



St Ursula's College

TOOWOOMBA

PROSPECTUS



CULTURE STATEMENT

St Ursula's College, a Catholic educational and residential community in the Ursuline tradition, is dedicated to the education and care of young women in Years 7-12.

We strive to create learning opportunities that will encourage students to take responsibility for their own thinking and learning, so that they may become more resourceful and empathetic young women who seek:

- the development of a personal faith and spirituality
- participation and leadership in all facets of today's and tomorrow's world.

The challenge for all is to model relationships within and beyond our community based on:

- mutual respect
- tolerance and acceptance
- care for the individual and the environment
- interdependence and collaboration
- service

so that our students, growing in wisdom, justice and integrity will contribute responsibly to their own transformation and that of society.



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

St Ursula's College is a dynamic community that has a strong sense of its own identity as a contemporary Ursuline Catholic School that has an emphasis on excellent teaching for learning which inspires the growth and transformation of both the individual learner and the learning community of St Ursula's College itself.

St Ursula's is a community that is Connecting with Life...

We strive to be a transformative learning community and a hopeful, faith-filled community through a focus on:

- ➔ confident innovation
- ➔ academic excellence
- ➔ reflection and responsiveness
- ➔ individuality and interdependence
- ➔ service and justice.

The twenty-first century world is one of emerging possibility and opportunity. Nothing exists in isolation in this world. Relationship is at the essence of everything that is. It is an interdependent, interconnected universe.

St Ursula's College aims to be a microcosm of the world as we would dream it to be – a place of peace, hope and justice; a place which acknowledges our shared humanity; a place which embraces our diversity; a place which recognises its integral part in shaping the future of life.

As Angela Merici faced new challenges by looking for new possibilities, so too is the St Ursula's College community called to do things in new ways to ensure that the young women in our care are offered a nurturing and challenging educational environment in which they can learn and grow and develop the confidence to go out and make a difference in our world.

Mrs Ann Marie Pawsey
Principal



"Established in 1931 by the Australian Ursuline Nuns, St Ursula's Toowoomba prides itself on being a community where girls are encouraged, guided and supported to grow, discover and reach their potential as young women."

SPIRITUALITY & COMMUNITY

St Ursula's College is a hopeful, faith-filled community. It is a welcoming, people-centred place where faith and life are motivated by the example and spirit of Jesus. The Ursuline spirit inspires an educational environment where there is unconditional recognition of the giftedness of each person.

Each person is known and valued and respected. Relationships are characterised by trust, care, respect, gentleness, service and forgiveness. This is a dynamic, lived spirituality which inspires hope and empowers all members of the community to realise their fullness of life. St Ursula's College is a place where deep learning arises from commitment to providing opportunities for staff and students to make a difference in this world.

At St Ursula's College, the honouring, exploration and lived experience of the Catholic tradition is central to the life of the community. Each person is respected as one who is created in the image and likeness of God. Each person is on a faith journey. Each person has a responsibility for enacting justice, peace and ecological sustainability.

St Ursula's College is a community which holds a shared understanding of its core transformative purpose evidenced by confident innovation, reflection and responsiveness, individuality and interdependence, service and justice are at its heart. It is in these ways that the St Ursula's College community is connecting with life.

At St Ursula's College our motto is "Serviam" – I will serve – and we encourage all girls to live this out in their everyday lives. There are numerous cultural and service groups to which the girls can belong. Service Options encourage students to develop an appreciation in supporting service organisations in the community. Activities include: Meals on Wheels, Rosies – Friends on the Street, Care for Cambodia, Pink Ladies supporting National Breast Cancer Foundation, Interact and Social Justice Initiatives.

"Serviam -
I Will Serve"



HISTORY & TRADITION

"Never cease to cultivate this vine that has been entrusted to you."

... Angela Merici

Although St Ursula's College began life in Toowoomba in 1931, the College draws its spirit and tradition from the lived experiences of many people in many continents and across many cultures over 400 hundred years of history.

The story of St Ursula's College is linked in every way with two great stories.

Our story is grounded in the story of Catholic education that was told dramatically and humbly lived out by Jesus Christ over 2000 years ago.

Our story began in the mind and heart of Angela Merici, the woman who founded the Company of St Ursula in 1535 in the city of Brescia in northern Italy.

Much of Angela's spirit continues to influence our approach today as we work towards being a place where people are celebrated for their unique giftedness and potential.

In recent years there has been a growing awareness among many Ursuline schools that this network can provide a means of mutual support and development amongst our schools through the sharing of spiritual and intellectual resources. It has also been considered that the international nature of the Ursuline schools helps foster an important global awareness in students and staff and an appreciation of other cultures and societies.

Those who become part of the community of St Ursula's College inherit this rich tradition and heritage. They also have the privilege of contributing to the dynamic shaping of the charism of Angela Merici as it is embodied in this place and time.



THE MIDDLE YEARS

At St Ursula's College, students in Years 7 to 9 experience a Middle Years Framework where fostering a love of learning and developing lifelong learners is our primary aim. This middle schooling philosophy is based on particular pedagogy and curriculum rather than organisational structures. Our Middle Years Learners are given opportunities to develop these attributes of life-long learners through our diverse curriculum where students experience education of the mind and heart. These skills and attributes allow our students to become effective participants in modern knowledge economies and societies. The potential of each student is nurtured, challenged and guided to enable full and transformative participation in the twenty-first century world in which we live.

The Middle Years are a time of immense change for young adolescents when they experience major physiological changes that impact not only their ability to learn, but their behaviour. Our Academic Care program incorporates many experiences that focus on the spiritual, emotional, social and physical needs of the Middle Years Learner. Relationships are integral to the Academic Care program and each student is part of the vertical Pastoral Care system at the College. Pastoral Care and academic progress are inextricably linked; therefore our Academic Care structures and processes are sympathetic to adolescent needs. A Head of Year for each of the middle years facilitates these areas.

Subjects at St Ursula's College incorporate Literacy, Numeracy and ICTs with authentic links to Cross-Curricular Perspectives and the General Capabilities from the Australian Curriculum. We provide learning experiences that aim to engage and motivate our students whilst fostering organisational and problem solving skills within real life experiences.

The Year 7 curriculum is a set program where students experience their transition into high school with core teachers, core and specialist subjects. Year 8 students make decisions about some subjects according to their own needs, talents and gifts. The Year 9 students are encouraged to explore our diverse curriculum through a greater selection of specialist subjects.

... Key characteristics of Middle Schooling at St Ursula's College:

- Academic Care program focusing on meaningful concepts for each year level.
- Seamless and purposefully designed orientation and transition program
- Core classes with core teaching teams
- Year 7 terms based around a Big Idea and Inquiry Question
- Integrated units of study
- Resource-based program on mindfulness in order to care for students' emotional health and wellbeing
- Project Based Learning
- Explicit teaching of executive functioning skills
- Diverse range of subjects studied with subject choice increasing each year
- Integrated Literacy, Numeracy and ICT program
- Critical and creative thinking



THE SENIOR YEARS

The Senior Years at St Ursula's College groups students from Year 10 through to Year 12 and has a clear focus on transition to pathways and possibilities that enable each student access to lifelong learning. With our ethos based on the values of Ursuline founder St Angela Merici, students in the Senior Years will be challenged and empowered to make informed decisions to equip them for the world of work and further study options at TAFE or University once they leave St Ursula's College.

The Academic Care team is proactive in designing relevant co-curricular programs and offering individual academic and pastoral support for each student in the Senior Years. The Heads of Year are responsible for the academic care of each student in their year level, guiding and challenging them spiritually, pastorally and academically.

The Year 10 program strives to prepare each student for the personal and academic choices when looking towards future pathways. Resilience, healthy living and self-awareness are key hallmarks of the Year 10 program. Our formal Year 10 curriculum gives students a wide variety of choice and helps to build skills and knowledge bases for new subject offerings as students prepare to enter Year 11.

The Year 11 program places emphasis on leadership and growing independence. Students in Year 11 are provided with many new opportunities to lead and serve. Our Peer Support Program is one initiative whereby Year 11 students are trained to mentor younger students. Academically, our Year 11 students are challenged with two year courses either in tertiary preparation or vocational education pathways. Acknowledging that every student is different and the multi-faceted pathways available, each student has access to specialist staff to support them in their choices.

The Year 12 program acknowledges students as independent learners and prepares them for transition into life beyond St Ursula's College. As the Senior leaders of the College community, every student has opportunities to lead and grow as young women of service. Students are individually mentored to assist them in their academic success and future decision making. Every student in the Senior Years has access to our Vocational Education Coordinator and our Careers Advisor. Through these key personnel, students and their parents are guided with relevant career planning. Embedded in the senior years journey is Career Avenue Testing, Study Skills information sessions and preparation for tertiary study.

The Senior Years Team seeks to equip each young woman with the desire, confidence, knowledge and skills for purposeful engagement in her world – initially as a student but primarily for life beyond school.



BOARDING LIFE

The St Ursula's College Residential Community aims to provide an environment in which each girl is nurtured and offered opportunities for growth and development across a range of areas: academic, spiritual, social, cultural and sporting.

Each student is viewed as a unique individual whose journey through St Ursula's College will foster strong academic and thinking skills, self-discovery and personal integrity.

There is an age appropriate focus for each year level group but always with an emphasis on community building activities and opportunities for our senior students to develop leadership skills as they are encouraged to be strong role models for our younger students.

The Residential College endeavours to make life as "homely" as possible in the residential community where our girls can feel comfortable and grow in an atmosphere of respect for themselves and others. Our boarding community is small enough to enable one-on-one relationships to develop between students and boarding staff, yet large enough for the girls to make life-long friends.

Each student is viewed as a unique individual whose journey through St Ursula's College will foster strong academic and thinking skills, self-discovery and personal integrity. There is an emphasis on developing and fostering healthy, life-giving relationships for personal and communal resilience.

- A formal structure has been established to develop the quality of leadership. The year 11 and 12 girls take on the mantle of leadership and act as role models for the rest of the boarders.
- We have a number of support staff on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some of our staff are also qualified teachers who provide students with additional tutoring where appropriate. This is complemented with the introduction of two international GAP students to the team, with specific interest in creative arts and sports, further enhancing our after-school and weekend activity offerings.
- Our Health Centre provides all the necessary health care with a qualified registered nurse on duty each day.
- Industry trained chefs and kitchen staff ensure that individual needs are catered to.
- Girls have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of weekend and representative sports, attend local activities, theatre productions, movies and, on occasions, have the opportunity to travel a little further to Brisbane and the Gold Coast.





PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care is a valued and important aspect of life at St Ursula's College. It underpins all we do both within the classroom and outside. Pastoral Care is about quality relationships, nurturing the hopes of our students and sharing our stories (past and present) and being challenged to be the best person we can be. We invite the girls to live creatively and justly and we encourage them to realise 'a future more wondrous than we dream of...' (*from the annals of the first Ursulines*). Pastoral Care is at the heart of the College and allows for the integration of the academic, social and spiritual dimensions of College life.

Leadership opportunities, together with the College's co-curricular program and values of service, ensure that our girls are encouraged and prepared as they move out into the wider community.

Our Pastoral Care program:

- consists of small, vertical (students from Year 7 – 12) groups that allow the older students, the 'big sisters', to mentor and care for the younger students.
- peer Support Program where trained, Year 12 Peer Support Leaders, work with small groups of younger students.
- a truly integrated Pastoral Care and Curriculum Program, whereby each operates in consultation with the other to ensure a student focus that is well-informed and catered to the individual at all times.
- resource-based program on mindfulness in order to care for students' emotional health and wellbeing.

The Pastoral Care teacher is a very important part of the Pastoral Care structure; this person is the link between home and school. This person meets with the students on a daily basis to work on helping them become responsible, autonomous individuals who are able to achieve and maintain quality relationships.

"The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts – this means heart in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit will converge in the human self." *Parker Palmer*



... MUSIC

St Ursula's College has a vibrant and successful Music Department. Our team of music specialists, ensemble directors and classroom educators works tirelessly to inspire young musicians at the College. A rigorous, exciting and contemporary classroom curriculum, membership in a variety of choral and instrumental ensembles, together with exposure to a wide range of visiting performers, outside music professionals and a variety of performance opportunities, promotes music in the life of each student.

... Vocal Instrumental Immersion Program

St Ursula's College has developed a new, innovative and multifaceted vocal and instrumental music program that, together with the classroom music program, will support the students in its care to achieve musical success, and to nurture them through their musical journey at the College.

V.I.I.P. is an all-inclusive program offered primarily to (but not exclusively) students in Years 7, 8 & 9. It is fully funded by the College (no extra costs to parents) and is aimed at students who have experience on, a demonstrated aptitude for or interest in any orchestral, brass, string, percussion instrument or voice. Under this program, students are provided with specialist tuition, the use of a College instrument and all music required. The College is committed to providing up to 100 places in this program each year.

... Music Bursaries

Students who have demonstrated aptitude and continued commitment to the development of their musicianship, display a willingness to contribute to the College Music Program, and who are in need of financial support, may be eligible for a College Music Bursary. This bursary includes all music, the use of a College instrument and a 50% subsidy on specialist individual music tuition.



... SPORT

St Ursula's College provides an extensive sporting program for the students. Students have access to a wide variety of representative sports offered by Darling Downs School Sport. Students also have access to a multitude of team and individual sporting activities that allow them to explore their capabilities not previously experienced in the primary setting.

All girls are encouraged to participate in social sport at the College as well as the numerous College championships including swimming, athletics, cross country and tennis along with the Desenzano Cup for Interhouse sports.

The College facilities including the indoor multi-court Salo Centre, our four multi-purpose outdoor courts for tennis, basketball and netball, and our College oval provide a variety of surfaces for physical activity.

The College 25 metre outdoor pool is heated and offers an alternative training venue for not only swimming but many other aquatic activities.

Our sporting program has been designed to offer an expansive yet flexible and responsive program of physical activity that meets the needs and interests of our students in a professional and encouraging manner.

... THE ARTS

St Ursula's College supports a diverse and vibrant Arts Faculty. Students have the opportunity to experience all disciplines of the Arts. Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts are available to all students from Years 7 – 12. We offer eight senior subjects and a multitude of units across all disciplines for students in the Middle Years.

The recently completed Salo Studios encompass flexible learning spaces with custom fitted tarket dance-suitable floor surfaces and a professionally appointed stage with lighting, sound and media capabilities. Downstairs there are soundproof studios, access to a wide range of musical instruments, cutting edge software and recording equipment for student use.

The Visual Arts and Media Arts facilities allow for work in clay, printing making, sculpture, integrated mediums, photography and filmmaking. Student work is exhibited in our 'Hole in the Wall' Gallery and in our brand new art gallery, 'Il Cielo'.

Students of the Arts also have the opportunity to extend their creative skills and talents by participating in co-curricular opportunities across all Arts areas.

We have an extensive Instrumental Music program, Drama productions for both Junior and Senior students, Dance concerts, Eisteddfods, Visual Arts and Media competitions and exhibitions.



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

The Australian Ursulines form one Province of a much wider international group known as the Ursulines of the Roman Union. This group provides the College with a link to a whole network of Ursuline schools, Colleges and educational institutions run by the Ursulines of the Roman Union in over 30 countries.

In recent years there has been a growing awareness among many Ursuline schools that this network can provide a means of mutual support and development amongst our schools through the sharing of spiritual and intellectual resources. It has also been considered that the international nature of the Ursuline schools also helps foster an important global awareness in students and staff and an appreciation of other cultures and societies.

The Exchange Programs, visits from international Ursuline staff and students, Student Leadership Programs, GAP experiences and more are a springboard for global learning among our College community, making connections for the students in the classrooms and creating opportunities for dialogue and understanding among Ursuline students and co-workers around the globe.

The aim of the international program is to:

- offer the unique experience of living and studying in another Ursuline school
- provide students with the opportunity to develop their skills and awareness that will enhance their future potential
- enable students to participate and contribute to international learning networks and assist in building community among Ursuline schools worldwide
- foster an important global awareness in students and an appreciation for other cultures and societies
- embed diversity and cultural intelligence into our school culture and learning.

... Current Exchanges/Trips

Hachinohe, Japan
Bangkok, Thailand
France/New Caledonia
USA, incl. Boston, New Rochelle, Dallas

WHY A GIRLS' SCHOOL?

Girls' schools are ideally positioned to educate, inspire and nurture the girls of today, who will be the leaders of tomorrow. While in coeducational schools, girls have to compete for attention and leadership positions with boys; in single-sex schools every girl has a voice. Curriculums are tailored for girls, who are given opportunities to develop and excel. Girls in single-sex schools can captain the debating team, choose to study physics or be part of a rugby team.

... Practice of Faith

Girls are able to pray, question and discover their relationship with God in a loving and open environment. Spiritual activities and experiences provide creative and meaningful opportunities that cater for girls.

... Academic advantages

Girls in girls' schools achieve significantly stronger academic results than any other group in Australia. Without the competition from boys, girls are free to pursue academic excellence and each achievement is celebrated.

... Role models and leadership

All of the leadership roles at St Ursula's College are filled by girls: from the captain of the touch football team to the head of the student body; from the first trombone in the school orchestra to the main part in the school play; and from student leadership groups to the leaders of every College club. Younger students see these female leaders as role models and learn that girls can lead in any field.

... A tailored curriculum

Girls' education is a specialised field. Teachers at St Ursula's College tailor their classes and curriculum for the girls. This means that students are more likely to be engaged with the content and the methods used in each subject. Girls are free to participate in class without the teacher's attention being dominated by boys.

... Countless opportunities

Girls at girls' schools enjoy not only equal opportunity but every opportunity. All activities are open to girls: they participate, influence and lead. There is no gender stereotyping with subject selection. Girls at St Ursula's College are able and encouraged to explore a career or future in any area.

... Counteracting negative influences

Girls can work through the challenges of adolescence without fear of embarrassment or harassment. St Ursula's College runs specific programs which counteract negative body imagery and ideals of how girls and women are portrayed in the media. We believe strongly in helping girls to accept and be comfortable with who they are.

... Global citizens

St Ursula's College students are prepared to be citizens of the world, using rapidly developing technology and forming connections with girls in other countries. At St Ursula's College there is an emphasis on social justice and community as girls are encouraged to make connections with others outside the classroom walls.

- Alliance of Girls' Schools Australia

"I ask you, to take all your daughters into account, having each and every one deeply fixed in your hearts and minds, and not just their names, but their background and character and everything about them. This will not be difficult if you surround them with love."

Angela Merici: Second Legacy

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