in an open course. Students undertake a total of twelve Open courses across the Depth Stage.
- **Pathways Stage** – Young men have the opportunity to undertake a Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) course, a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship (SBAT) and or selection from a range of Vocational Education and Training (VET) studies as part of their two-year program across the Pathways Stage.

- **Program Review** – Each student will participate in a program review during the first year of the Depth and Pathway Stages with a Learning Mentor. This is an opportunity to determine if there is a need to make a course change.
- **Masterclass** – A masterclass is a lesson where someone who is an expert at something such as dancing or music gives advice to a group of good students. Masterclasses usually take place in public or are broadcast on television.
- **Mastery Task/s** – Is a set of tasks that a student completes in each course to demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skill acquisition and meaning-making.
- **MyMC** – MyMC is the College's dynamic online learning management system designed in partnership with SchoolBox.
- **Polaris** – Is the title of our new learning ecosystem and vision for faith, learning and life for a new world environment. In astronomy, Polaris is the brightest star in Ursa Minor constellation; the Polestar or North Star.
- **Project-Based Learning [PBL]** – PBL integrates knowing, thinking and doing. Students learn knowledge and elements of the core curriculum, but also apply what they know to solve authentic problems and produce results that matter. (Markham)
- **Self-determination Theory (SDT)** – SDT is a theory that links personality, human motivation, and optimal executive functioning. It centres on three basic human needs – competence, autonomy and relatedness.
- **SBAT** – School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship.
- **VCAL** – Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning. The hands-on option for Year 11 and 12 students.
- **VCE** – Victorian Certificate of Education.
- **VET** – Vocational Education and Training. This is a course which focuses on providing practical skills for work.

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