



MERCY COLLEGE

RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY POLICY

Rationale

In the spirit of Catherine McAuley and the Mercy tradition, Mercy College provides a Catholic education for young people and endeavours to make Catholic education accessible to all those who desire it.

At Mercy College (the "College") we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our College. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel.

All students, parents/guardians, teachers, support staff and volunteers have the right to be safe and feel safe in their College community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety or wellbeing of others.

This Mercy College Respectful Community Policy provides members of the College Community with guidelines for the effective development of positive relationships within the College Community and assists in promoting the values that are in keeping with the College's purpose and values.

Aims

The College aims to provide an open, welcoming and safe environment for all. We believe that all community members play a valuable role in the life of the College. This Mercy College Respectful Community Policy for staff members, parents/guardians and volunteers outlines the behaviours we require all adults working and volunteering in our College to follow. This will assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students, families and staff. The Mercy College Respectful Community Policy is a broad outline of behavioural principles and expectations. This policy will provide guidelines to promote desirable and appropriate behaviour to ensure that all interaction with students and adults is respectful, honest, courteous, sensitive, tactful and considerate.

Policy statement

The following principles provide the framework for the Mercy College Respectful Community Policy:

- Active and engaged members of the Community are aware of their rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others
- Our mercy values of excellence, justice, hospitality and compassion underpin all we do here at Mercy College.
- Members of the College Community have a responsibility to develop and maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterised by respect, civility and dignity.



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Implementation

The Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring all parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, students and visitors are aware of this policy upon arrival, employment and enrolment.
- maintaining currency and relevancy of the policy
- implementing the standards of conduct as set out in this policy.

The staff members are responsible for:

- respecting the individual needs, cultural practices and beliefs of families in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal.
- working with colleagues, parents/guardians to provide an environment that encourages positive interactions and supports constructive feedback.
- providing guidance to parents/guardians and volunteers through positive role modelling and when appropriate, clear and respectful directions.

Parents and guardians are responsible for supporting the efforts of the College in maintaining a safe, orderly and respectful learning environment for all students. This necessitates abiding by the Mercy College Respectful Community Policy and ensuring that students do likewise.

Parents/guardians fulfil this responsibility routinely and specifically when they:

- engage in all aspects of the students College life at Mercy College
- provide an environment that encourages positive role modelling
- maintain effective communication with the College related to their child
- promptly report to the College their child's absence or late arrival, and
- work with the College in managing challenges or concerns involving their child
- agree to abide by the College Policies and procedures as detailed below, but not limited to:
 - Child Safety Policy
 - Child Protection – Reporting Policy
 - Anaphylaxis Policy
 - Complaints and Grievance Policy
 - Enrolment Policy
 - Fees Policy
 - Privacy Policy
 - Social Media Policy
 - Student Attendance Policy
 - Student Dress Code Guidelines
 - Workplace Anti-Bullying Policy

These policies can be found on the Mercy College website.



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Members of the wider College Community are expected to respect/uphold the Mercy College Respectful Community Policy in all their contacts with the College whether on campus or at College functions or events off campus.

Any College Community member who invites a relative, friend, supporter, carer or other person (adult or child) to be present at any College related function or activity at any location must be responsible for that person and must ensure that they act at all times in a manner consistent with this policy.

Sanctions for any breaches of the Mercy College Respectful Community Policy

A breach of this policy may in certain circumstances be a breach of a legal obligation. In such circumstances the College Principal is obliged to act in accordance with this obligation.

The consequences for a member of the College Community who is in breach of this policy will be determined by the Principal in accordance with the College Complaints and Grievance Policy.

Status of Document	
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Appendix 1 – Guidelines

Standards of Behaviour

College Community members should act according to these guidelines:

Communication

- Use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language. Refrain from the use of profane, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language.
- Accept that the use of swearing, derogatory terms, sexual jokes, innuendo and other inappropriate language in the College environment or around students will not be tolerated.
- Give encouraging and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Responses to emails and telephone calls are not expected to be instantaneous or out of normal working hours, an acceptable response time for emails is within 48 hours.
- Discipline of students while participating in College life is the responsibility of staff and therefore any matters or concerns related to managing students' behaviour should be referred to staff immediately in a respectful manner.
- Under NO circumstances should a student, parent/guardian or member of staff be approached in a confrontational manner. The proper channels for communication are through the appropriate staff member according to the Mercy College Complaints and Grievances resolution pathway. This is available on the Mercy College website.

Relationships

- Ensure that staff relationships with students are strictly in accordance with appropriate roles and that favouritism and special treatment are avoided.
- Respect diversity in people, their ideas and opinions and treat others fairly regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- Respect the legal and moral rights of others and treat them with dignity, civility and respect at all times, and especially when there is a disagreement.
- Respect the value and importance of volunteers within the School community.
- Acknowledge and affirm success in individual and school achievement.
- Refrain from public criticism of school activities and events, children and staff at the School. Public criticism includes verbal, written and online.
- Refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes harassment or discrimination, including inappropriate use of social media such as emails and Facebook within the School Community.



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Ethical Conduct

- Support the College in the development of a faith based learning community based on the Catholic ethos, to work in a co-operative and positive manner.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity.
- Always act in the best interests of students, their families, and staff members.
- Show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others.
- Take appropriate measures to help those in need.

Safety

- Comply with all relevant policies and procedures of Mercy College. These are displayed on the College website.
- Be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures.
- Respect and comply with all applicable Commonwealth and State laws.
- While on College grounds or attending College activities, the College's staff are responsible for the students that are enrolled in the College.
- Parents/guardians, and other persons attending with children not enrolled in the College are responsible for supervising the behaviour of those children.

Confidentiality

- Comply with the Mercy College Privacy Policy.
- Personal information should not be used for the benefit of others, (specifically, must not be used for business pursuits or networking opportunities).
- Respect the privacy of all members of the College Community and refrain from recording or photographing individuals, without permission of the individual or parental approval.

Conflict Management

- Seek staff assistance, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully.
- Work with the College to deal promptly with areas of concern.
- Accept staff decisions and follow their directions. Speak with the staff member if there is a problem complying with any directions.

School Community members must not:

- Verbally abuse, threaten or inflict bodily harm on another person by any physical aggression or encourage others to do so.
- Be in possession of, or under the influence of, or provide others with, alcohol or illegal drugs.



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Appendix 2 – Complaints and Grievances Resolution Pathway

