



1.10

MERCY EDUCATION POLICY 1.10 CODES OF CONDUCT

Introduction:

Mercy Education Limited (Mercy Education) is an incorporated ministry of Mercy Ministry Companions (MMC). MMC is responsible for ensuring, as faithfully as Catherine McAuley and her sisters, that the Catholic identity, charism, and spirituality of schools previously under the stewardship of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG), thrive into the future.

Our Mercy schools' vision is underpinned by the values of *compassion, justice, respect, hospitality, service* and *courage* and each Mercy school strives to reflect the spirit of mercy in the relationships it forms with its students, parents, employees, volunteers, and the wider school community.

Mercy Education has developed two codes of conduct to provide context for these relationships, the *Mercy Education Code of Conduct*, and the *Mercy Education Parent Code of Conduct (codes of conduct)*.

Rationale

The Mercy Education codes of conduct describe the expected attitudes and minimum behaviours for employees, parents, volunteers, and the wider school community.

Children and students can feel safe, protected, and empowered with the knowledge that adults have an enhanced understanding of appropriate boundaries surrounding their interactions with them.

Senior leaders, employees and volunteers are guided in their obligations to meet professional ethics and standards, workplace health and safety responsibilities and appropriate workplace behaviour.

Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with their schools to promote supportive and effective relationships with employees and other school families and to act as role models for children and students.

Importantly, Mercy Education can feel confident in its governance with the knowledge that its codes of conduct will assist in creating and supporting happy, successful, productive, inclusive, and culturally safe learning environments for children and students.

Purpose

To provide guidance on the acceptable, caring, and respectful relationships expected from members of the school community.

Definitions

Child: A child is a person under the age of 18 years or as defined according to applicable legislation. Enrolled students over the age of 18 years are not included in the definition of a child.

Child Safety: includes matters related to protecting children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures, or allegations of child abuse.

Clergy: any cleric, member of religious institute or other persons who are employed or engaged by a Church body, or appointed by a Church body to voluntary positions, in which they work with or are near children or young people or are engaged in other forms of pastoral care or chaplaincy.

NB: Whilst specifically the definition of the word 'clergy' is for ordained persons who are religious leaders serving the needs of their religion and its members, for the purpose of this document, it includes other professed religious personnel providing pastoral care or chaplaincy services.

Conduct: the way an employee, volunteer, parent, or member of the wider school community behaves in a school environment.

Employee: an individual working in a school environment (or school boarding environment) who is:

- Directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- Contracted service provider (whether a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work; or
- A minister or religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school (ref Clergy).

Parent: applies to an individual in a parenting capacity of a child, student, prospective student, or past student, including carers, guardians, and natural, step, family caregiver, or adoptive parents.

School boarding environment: any physical, online, or virtual space made available or authorised by Mercy Education for a child or student boarding at a school boarding premises to use at any time, including:

- a) online or virtual school boarding environments (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services);
- b) other locations provided by the provider of school boarding services or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:
 - i camps
 - ii approved homestay accommodation
 - iii delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers, or another school; or
 - iv sporting events, excursions, competitions, or other events.

School environment: any of the following physical, online, or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:

- a) A campus of the school
- b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and
- c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:
 - i camps
 - ii approved homestay accommodation

- iii delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers, or another school; or
- iv sporting events, excursions, competitions, or other events.

Student: a person who is enrolled in or attends the school or a student at the school boarding premises.

Volunteer: an individual (including College Advisory Council Members) who is engaged by Mercy Education or its schools and performs work without remuneration or reward for the school or school boarding premises in the school environment or school boarding premises environment.

Policy Coverage

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and parents of students at Mercy Education Schools

Policy Statement

The Mercy Education codes of conduct:

- 01 embrace the moral values and teachings of the Catholic Church and the aims, philosophy, and ethos of our Mercy schools
- 02 are consistent with its commitment to child safety and wellbeing and a no tolerance approach all forms of child abuse
- 03 ensure that a child safe culture is demonstrated and promoted at all levels of the school
- 03 describe acceptable attitudes and minimum appropriate behaviours and consequences for non-compliance with the codes and applicable legislation
- 04 are designed to ensure all persons are treated equitably and fairly
- 05 promote child safety and wellbeing in the school environment including any school boarding house environments and make the safety of children and students against sexual, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse or neglect, a priority
- 06 promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students and those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 07 promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and students with a disability
- 08 Mercy Education will communicate these codes by:
 - publishing the codes of conduct on the Mercy Education website and individual school websites
 - requiring acknowledgement of the Parent Code of Code as part of the enrolment process
 - including the Mercy Education Code of Conduct in the employee and volunteer induction process
 - requiring an annual acknowledgement of the Mercy Education Code of Conduct from all Board Directors, Board Committee members, and employees
 - reviewing the codes of conduct on a regular basis at Board, leadership, and staff meetings
 - displaying the codes of conduct in communal areas, such as reception, staff rooms and other areas accessible to parents.

- 09 are supported by policies, procedures, resources, recordkeeping, and legislation as applicable
- 10 provide for compliance with the obligations of the reportable conduct scheme
- 11 provide for compliance with all mandatory reporting obligations in accordance with the relevant legislation in each State
- 12 provide for reporting all child safety concerns to school leadership (or nominated child safety officer/s), Mercy Education, the police and/or other regulatory authority as applicable in each State
- 13 will ensure that the child is safe as quickly as possible if an allegation of child abuse is made
- 14 will ensure that a breach of either code of conduct will be referred to school leadership, Mercy Education, the police and/or other regulatory authority as applicable in each State
- 15 are reviewed on a regular basis (at least every two years)

Related Documents

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL)

- <https://www.acsltd.org.au/>

Legislation

- *Model Work, Health and Safety Laws (as applicable to states)*
- *Ministerial Order 1359 Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*

Mercy Education Limited (MEL)

- *1.06 Policy: Complaints Management*
- *1.10a Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers*
- *1.10b Parent Code of Conduct*
- *6.09 Policy: Child Safety*

Review History:

Version	Date Released	Next Review	Author	Approved
1.0	February 2020	February 2023	Head of People & Culture	MEL Board
1.1	June 2020	June 2023	Head of People & Culture	MEL Board
2.0	June 2022	June 2023	Head of People & Culture	MEL Board
2.1	September 2023	July 2025	Head of People & Culture	MEL Board