

Pastoral Care Policy

Policy

- *Endorsed by The College Executive*
- *Distributed to Staff in the Staff Handbook available through the College intranet in staffdata/OLMC STAFF HANDBOOK*
- *Available on the College website at <http://www.olmcburraneeer.catholic.edu.au>*
- *Some sections referenced in the Student Diary*
- *Last reviewed February 2012*

Rationale

Pastoral Care is the total care that the school provides for each community member, including the staff, students and parents. At Our Lady of Mercy College procedures exist to develop the school as a truly Christian and caring community. The community draws its inspiration from the examples of Jesus' teachings as recorded in the Gospels and interpreted by the Catholic Church.

The school is committed to promoting the Mercy ethos through quality relationships where each of us can experience support, encouragement and education in Mercy traditions.

At Our Lady of Mercy College Pastoral Care is exemplified by:

- an environment conducive to the motivation towards personal achievement, self-esteem and the happiness of the individual;
- an environment that ensures the dignity and worth of each individual, and a sense of belonging;
- an environment that is safe and caring and treats all in a just and fair manner;
- an environment that provides quality teaching and learning, good discipline and high expectations of the individual student's performance.

Principles

At Our Lady of Mercy College we believe that:

- Pastoral Care is an expression of God's love for all, regardless of race, colour, creed or culture;
- Students have a right to receive relevant and compassionate pastoral care;
- students need to be encouraged to realise their potential within a strong, nurturing community;
- students need to be encouraged to develop and sustain relations of mutual respect;
- parents are active partners in the pastoral care of their daughters;
- the College has a responsibility to respond to legislative and regulatory changes which affect the pastoral care of students;
- Pastoral Care is the responsibility of every member of staff;
- structures and procedures must nurture an environment where each student's full educational, spiritual, physical and social potential may be realised.

Guidelines

- The Year Co-Coordinator has the responsibility for nurturing the community of the Year Group and over-seeing the Pastoral Care of the students in that Year Group.
- Year Teams consist of five or six Homeroom Teachers who work with the Year Coordinator and meet on a regular basis to discuss and manage Pastoral Care issues in the Year Group.
- Students are allocated to a Pastoral Homeroom group at the beginning of Year 7. Students remain in this group for the duration of their time at the College.
- Each Homeroom Class is led by a Pastoral Teacher who is a person in a significant relationship of care for the students. This teacher remains with the same Homeroom Class from Year 7 to Year 10.
- Students meet with their Pastoral Teacher in their Homeroom Class each morning for the purpose of prayer, roll call and daily notices.
- A School Counsellor is employed to give assistance and guidance to students in need.
- A Merit System is in place to affirm good behaviour and recognise student achievement.
- One period each cycle is allocated as a Year Assembly. This assembly is led by the Year Coordinator, Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator and Curriculum Coordinator. The purpose of these assemblies is to recognise student achievement and provide both curriculum and pastoral information and activities.
- One 30-minute period each month is allocated as a Community Period for the purpose of School assemblies, guest speakers or special occasions relevant to the College community.
- Peer Support and Tutorial Programs occur on a regular basis to assist Year 7 students with the transition to High School.

Pastoral Structures

Section

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Introduction

A variety of Pastoral Care structures are in place in an attempt to adequately provide a sense of belonging, to cater for the needs of all students and to actively promote and reinforce various aspects of Pastoral Care.

Overview of Structures

- Key Personnel Responsibilities
- Year Groups
- Community Period
- House Groups
- College Diary System
- Merit System
- Transitional Procedures

KEY PERSONNEL AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Introduction

Our Lady of Mercy College has a number of key personnel with particular responsibilities in relation to the pastoral care of students and staff. A more detailed description of each role is found in the relevant sections of the Staff Handbook.

Pastoral and Administration Team

The Pastoral and Administration Team consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator, Year Co-ordinators and KLA Co-ordinators. The purpose of this group is to address issues related to the pastoral welfare of students, to ensure consistency across the year levels regarding the college's expectations and to work collaboratively to ensure that key events and activities are appropriately and effectively organised.

Year Co-ordinators

The Year Co-ordinator has a special and significant relationship with the students in their Year Group. They are responsible for the overall co-ordination of the Year group and the care and management of the students in that group. The Year Co-ordinator co-ordinates a team of teachers allocated to the group.

Year Teams

Each Year Team consists of a Year Co-ordinator and the Pastoral Teachers responsible for each Homeroom Class. The role of the Year Team is to assist the Year Co-ordinator with the organisation and conduct of Year Group activities and events. Year Teams meet regularly with the Year Co-ordinator to discuss areas of concern within each year group.

Pastoral Teachers

The Pastoral Teacher is a person in a significant relationship of care for students and is the first point of contact between home and school. Each Pastoral Teacher is responsible for engaging their Homeroom Class in daily prayer, recording daily attendance, imparting relevant day to day information and nurturing the sense of belonging to the class and generally overseeing the care of students in that class.

Counsellor

The College Counsellor is a professionally trained counsellor responsible for giving professional counselling guidance to students with particular social or emotional needs. She is directly responsible to the Principal and Assistant Principal in her capacity as co-ordinator of pastoral care. The counsellor liaises closely with the Year Co-ordinators in order to cater for the students. All referrals to the Counsellor must go via the Year Co-ordinator.

YEAR GROUPS

Introduction

Each student belongs to a Year Group. Each Year Group is divided into five or six Pastoral/Homeroom class groups. Students are grouped alphabetically and remain in these groupings for four years.

Within each Year Group there are four to six Subject class groups. These are usually named using the letters of the school name O L M C B U. Depending on the subject the composition of these classes is determined in one of the following ways:

- Graded Classes with the 'O' class catering for the students of strongest ability,
- Mixed Ability Classes or
- Elective Subject choices.

Some classes may also cater for students requiring extra learning support.

Year Co-ordinator

Each Year Group is led by a Year Co-ordinator who is responsible for the effective guidance management and pastoral care of the Year Group.

A role description can be found in Section 3 of this Handbook.

Year Teams

All teachers are allocated to a particular Year Team. The members of the Year Team assist the Co-ordinator with the organisation and the conduct of Year Group activities and events. The composition of each Year Team is initially the responsibility of the Principal and they remain with that Year Group for Four Years.

The Year Co-ordinator is announced annually.

HOUSE GROUPS

The House system is designed to create a positive climate of healthy competition and rivalry between the four House Groups. The four House Groups are

- Carita
- Coolock
- McAuley
- Mercedes

Each girl is allocated to a House Group when she enrolls at the school. This is done alphabetically. Each House is led by a House Captain from Year 10. Staff members are also allocated to each House to assist the management of House meetings. These meetings occur before the annual Swimming Carnival and Athletics Carnival. These two carnivals cultivate a sense of belonging and healthy competition.

Carita House

Carita House was named after the word "charity". Carita House is represented by the colour **RED** and became one of the sports houses after enrolment numbers increased.

Coolock House

Coolock House was named after a building called Coolock House which Catherine McCauley had inherited and which she opened up to people in need. Coolock House is represented by the colour **GREEN** and became one of the sports houses after enrolment numbers increased.

McAuley House

McAuley House was named after Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Mercy Order. McAuley House is represented by the colour **YELLOW** and was one of the two first sports houses.

Mercedes House

Mercedes House was named after the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, which was established in 1831 for the visitation of the sick, poor and the charitable instruction of poor females. Mercedes House is represented by the colour **BLUE** and was one of the two first sports houses.

COLLEGE DIARY SYSTEM

Each student is issued with a diary at the beginning of each school year. The diary is a fundamental source of information, an important means of communication between home and school, and an organisational tool to assist students in managing their school and study commitments.

The diary contains a wealth of information about the life of the school. It contains specific prayers, school map, outlines the College's expectations of students and the procedures students should follow in specific circumstances.

The student diary is also a ready means of identification that provides the name of a contact person and telephone number in case of emergency. The pastoral teacher must ensure the Personal Information section is completed.

The student diary is an important means of communication between parents and teachers. It also serves as a record of the frequency and nature of such communication. Notes between home and school can be recorded in the diary. Teachers also comment in the diary allowing parents to be aware of problem behaviour, good conduct, uniform violations, lack of preparation for class, homework misdemeanours and punctuality problems.

The diary is an important organisational tool for students. It provides a means for students to manage and organise their study commitments. Students are expected to record all homework, assignments and assessment tasks in their diaries. There is sufficient space provided in the diary for other important college events and activities.

Students are expected to have their diary with them at all times. Students should collect a replacement sheet from Student Services if the diary has not been brought to school. Pastoral teachers are expected to check the diary regularly during Homeroom Period and take this opportunity to discuss any matter arising from notes entered, and the general state of the diary. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that her parents sign the diary if a teacher has written a comment.

The college diary is an important and official College document and should be in the possession of the student at all times. Lost diaries must be replaced at the students' expense. Students are expected to use their diary for the purposes for which it is intended. Personal notes, decorations and graffiti are unacceptable. Students who fail to keep their diary in good condition may be required to buy a new diary.

COMMUNITY PERIOD

A Community Period occurs once a month for 30 minutes usually at the beginning of the day, immediately after Homeroom Period. During this lesson time various activities occur for each Year group. The purpose of this allocation is to allow time for the Year to meet as a group so that issues relating to the Year group can be addressed through Year Assemblies. It also provides the opportunity for school assemblies, guest speakers, skill building, leadership initiatives, and to allow the school to meet together to mark special occasions.

COLLEGE MERIT SYSTEM

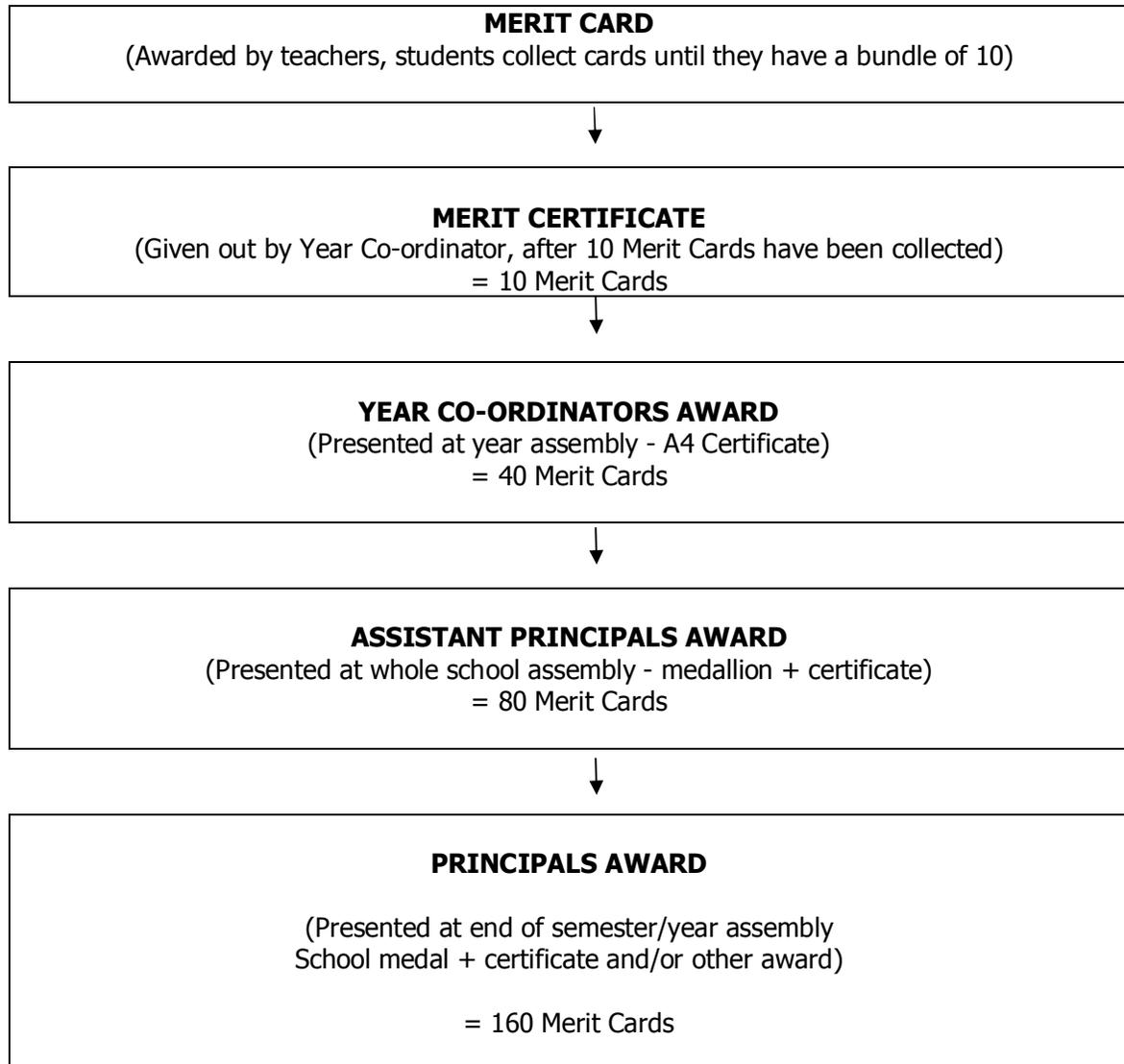
The Merit System affirms students who strive to achieve personal excellence in many areas of school life. Merit Cards are intended to recognise effort, and may be given for academic achievement, high standards of behaviour and uniform, sporting achievements, service to others, classroom effort, contribution to school life and other aspects of College life. The Merit System is accumulative and ongoing from Year 7 to Year 10.

There are five tiers to the Merit System

1. Merit cards.
 - Students receive Merit Cards from teachers for the reasons outlined above. Merit Cards can be obtained from Student Services.
2. Merit Certificate
 - When students have received 10 Merit Cards they are eligible to receive a Merit Certificate which is issued by the Year Coordinator at a Year assembly.
3. Year Coordinator's Award
 - When students have received 4 Merit Certificates they are eligible to receive a Year Coordinator's Award at a Year assembly.
4. Assistant Principal's Award
 - When students have received 2 Year Coordinator's Awards they are eligible to receive an Assistant Principal's Award. This includes a medallion and Certificate, which is presented at a School assembly.
5. Principal's Award
 - When students have 2 Assistant Principal's Awards, they are eligible to receive a Principal's Award. This includes a gold medallion and certificate presented at an end of semester or end of year School assembly.

COLLEGE MERIT SYSTEM

OLMC has introduced a Merit System to recognise student achievement.
An outline of the System is shown below.



Teachers will award Merit Cards to students based on the following criteria:

- Classroom Effort
- Academic Achievement
- Contribution to School Life
- Sporting Achievement
- Other Achievement

Major awards will be presented at whole school or end of year assemblies.
Mini prizes will also be awarded to students for participation in the system.

TRANSITIONAL PROCEDURES

Year 6 into Year 7

The purpose of the transitional program is to facilitate the smooth transition of students from the Year 6 feeder schools and neighbouring schools into secondary school. OLMC utilises a variety of strategies targeting both pastoral and academic transition.

The transition program begins in the year prior to commencement at the College with Open Day (March), enrolment interviews, staff visits to Primary Schools and Orientation Day (November). To ensure that this critical transition is as smooth as possible additional strategies are employed to this program. The pastoral transition includes the Peer Support Program, Year 7 Induction Day (first day of the school year), Year 7 Pool Party (February) and Year 7 Camp (March). The academic transition includes Year 6 Integration Day, Academic Testing and the Passport to Learning Success Program, which involves one lesson per week during Year 7. Individual Orientation Days are provided for students with special needs after liaison with the Primary Teacher.

Year 10 into Year 11/TAFE/Workplace

The Transitional Program also involves assisting Year 10 students in their preparation for Senior School or the workplace. Students are provided with subject selection information which includes a subject market day at De La Salle College Cronulla. Students are visited by the Principal or delegate of De La Salle College Cronulla in preparation for enrolment and interviews. There is consultation and correspondence between the KLA Coordinators of both colleges in relation to subject selection. Year 10 Assemblies include information to support students in subject selection and transition into De La Salle College Cronulla.

All Year 10 students complete one week of work experience. In addition, for students who plan to enter TAFE or the workplace after Year 10, the Careers Adviser may arrange other opportunities for work placements and negotiates with agencies such as Centacare in order to ensure appropriate preparation for this transition.

COUNSELLING PROGRAM

Introduction

A qualified counsellor is contracted by Our Lady of Mercy College Burraneer from Centacare to work with staff, parents and students two days per week.

The role is aimed at supporting all members of the OLMC community, staff, students and parents who are supporting OLMC students experiencing difficulties in their lives, especially those who might require a level of professional care beyond that which can normally be provided by a teacher. These students seek appointments through their respective Year Co-Ordinator.

This support may take the form of assessment, counselling or referral to other appropriate agencies. The counsellor is also able to facilitate various groups as the need arises.

Referral Process

Referrals to the School Counsellor are made via the Year Co-ordinator, who will make an assessment of each student's situation. The Year Co-ordinators consult with the Counsellor to organise which students the Counsellor will see and how often. Students may make a self-referral and this is also usually done via the Year Co-ordinator.

Parents are always informed that their daughter is seeing the School Counsellor. Conversations with the Counsellor are protected by confidentiality. However, the Counsellor always informs the student when they first meet that there are some issues (for example, risk of harm to self or others) that cannot remain confidential. Situations involving risk of harm are referred to the Principal or Assistant Principal, who will inform the student's parents.