



MERCY
Regional College

Policies Booklet

WELCOME

This booklet contains important information for parents who are considering enrolling their child at Mercy Regional College in 2018.

We would ask that you read through all the information contained in this booklet to familiarise yourself with College expectations.

Dr. Darren Egberts



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ENROLMENT POLICY

Rationale

"...Catholic schools are still central to the mission and work of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat today and to the life quality of students and their families. Inspired and governed by the message and person of Jesus Christ, and committed to the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of each person, they provide education of the highest quality to their communities. In line with the self-understanding of the Church, they are welcoming to all who share their educational philosophy." (Awakenings Core Document, 2005, p 16).

The Mercy Regional College enrolment policy has been developed to assist the Principal in the assessment of the potential students' suitability for enrolment at the College for vacancies that exist at any time for any year level.

Mercy Regional College invites enrolments from any potential student who is comfortable with, and prepared to support, the ethos of the College as outlined in the Mission and Vision Statement. Both student and parents/guardians are expected to respect and fully support the Catholic nature and practices of the College. These include formal Religious Education program, class and College Masses, retreats and reflection days and prayer.

Policy Statement

The enrolment policy of Mercy Regional College is based upon the following beliefs:

- That parents/guardians are the first educators of children and have the obligation and right to choose an education for their children consistent with their own beliefs and values;
- By virtue of their baptism, all Catholic children are entitled to a Catholic education; and
- Any and all potential students will be considered for enrolment provided their enrolment does not result in the exclusion of Catholic students.

Policy Guidelines

- Each year, the Mercy Regional College Board will set the maximum enrolment numbers for the intake of Year Seven students and for Years 8 – 12.
- All enrolments are subject to the discretion of the Principal and each enrolment decision must take into account the best interests of all concerned.
- The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and the Diocese of Ballarat recognize that Catholic schools are first and foremost for Catholic students.
- No child can be excluded from enrolment solely on the basis of gender, race, religion, physical or intellectual ability.
- No child will be excluded from enrolment at the College due to an inability to pay school fees. Parents will be given an opportunity to make arrangements with the Principal for alternate payment arrangements or, in certain circumstances, reductions in fee payments.
- Students with special needs are welcome at the College provided appropriate resources and finances are available to meet the specific learning, emotional and physical needs of the student.
- The following criteria reflect the order of priority for enrolments at Mercy Regional College:
 - Students who are baptised Catholics.
 - Students with siblings attending the College.
 - Students attending Catholic Primary schools.
 - All other students.

However, all enrolments at Mercy Regional College are at the discretion of the Principal and specific pastoral concerns may cause him or her to override this order.

- In matters of enrolment, the Principal may seek the advice of the College's Canonical Administrators, the Catholic Education Office Ballarat or other persons and/or institutions.
- The Principal (or Principal's delegate) will interview all or some of the applicants to fill potential or actual vacancies in year levels at the College.
- Those wishing to enroll at the College must complete the Mercy Regional College Enrolment Application form and pay a deposit of \$100.

Transfers

- Students transferring from other Colleges will be expected to provide a recent report from their previous school and the school will be contacted for a reference.
- Students from other Catholic Colleges will generally be accepted subject to the above.
- Students seeking to transfer from local or other Secondary Colleges will be offered enrolment subject to availability and a check of previous reports and reference.
- Where a student requests enrolment from another College following a dispute or any other significant reason, the Principal may offer a provisional enrolment which would be subject to periodic review. The provisional enrolment would include an agreement signed by the student, parents/guardians, Head of School and Principal of Mercy Regional College.

Notification of Enrolment

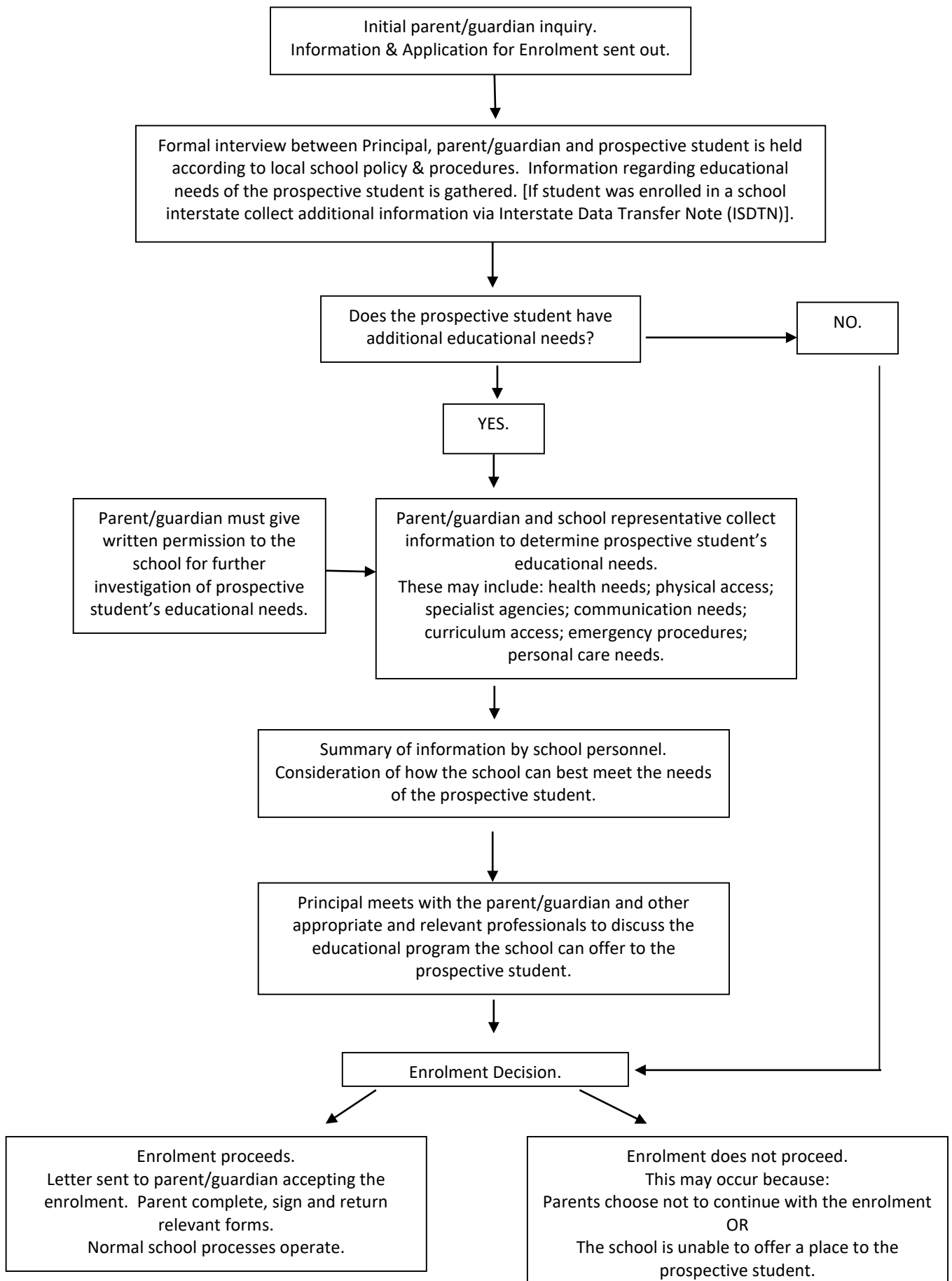
- Parents/Guardians of applicants for enrolment will be notified in writing by the College of acceptance of that enrolment, or otherwise.
- Where applications for enrolment exceed the number of places at any year level, a waiting list will be created for those students who are unsuccessful in gaining initial enrolment at the College.

Sources

- Mercy Regional College Mission and Vision Statements
 - Enrolment Guidelines for Ballarat Diocesan Secondary Schools
 - Relevant State and Commonwealth Legislation (Appendix 1)

SCHOOL ENROLMENT PROCEDURES IN THE DIOCESE OF BALLARAT

To ensure consistency and transparency in the enrolment of students in the schools of the Diocese of Ballarat, it is suggested that the following procedures for enrolment are implemented by all schools.



CHILD SAFE POLICY

RATIONALE:

The Mercy Regional College community is strongly committed to policies and procedures developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including all forms of abuse. This commitment extends to the whole college community including leaders, staff, volunteers, students and their families.

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT:

"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

POLICY STATEMENT:

Commitment to Child Safety

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, Mercy Regional College have a right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

The staff and volunteers of Mercy Regional College encourage students to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them. We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us. Student empowerment and leadership is a key priority for Mercy Regional College and is reflective of our broader commitment to holistic education where students are encouraged and challenged to grow academically, spiritually, psychologically, emotionally and physically. Mercy Regional College offers a broad set of programs and activities designed to facilitate empowerment and leadership.

Valuing Diversity and Inclusion

We value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity, and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) and their families
- promote the personal safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability and make them feel welcome and part of all aspects of school life

Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Mercy Regional College will apply the most thorough and rigorous standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Checks (WWCC) for all staff and volunteers. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for staff and volunteer positions.

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Mercy Regional College provides support and supervision to all staff and volunteers so people feel valued, respected, affirmed in their work and fairly treated. We have a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, with all staff having received the Code and undertaken rigorous professional development on it. Our volunteers also receive a copy of the Code and are required to adhere to it. All new staff at Mercy Regional College will be taken through the Code as part of their incoming induction program.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct, and store the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures:

- *Child Safe Reporting and Responding Policy*
- *Child Safe Reporting Procedure*
- *Complaints & Disclosure Policy*
- *Complaints Procedure*
- *Disclosure of Abuse or Harm Procedure*
- *Child Safe Responding Procedure*

The specific policies and procedures are still to be confirmed.

Mrs Emily Stephens and Mr Chris Grant have been appointed as Child Safety Officers with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to Child Safety.

Risk Management

Risk management is an approach that minimises the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. Our Risk Management Plan (*To be developed according to Standard 6*) outlines and details all aspects of risk across our whole school environment (on site and off site school activities) with specific activity risk assessments. In addition to our general Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse and harm to our students.

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Vision and Mission

Through the Mercy tradition, we commit ourselves to caring for each other.

We will endeavour to:

- provide all person in the College community with a safe and protective environment;
- support each other; and
- listen to, and share in, the experience of others.

Rationale

We believe that the Pastoral Care of Mercy Regional College should enhance students' wellbeing through their respect for self, others, property and the environment. The school will provide a secure, supportive and constant environment highlighting partnerships within the community. While living true to the Gospel values, we respond to the ever-increasing needs to social, economic and cultural diversity within the community. Pastoral Care promotes a deepening of relationships between students, parents, staff, parishes and the wider community.

Scriptural Context

"God created human beings in his own image" (Gen 1:27)

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

"As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness". (Ezk 34:12)

Policy

Mercy Regional College will provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all. We will ensure that where possible, we identify and seek to meet the pastoral needs of our students in and beyond the classroom.

GUIDELINES AND INDICATORS

POLICY GUIDELINES At Mercy, we will:	POLICY INDICATORS These are evident when:
1. Foster professional relationships between teachers, students and parents/guardians.	Members of the College community demonstrate mutual respect, care and concern for each other
2. Ensure that discipline procedures, school rules and sanctions are intended to develop persons "who are responsible, and inner directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their conscience". (The Catholic School. Sec. 31).	The procedures and process put in place by the College achieve the desired outcome. The procedures and processes are considered fair and reasonable by the majority of the school community
3. Develop and nourish Pastoral Care programs and activities that meet the life needs of students and to provide them with every opportunity to value themselves and to experience well-being.	Pastoral Care programs focus on self-esteem, social relationships, moral development, vocational awareness, sexuality, health and personal safety.
4. Ensure our curriculum is comprehensive and inclusive catering for the diversity of needs of students.	The curriculum reflects the various elements and Christian understanding of Pastoral Care.
5. Promote networks of care between school /family relationships.	The support services within the school and local communities are investigated and used to best advantage. The programs and resources used are characterised by a sense of love, kindness and celebration of living – based on Gospel values.

STUDENT HOMEWORK PROCEDURES POLICY

Mercy Regional College is implementing this policy to ensure that students, parents and staff are aware of their involvement with, and obligations in regards to, student homework participation.

GUIDELINES:

Homework is important for reasons including:

- increasing time on task, which is a strong correlate of achievement;
- establishing some ability to work independently;
- practising and preparing for coming lessons and units of work;
- developing good habits of study, concentration and self discipline from early in secondary school;
- practising, extending, reinforcing and consolidating skills and content learned in class;
- strengthening home-school links.

The time students need to complete tasks at home varies. A task intended to engage a Year 7 student for 15 minutes will take some students five minutes and others one hour or more. In the former situation, a student is expected to allocate the specified time to homework-type tasks. However, a student needing more than the set time to finish a homework piece should ask one of their parents to sign the diary so as to indicate that the required time has been completed. Parents should not let their children spend significantly longer than that specified on homework tasks, and all teachers must accept parent signatures in diaries as proof that students have expended the required amount of time.

Some students find this very hard to accept – they want to make all their work perfect! These students need coaching from home and school to understand that the challenge is to do the best job possible within the time available. Students who ignore this will find themselves in difficulties in more senior years when it will be physically impossible to achieve perfection with every piece of work. If a parent believes their child needs school support in this area please discuss the issue with the Homeroom teacher.

We all need to acknowledge the rich and full lives many of our students live outside of school managing their sporting, music, performance and other commitments. Students should be given homework after every class as per the table set out below.

Please note that:

- Year 12 students have a study period in their timetable which is taken at school. Maximising this time at school is critical as it will provide an opportunity for homework to be done and may give the opportunity in the evenings for consolidation of skills in areas of revision, summaries and extended tasks.
- Year 11 students who study at least one Units 3&4 subject should expect to allocate one hour per day for each of these; likewise Year 10 students who study at least one Units 1&2 subject should expect to allocate 45 minutes per subject.

The extended assignment is another area that can cause problems for students. Assignments should never mean extra work. Work for assignments must fit into the normal homework expectations. Occasionally some students can spend whole days and even weekends working on assignments. An assignment set over a two-week period should use no more than seven homework allocations. When an assignment is set students should write very specific details of its requirements into the relevant pages of the homework diary so that it is obvious that this is the homework to be done on the set nights. If a parent believes their child has not been given enough support with planning assignment work the teacher concerned should be contacted immediately, perhaps via a note in the diary. Staff will happily help remedy the situation.

YEAR LEVEL	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER DAY	HOMEWORK SET PER CLASS	TOTAL HOMEWORK PER DAY
7	4 on average	15 minutes	1 hour
8	4 on average	20 minutes	1 hour 20 minutes
9	4 on average	25 minutes	1 hour 40 minutes
10	4 on average	30 minutes	2 hours
11	4 on average	35 minutes	2 1/2 hours
12	2 / 3 / 4	1 hour	3 – 4 hours (including study periods)

Research data (Robert Marzano) supports our commitment to homework as part of our curriculum program:

- the more homework students do, the better their achievement (within practical and ethical limits);
- if homework is assigned, it should be commented on. The effects of homework vary greatly, depending on the feedback provided by the teacher.

In summary:

- Parents are encouraged to take an interest and be involved in their child's homework, but direct assistance should be kept to a minimum.
- The purpose of homework should be articulated and identified.
- When homework is assigned for practice, it should be structured around content with which students have a high degree of familiarity.
- Homework is assigned to prepare students for new content or to have them elaborate on content that has already been introduced.

EXAMINATIONS POLICY & PROCEDURES

RATIONALE:

The reasons for an examination as a method of assessment include:

- There are some students for whom the examination form of assessment is stimulating and rewarding and because exams are only one form of assessment, this needs to be noted for these students.
- It is becoming increasingly obvious that school rankings and student benchmarks are going to play a significant role in the ways in which schools conduct their operations and this may affect employment opportunities for students.
- The kinds of teaching and learning needed for the successful approach to an exam are part of what all good teaching must include.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of an examination program in a school is:

- To test the key areas of learning which have occurred over a semester of work in a particular subject. This is a form of summative assessment.
- To enable teachers to arrive at a clear awareness of what a student has understood in the teaching and learning process across a period of time.
- To enable teachers to report clearly on the specific standard arrived at based on a specific testing method.

PROCEDURES:

The following procedures are to be followed in relation to examinations:

- Exams are to be compiled by subject teachers; where there is more than one class for a subject the exam should be written in conjunction with all teachers.
- Where possible the exams should build on domain specific skills and reflect a format that prepares them for such subjects in the future.
- Exams should be submitted to the appropriate Heads of Teaching & Learning four weeks prior to the examination period and the arrangement of printing can be made.
- Once printed these exams will be stored in year levels and delivered to the examination room on the timetabled day.
- A copy of all exams are to be stored (electronically or paper format) by the Heads of Teaching & Learning for future reference.

CORRECTION:

At the completion of the examinations, the following processes should occur:

- Students should receive a clear and fair mark. It is often helpful to use moderation to begin the marking but once this is done, the teacher becomes the one who allocates a mark which is then the end point.
- Moderation can sometimes be done in the process of setting an exam and a short criteria sheet can enable teachers to mark according to the criteria decided on beforehand.
- There is no need for comments on the examination paper.
- Where appropriate, teachers can review the paper with their students, but papers are to be retained by the teacher.

REPORTING:

Reporting on examinations will involve the following:

- When reporting on an exam, a teacher is literally saying this is the standard at which this student can work under exam conditions.
- After each exam period, teachers may note the ways in which students could better prepare for exams. Students who seemed to experience considerable difficulty should be flagged as needing extra preparation.
- After each exam period, teachers may identify common areas of difficulty for students within the paper, leading to a review of emphases in teaching.
- Inherent in an exam program are numerous learning opportunities which should be incorporated into all good teaching e.g. organisation of knowledge, ability to read questions carefully, writing to time, handwriting skills, effective study techniques etc.

ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURE

Mercy Regional College is a Christian community based on gospel values. It has as one of its aims the promotion of positive interpersonal relationships between all members of the school community. This anti-bullying procedure recognizes that any form of bullying is unacceptable at the College.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

“Repeated intimidation, over time of a physical, verbal or psychological nature of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons.” (Rigby & Slee).

Seven elements of bullying are:-

1. A desire to inflict hurt
2. That desire is expressed as a physical or verbal action
3. The action is hurtful and plays upon student’s (Victim) vulnerability
4. There is power in inequality
5. The actions are without justification although the bully may try to present an argument
6. The actions or bullying behaviour is repeated
7. There is evident satisfaction felt by the bully

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING INCLUDE

Physical bullying	Physical violence or threats. eg. Hitting, kicking, grabbing, pushing, damaging, removing or hiding property belonging to others, damaging College property.
Verbal bullying	eg. Teasing, name calling, ridiculing or putting down others and their achievements, making comments of a sexual nature or spreading rumours about another.
Isolating bullying	eg. Purposely leaving someone out of activities.
Telephone / Cyber bullying	eg. Repeated menacing phone calls, text messages and emails.
Gesture bullying	eg. Glaring and menacing gestures.

WHAT THE STUDENT CAN DO?

You decide what to do, because you have a number of choices.

WHEN THE BULLYING OR HARASSMENT OCCURS

Look for support from - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other students ▪ Friends ▪ Homeroom Teacher ▪ Year Level coordinator ▪ Deputy Principal ▪ Principal 	Be firm, clear and confident	Tell them to stop bullying you and get away from the situation as quickly as possible.
After the harassment has occurred seek advice, BUT DON'T BLAME YOURSELF FOR WHAT HAPPENED.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk to a friend, a teacher, another adult or someone you trust. ▪ Keep on speaking until someone listens. 	When talking to an adult about harassment be clear about - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where it happened ➤ What happened to you ➤ How often it has happened ➤ What you have already done about it ➤ Who was involved 	

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:

- If you have any concerns regarding your child's welfare at school (including any incidents of bullying), make contact as soon as possible.
- The College will listen to your concerns and discuss with you the most appropriate steps in order to resolve the issue.
- Communicate to your child that you need to work with the College in supporting them.

WHAT THE COLLEGE DOES:

POLICY:

Mercy Regional College is committed to providing all students and staff with a working, living and learning environment free from harassment. All students and staff are required to honour and support this commitment. It is expected that all other members of the school community will also honour this policy.

VALUES:

All members of Mercy Regional College community have the right to work, learn and live in an environment free from harassment of any kind. This means that all members of the College community accept their responsibility to accord each other respect, tolerance and dignity.

Mercy Regional College provides a supportive environment which encourages positive relations between all members of the school community by:

- Modelling and affirming appropriate behaviour,
- Acting upon any reported cases of bullying,
- Keeping records of incidents of bullying in line with privacy regulations
- Supporting all concerned to resolve the issues,
- Providing in-school programs for students and staff to support this policy, e.g. "Hands Off" which is the 3 p's program – hands off Person, Possessions & Personality.

GUIDELINES:

(As stated in our Harassment Policy)

Harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Mercy Regional College, under any circumstances. Staff are legally obliged to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in any proven instance of harassment involving staff, parents/guardians and students.

ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL:

It is the responsibility of the school Principal to ensure that proper standards of conduct are maintained in the workplace in that:

- harassment will not be tolerated;
- all complaints involving students, members of staff or parents / guardians will be investigated seriously and sympathetically;
- positive action will be taken in each instance;
- where necessary disciplinary action will be taken;

CONSEQUENCES:

- to ensure offensive behaviour stops and does not recur.
- to ensure there are no reprisals for having complained or caused offence
- to provide an opportunity for those involved to come to a mutually agreed resolution on tolerance, respect and the rights of others
- where complainants have suffered disadvantage or detriment, the situation should be redressed so far as possible

It is the responsibility of everyone at the College to speak and act against bullying.

MOBILE PHONE & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

Mercy Regional College understands and accepts that mobile phone and other electronic devices are part of the student's everyday life. Students of Mercy Regional College must use mobile phones and other electronic devices in a responsible manner. Issues surrounding privacy laws and the use of cameras on mobile phones must also be taken into consideration.

To assist our students in the appropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices while at school the following guidelines have been developed:

Guidelines

- The mobile phone is to be used to receive /send SMS and calls only **outside normal school hours**. During school hours it must be kept in a student's bag or locker and is turned off.
- Other electronic devices such as iPods and MP3 players are **not** permitted at school.
- Mobile phones and other electronic devices is the responsibility of the student and the College shall not be liable for lost, stolen or damaged phones and other electronic devices.
- If a mobile phone or other electronic devices are detected during school hours, it shall be confiscated and parents will need to collect the item from the school.
- If a parent/guardian wishes to contact a student, then the College office is the first point of call on all occasions.
- If a student wishes to contact parents/guardian during normal school hours this request must be made to the Year Level Coordinator who will then make the appropriate contact.
- All student mobile phones must be recorded on the College's "mobile phone register".
- If a mobile phone is detected and is not on the College's "mobile phone register" then it shall be immediately confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian after a period of time decided by the Deputy Principal.
- Students are not permitted to have mobile phones and other electronic devices with them on school camps and retreats. If a student is required to have a phone on camp, this will be indicated in the permission form. The College shall furnish parents with contact numbers when students are on camps and retreats.



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