

Community Consultation Feedback

If you were asked to describe the strengths of Aquinas College to a work colleague or friend, what would you say?

The most common responses fell in the following areas:

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
<i>Academic Results / Supports students achievement / Achievement culture</i>	28
<i>Staff know and care about my child / Effective leadership / Pastoral Care</i>	26
<i>College spirit / Caring, supportive, family-oriented environment (facilitated and supported by staff, students and/or community)</i>	24
<i>Catholic Character / Ethos / Touchstones</i>	23
<i>Holistic education</i>	16
<i>Values based education</i>	12
<i>A welcoming and supportive community</i>	10
<i>Small and/or safe school</i>	10
<i>Good communication and/or consultative</i>	9
<i>High standards</i>	7
<i>Becoming more future focussed</i>	4
<i>Pastoral care of students</i>	3

Sample comments:

- *“A small family Catholic school, supportive and nurturing both academically and spiritually to help our children be the best that they can be, in all areas of schooling and their future lives as Catholics.”*
- *“A great school with some great initiatives. The school is working hard to align itself with modern practices and the ever-changing needs of our children. Headed in a great direction.”*
- *“Supportive teaching to your child’s strengths and weakness’s. Great teachers that are lead by a modern and communicative management group. Love the special year retreats, camps and specific education workshops for each year groups. Really like the availability of parent interviews and email access to all my children’s teachers and Deans. Love the concept of Family integration into the school community.”*
- *“Dedicated committed staff team who celebrate student achievement via emails etc, not just communication when things aren't going well! supporting the faith, morals and expectations for participation, attitude and behaviour we have at home, Zero tolerance of bullying/drugs and other behaviour which disrespects self, others or environment in school and out in the community. Pride in the school in all its forms (uniform etc) is encouraged and upheld. The leavers dinner, excellent NCEA results, fabulous supportive transition from primary school. Lots of opportunities in all areas including personal development.”*
- *“It has strong educational achievement, it offers great opportunities in sport and the arts, it is a reasonably close knit community with a family feel and students have the opportunity to practice their faith and to be involved in many service opportunities.”*
- *“It's more than just a school, it is a family where our children feel like they belong. Community is important and it's a community of like-minded morals and ethics. Their expectations of their students is higher than the National Average which means the students strive to do better.”*

- Great academic results; high level of education, good morals and standards, a lovely school community
- The staff know my child and they care about my child. The staff are one of the greatest strengths of the College.
- Catholic ethos, Excellent learning, caring faculty and broad interest in the wellbeing of the child.
- “Smaller size classes good. Religious education good. Sense of community good. Pastoral support good. Extra-curricular activities good. Class selection good...guide toward future University requirements. Overall teacher instruction good. Overall, I feel Aquinas does a great job in a very challenging arena. Can't give enough thanks!”

If you were asked to describe the areas of improvement for Aquinas College to a work colleague or friend, what would you say?

The most common responses fell in the following areas:

Areas for improvement	Number of responses
More subject options	11
Sports culture / sporting programmes	10
Investment in infrastructure / beautification of the grounds	9
Commitment to biculturalism / Cultural responsiveness	8
Dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour	7
Consistency in communication across the school	6
More progressive curriculum	4
More freedom for seniors	3
Improved guidance around subject choices / career counselling	3
Grow student /parent participation in Mass	3
More opportunities to practice faith	3

Steps the College is taking in 2020 which addresses some of these areas:

1. The Board plans to progress two infrastructure projects in 2020. One is the creation of a performing arts amphitheatre and the second is the addition of three basketball hoops on the courts to increase opportunities for students to engage in the arts and physical activity in break times.
2. The College is creating a communications role within the College. In 2020, this newly appointed staff member will work across the various areas of the College to improve the consistency and coherence of our communications streams.
3. In 2020, a Discipleship class is being created at Year 11 within the Religious Education stream and this will promote opportunities for students to be witnesses to their faith. This will grow upwards in the school in 2021 and 2022.
4. The College has reviewed its provision of careers counselling and provision of mentoring in 2019. A Head of Future Pathways will be appointed to begin in 2020 and will work alongside an assistant to strengthen the advice and counselling offered to students in the College. In addition, tutor teachers will administer a formal mentoring programme throughout 2020. This will be a structured programme which will be supported by the Future Pathways department.

5. As a staff team, we are continuing our firm commitment to professional learning which supports culturally responsive and relational teaching practices. The Ministry of Education has confirmed further professional development hours for our College in this regard in 2020.
6. The College is trialling Self Determined Learning Blocks for Year 13 students in 2020.

Question: Since its inception, Aquinas College has offered French as an intentional language. It is an appropriate opportunity to consult with our community about the provision of our international language moving forward. Please select what you think is the most appropriate international language for our College to offer from 2021:

International Language	Number of responses
French	10
Spanish	16
Japanese	8
Mandarin Chinese	21
I don't feel strongly enough to make a choice	16
Other	5

College Response to the feedback received:

From the responses we received, there is no clear overwhelming preference from the community. We will continue to reflect on this as we move forward. With the appointment of a new Principal at St Mary's Catholic School it will be important to monitor if there is a change in focus and priority given to international language learning under the direction of a new school leader. Naturally, we are best to build on the work of our two main contributing primary schools.

Question: In recent student surveys, a prevailing piece of feedback from senior students is for the College to consider introducing self-determined learning blocks (study). The benefits of self-determined learning are well documented and with so much information available at students' fingertips, it's easier than ever for students to learn independently. Would you support the College introducing self-determined learning blocks for Year 13 students?

	Number of responses
Yes	53
No	7
Neutral	16

College Response to the feedback received:

As has been outlined in the newsletter, we will be trialling Self Determined Learning lessons for Year 13 students in 2020.

Question: We are currently reviewing our Future Pathways department (Careers, Gateway and STAR). We would appreciate your feedback on the following questions as it relates to this area of the College.

How many of the following future pathways/ careers services are you aware that the College provides?

	Number of responses
Trades Academy	16
Gateway	45
Star Courses	17
Study and workplace exploration	12
Future Pathway / Career counselling	33
Preparation for interviews	5
CV writing	7
Career-Central website	11
None of the above	22

Question: Do you think your child(ren) receives adequate support, advice and guidance in terms of their pathways beyond school, whether it be further education or employment?

	Number of responses
Yes	10
No	23
Unsure	41

College Response to the feedback received: As the College reflected on this feedback alongside the internal review, it was determined that we needed to put more focus and resource into this area to enable all our students to access these services. We have restructured our provision of careers education and counselling in the College for 2020. We will be appointing an experienced and well qualified Head of Future Pathways alongside a Future Pathways Assistant. The feedback clearly demonstrated the requirement for us to more widely promote the services offered in this faculty and to further educate our families in this space. This will be a priority in 2020.

Question: I believe that the use of mobile technology should be banned during the school day for Years 7–11 students, including interval and lunchtime, unless at the direction of a teacher for learning or in the event of an emergency.

	Number of responses
Agree	47
Disagree	22
Neutral	5

College Response to the feedback received: This is complex and layered issue. As a College we will continue to reflect on how we move forward in this space. Clearly, we all want to reduce the use of technology that isn't related to learning to promote social interactions and play. The position that leadership has taken at this point is that it believes we (as a College) have a responsibility to educate our students in this space. Technology is part of the world our students live in and they need to learn to be responsible users. Leadership also feels that a ban could lead to unintended consequences and issues. Leadership will continue to monitor this issue closely.

Question: Aquinas College made a decision in 2018 to offer internet protection for our students during the school day through the use of Family Zone web filtering. This platform also offers the OPTION for you to determine appropriate usage at home. Regrettably, not all our students have this installed on their devices meaning they are unable to access our web services at school and this is inhibiting our teaching programmes. Do you currently have Family Zone installed on your child(ren)'s device(s)?

	Number of responses
Yes	36
No	35
I was unaware of the Family Zone service being offered by the College	3

College Response to the feedback received: Aquinas College is committed to ensuring students are protected at school and providing our families with the choice to employ safety measures at home. There continues to be misconceptions and myths associated with Family Zone perpetuated by our students. All students in Years 7-11 are required to have Family Zone on their device to access our school network. Failure to do so will mean that students are disadvantaged as we move into a 1-1 BYOD environment in 2020 for students in Years 9-13. We will continue to promote the use of this tool to ensure a safe environment at school. We need the support of our community in ensuring Family Zone is loaded on to your son(s) and/or daughter(s) devices. We will continue to promote the use of Family Zone in 2020 and will be looking to publish myth busters in response to the misconceptions.