



**STPATRICK'S**  
Technical College

## SUB-SCHOOLS PROGRAM

St Patrick's Technical College is well known as an innovative educational institution, with a history of excellence in all areas of teaching and learning. One of these reasons for excellence is the personal attention given to students through the use of mentoring and now development of the Sub-school infrastructure.

These Sub-schools are semi-autonomous units that are self-directing and self-governing. They are responsible for the course development and delivery, monitoring of behaviour and progress of students, communication with parents and provision of pastoral care.

They are led by three educational leaders who assume the multi-dimensional role of Head of Sub-school and are supported by the student welfare team who are jointly responsible for the monitoring of behaviour and progress of students in the school.

Sub-schools improve student learning outcomes through the promotion of positive student-teacher relationships. They encourage and support communication among teachers in improving their teaching and enhance collaboration among teachers in attacking school-wide problems. The traditional school organisation minimises collective, collegial behaviour on the part of teachers. "It leads to bureaucratic, rule-prone direction from the top but then creates autonomous teachers who, behind their classroom doors, can readily ignore much of the top-down direction." St Patrick's Technical College has been deliberately structured to avoid this.

Central to the concept of Sub-schools are a number of other beliefs:

- That an organisation's structure can enhance the working environment for students and teachers.
- That a consistent, whole of school approach to effective teaching and learning is essential to the development of an effective school that seeks to maximise student learning outcomes (i.e. academic, social and personal).
- That teaching strategies and curriculum should focus on the maturity level of students. The more individualised instruction, the more it meets the psychological needs of students, particularly young adolescents.
- That teaching and learning is relevant to the employment needs of industry.
- That only through the collective efforts of teachers, can schools operate effectively.
- Collective teaching has a stronger influence on student achievement than individual teaching.
- Teacher accountability is achieved through ownership, commitment and collegiality rather than through supervision.





- In a shared-influence setting, such as a Sub-school, teachers have less individual autonomy because the pressure to do things differently comes from a source they need to respond to - their peers. This loss of individual autonomy is offset, however, by the collective ability to do things on behalf of student learning that the teacher is not able to do in isolation.
- Learning partnerships are generated.
- Sub-schools foster student growth and development and a deeper sense of belonging for all involved in the school community.

The three Sub-schools at St Patrick's Technical College are:

- School of Engineering & Transport
- School of Building & Construction
- School of Community Services, Hospitality & Lifestyle

Aims of the Sub-schools:

- Improved student outcomes
- Increasing enrolments
- More diverse school community
- Very high expectations from parents and staff for student achievement
- Effective parental engagement
- Very few behaviour issues
- Greater employment outcomes
- Opportunity to develop new specialist pre-vocational courses

Heads of Sub-schools support teachers and teaching through:

- Ensuring explicit teaching is a focus throughout the school
- In-class and on-job teacher mentoring
- Regular schedule of collective teaching
- Collaborative planning
- Moderated assessment
- Helping to set individual student targets
- Assisting in the transfer of learning from Professional Development back into classrooms

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