Parent Handbook
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Introduction

1.1 School Details

School
MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Address
394 SHERIDAN STREET
CAIRNS NORTH QLD 4870

Postal Address
PO BOX 22N
CAIRNS NORTH QLD 4870

Principal
MS RUTH MALLON

School Secretary
MRS EVELYN CONNORS
MRS DESLEY JONES

Phone
07 4053 6133

Fax
07 4053 6433

Email
secretary.nthcairns@cns.catholic.edu.au

internet
http://www.mogc.qld.edu.au

Parish Priest
FR PAT MCKENNA

Parish Secretary
MS MARY KLECZAJ

Phone
07 4053 1179

ENROLMENT ENQUIRY

Submit the completed Enrolment application form to the office with the following:

- $50 enrolment fee per family (non refundable)
- Copy of Birth certificate – required by law
- Copy of any sacramental records
- Copy of previous School’s progress reports

An interview is necessary to complete the enrolment process.

Enrolment will be dependent upon vacancies and the school’s physical and human resources available at the time.

When a child’s enrolment position is confirmed at MOGC a $100 ‘holding fee’ is requested which is deducted from the next issue of school fees.
1.2 Welcome

Welcome

May I take this opportunity to welcome you and your family to our school. We hope this is the beginning of a long and lasting association with Mother of Good Counsel School. We are here to support you as the first educators of your child. We trust you always feel welcome here and as we work together for the education of children, let us hope the time is spent in co-operation, collaboration and mutual support.

We base all work on Gospel values. We hold these values to be the most important personal, spiritual and emotional aspects of a child’s development, which combined with a comprehensive and rigorous curriculum, helps each child develop his/her own abilities and become a totally integrated, self-disciplined student.

Each child and parent wishing to enrol in this school must strive to uphold the values of this school. All children are expected to participate in the Religious Education program and must agree to become a part of a community of learners, who are seeking knowledge of this world and of its Creator.

Thank you for the time you have taken thus far to prepare your child for school. We look forward to working closely with you in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Mallon
PRINCIPAL

1.3 Mission Statement

To foster successful learning in education and gospel values in a community where each child is valued and nurtured.

1.4 History of Mother of Good Counsel

Mother of Good Counsel is a parish based, urban school, situated in the North of Cairns. The school was founded in 1936 when Fr Phelam, an Augustinian priest, foresaw the need for local Catholic families to have access to formal religious and educational instruction. A two-storey cement Church-School was erected. The school was located on the lower floor consisting of four classrooms. Under the care of the Sisters of Mercy, the school began on 16 April 1936, with nineteen children enrolled on the first day.

By 1969 many more classrooms had been built and the school had 250 enrolments. In 1976 the convent was closed and the first lay principal was appointed. In 1986 the Marist Brothers took charge of the school and served the local community until 1990.

Historically, the school has served the residential suburbs of North Cairns, Edge Hill and Whitfield, but with the development of new schools in the Northern Beaches area and the southern corridor of
Cairns, the demographics have changed and families have moved away from the area. Mother of Good Counsel now has a large catchment area due to the situation of the school on the outskirts of the city, making it a convenient location for parents travelling to work. Many parents work in hospitality, administration, airport services and the medical profession. The school population is culturally diverse and has a wide socio-economic mix.

In recent years Cairns has experienced rapid growth. In 2008, in response to local demand, MOGC offered a second Prep class, providing the foundation for a two-stream school. The school constantly supports the increase of student enrolments. MOGC is in an exciting period of growth and has a building program in place. During 2011 the school refurbished its multi-purpose hall, built five additional classrooms and specialty rooms, a new contemporary library, extended the covered eating area for the senior school and erected an all weather roof cover over the existing basketball court.

MOGC has a strong record of achieving academic success in literacy and numeracy. This is due to the high calibre of staff, strong parental support and up to date learning facilities. Mother of Good Counsel School strives to foster successful learning based on Gospel values and the tradition of the Mercy Sisters and stands firm on its capacity for effective, life-giving relationships and collaboration involving all stakeholders of the school community.

### 1.5 Principles & Practices

- Mother of Good Counsel is a Catholic Parish School built on co-operation, friendliness and integrity, where students, staff and parents work together to provide the best possible Catholic education for children.
- Religious Education has a privileged place in this school and all students take part in Religious Education programs. Opportunities are provided for students to express and deepen their commitment to God through Mass, Sacraments, prayer, Christian service, and within the school environment.
- Striving for individual best is encouraged in all Learning Areas, together with other aspects of a good general education and personal development.
- Politeness and respect for others are a necessary part of school life.
- School rules regarding health and safety are very important.
- Parents/Guardians must notify the office of changes in their contact details. The school must have current phone numbers, addresses, workplaces etc. to enable us to contact you in an emergency situation.
- Extra-curricular activities are a vital part of the school program. Students are enrolled on the understanding that they participate in sport, excursions, class camps and similar activities.
- Students who possess the ability and physical fitness to represent the school in sport should do so willingly in order to foster positive school spirit.
- Full school uniform is to be worn as designated. Students wearing incorrect uniform require an explanatory note from home.
- Operating expenses are covered in part by Government grants and subsidised by school fees. School fee concessions can be arranged with the Principal and Parish Priest for families in difficult circumstances. Please contact the principal to arrange an interview if you have difficulty meeting this financial commitment. Confidentiality is ensured.

### 1.6 School Year

In accordance with the Queensland State Government Department of Education, all school programs and student assessment programs are divided into two, six monthly periods called Semesters. **Semester One is divided into two** terms ending in April and June. **Semester Two terms end in September and December.** Specific dates are provided in advance for parents’ information.
1.7 **School Times**

Mother of Good Counsel provides a 27.5-hour teaching week, which is 2.5 hours longer than State Schools. These extra hours allow us to integrate and develop Faith and Religious Education without detracting time from other Learning Areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.10 am</td>
<td>Staff supervision commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30 am - 10.40am</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.40 am - 11.10am</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.10 am - 1.10pm</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 pm - 1.40pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.40 pm - 2.50pm</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50 pm</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 pm</td>
<td>Staff supervision concludes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supervision by staff occurs between 8.10am and 3.10pm. Parents are urged NOT to leave children at school prior to 8:10am and to collect children as soon as possible after school is dismissed. If you are unable to collect your child promptly after school, we suggest you contact Out of School Hours Care, which is located on the school grounds.

1.8 **Outside School Hours Care**

An Out of School Hours Care Program exists within the grounds of the school, but is managed separately. Currently the OSHC provides:

- **After School Care:** 2.50pm – 6.00pm
- **Vacation Care:** School Holidays – 8am – 6pm

For further information contact OSHC on 40532066. All enquiries and communication with OSHC should be made directly to them.

1.9 **Parents & Friends Association**

The Mother of Good Counsel Parents and Friends (P&F) Association is the formal organisation, recognised by the Church and Catholic education authorities, which represents parents/carers of the school and acts in their interests and on their behalf.

The P&F exists to support the school community and is involved in the total life of the school. Mother of Good Counsel School is a Christ Centred Learning Community. Parents/carers as first educators of children, have a vital role to play in the development and implementation of the educational philosophy and policy of the school.

Parents have an interest in and a contribution to make to their child’s education. It is therefore imperative parents share in decisions affecting their child’ educational and spiritual growth, and support excellence in teaching and learning, both at school and at home.
Mother of Good Counsel P & F Association is actively involved in the school setting. Some of the Association’s responsibilities include:

- Supporting staff in the education of their children;
- Being major stakeholders in the educational process;
- Financially supporting the school with educational resources;
- Supporting the upkeep of the school through working bees;
- Forming a collaborative partnership in the school’s curriculum development;
- Supporting the Catholic ethos of the school;
- Supporting the school in the development of its facilities;
- Creating a social, friendly environment within the school;
- Sharing in decision making;
- Sharing ideas, strengthening values and fostering initiatives; and
- Conducting Parent Information Sessions.

Parents and Friends’ Meetings are held on a monthly basis throughout the year. The P & F meets in the school library on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.00pm.

Every parent at Mother of Good Counsel is an automatic member of the Parents & Friends Association. This is a committee chaired by parents, in association with the School Principal, to discuss and coordinate financial, educational, social events and unique issues that may impact upon the school’s and students development.

These meetings represent a great opportunity to be heard, and to support school initiatives. Your attendance would be warmly welcomed along with any great ideas you may have to contribute!

P & F have also introduced the “Just One Thing” policy, aimed at engaging all Mother of Good Counsel parents to undertake at least ‘one thing’ during the school year to assist with or participate in e.g. covering library books, providing assistance with school events like the school disco, movie night, Christmas carols etc.
2. Policies & Procedures

2.1 Positive Behaviour & Relationship Plan

Mother of Good Counsel exercises Pastoral Care for each and every child. This is achieved through mutual love and respect by staff, students and parents.

To develop this, discipline is administered within the following guidelines:

- Corrective measures are firm, just, consistent and impartial.
- Corrective measures are within the norms of the PBRP.
- Principal and Staff, with firmness and kindness, are involved in developing a school environment which enhances safety, security and an effective learning environment.

A high standard of behaviour is expected at all times whether:

- In class
- About the school
- Outside school grounds
- In school uniform or casual clothes

As discipline is a joint responsibility of parents and teachers, home and school must work hand in hand to develop in children a Christian respect for himself/herself, for others, for authority and for property. Where it is deemed necessary, parents are notified and expected to work collaboratively with staff to resolve disciplinary issues. Concerns parents have with disciplinary action should be discussed privately with staff.

2.2 Enrolment Process

For the purpose of enrolment, documentary evidence of your child’s date of birth is required. Pupils may be enrolled in Prep if they turn five years on or before June 30th of the year commencing Prep.

Enrolment Application & Confirmation Fees

At the time of submitting an enrolment application the school requires a $50.00 application fee to cover administration costs. If the student is offered a position, the school requires an enrolment fee of $100.00 to hold the child’s position, which deducted from the next issue of school fees.

To assist in future sacramental preparation an extract or a copy of the child’s Baptismal Certificate is required.

Form of Enrolment

Official enrolment forms are available from the school’s office or may be downloaded from the school’s website. Implicit in the acceptance of an enrolment is the understanding pupils and parents agree to adhere to the expectations and standards set by the school.

Enrolment Procedure – Transferring Students

As a Catholic Primary School we are obliged to accept children transferring from other Catholic Schools, if we have the capacity to do so.

In addition to the information contained on the enrolment form, parents should notify the school of:

- Reports from previous schools;
- Details of issues relating to the child’s health e.g. special allergies, treatment, etc;
• Details of disability, impairment or syndrome the child has;
• Details of medication to be administered while at school. Please note the legislative requirements for medication given during school time;
• Reasons why the child cannot participate in learning, sporting or cultural activities;
• Reasons why the child may not be performing as well as he/she should.

It is necessary parents be open about these matters, so we can work in partnership, in the best interests of each child.

2.3 School Uniform

School uniform is important in creating school spirit and bonding students as a group. It is expected parents support the school’s requirements that full and correct uniform be worn at all times and students be neat in their dress and appearance. Any deviation from this should be explained, in writing, to the school office.

ALL items of clothing should be clearly marked with the child’s name. Hats are compulsory. No hat, no play!

Compulsory Boys’ Uniform:

• MOGC bucket hat;
• Prep students are required to wear a yellow broad rimmed hat;
• Navy blue or white ankle length socks;
• Black shoes/joggers or black/brown sandals during summer season;
• Tri colour MOGC polo shirt;
• Navy short pants.

Compulsory Girls’ Uniform:

• MOGC bucket hat;
• Prep students are required to wear a yellow broad rimmed hat;
• Navy blue or white ankle length socks;
• Black shoes/joggers or black/brown sandals during summer season;
• Tri colour MOGC polo shirt;
• Navy skirt, skort or short pants.

Children are designated house colours. House shirts for sporting events are purchased through the school. These may be worn on Fridays. A plain navy blue jumper or jacket may be worn in the cooler months.

The following applies to all children from Prep to Year 6

Hair

Long/shoulder length hair must be tied back or plaited. This applies to males and females as it discourages head lice and is a recommended practice by Queensland Health. Hair styles are to be conservative and suitable to Primary School eg. not coloured.

Hair ties/bands

Kept to a minimum: black, brown, navy, white or gold

Jewellery

One pair of sleepers/small plain studs in ears only. Signet rings may be worn. Watches are allowed. Chain with religious medal/cross is allowed. No other forms of jewellery are to be worn.

Nail Polish

Is not allowed.
2.4 Custodial Matters

It is the parents’ responsibility to resolve custodial issues and provide the school with written notification of decisions handed down by the courts. The school releases children to the custodial parent according to court orders and written permission is required for staff to release children to non-custodial adults. Staff do not take sides in family disputes and act in the best interest of children, in accordance with the court.

2.5 Arrivals

It is important children are punctual for the commencement of school. Children who are late require a note of explanation. Classroom rolls are taken at 8.40am. If your child arrives after this time they will be noted down as a late arrival (L) in the roll. Children arriving at school after 8.40am are required to be signed in by their parents, at the office, before continuing to class. Valuable teaching time is lost by continuous interruptions by latecomers.

2.6 Departures

Parents who collect students each afternoon (or students walking or riding home alone) are asked to ensure school grounds are vacated by 3:10pm.

2.7 Attendance

Regular attendance is compulsory by law and is necessary if pupils are to gain the greatest possible benefit from school activities.

2.8 Absentees

When a pupil is absent from school, parents are required to contact the school via phone call, Skoolbag App or email, explaining the absence. A note is also required if a child cannot participate in the school’s program, e. g. sports, physical education, etc.

If you are planning holidays for your family that fall outside of school holiday times or if there is a time when, for family reasons, you need to take your children out of school for a week or two, you may be interested in the following guidelines for staff:

If a student is absent due to family holidays or other family circumstances, the student will miss explicit teaching and learning opportunities, and may miss assessment opportunities, which may be reflected in their overall mark or report comment. In this case, the teacher is not required to provide work for the students to do during their absence. Parents would be advised to continue with reading and comprehension activities, under their supervision, and for students to keep a detailed diary of the events surrounding their absence. This could be an electronic or hand-written account, with detail in line with the student’s age and ability. Online learning opportunities and Apps may be accessed by the student, to practise skills and improve recall speed, and some topics for independent study or research may be provided by the classroom teacher. It must be understood by parents that providing worksheets, without the pre-requisite learning opportunities and discussions does not “catch a student up” with the rest of the class. Most of the learning that occurs in a classroom is experience-based, with sequences of activities built upon, which may or may not lead to a final product. These experiences cannot be duplicated by completing worksheets and doing ‘busy’ work.
If a student is absent due to illness, it is recommended that their time away from school is focused on their health and recovery, rather than on “busy” school work. While parents are encouraged to continue reading activities with their child, if well enough, teachers are not required to provide work for those students.

2.9 Leaving School Grounds

Children are not permitted to leave school grounds during the school day. Written permission to leave school is required and approval is at the discretion of the principal. Parents must report to the office to sign their children out, if they are leaving early. Children will be notified, by the secretary, to meet their parents at the office. As a matter of safety for all students, parents may not go to classrooms during the day to collect their children.

2.10 Use of School Grounds Outside School Hours

Permission of Use

Persons wishing to use the basketball court or school oval must obtain written permission from the school principal prior to use.

School Buildings and Facilities

Unauthorised persons on the school premises are regarded as trespassers unless accompanied by a member of the school staff, or by a person who has written authorisation from the Administration of the School.

Parking of Vehicles

Vehicles may be parked only in the designated areas and under the conditions signposted. As a matter of safety, please do NOT park in the staff parking area.
3. Faith Life of MOGC

Through the experience of a Catholic Education, children develop a deep relationship with Christ and an understanding of his unconditional love for humanity. Christ’s absolute love was evident through his crucifixion and resurrection, acts which form the core of Christian belief.

*From the first moment a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics. The inspiration of Jesus must be translated from the ideal into the real. The Gospel spirit should be evident in a Christian way of thought and life which permeates all facets of the educational climate* (Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988, n.25).

Mother of Good Counsel School follows the Religious Education Curriculum and Religious Life of the School Guidelines as developed by the Brisbane Archdiocese. These documents comprise two distinct yet complementary processes, teaching students religion and teaching students to be religious in the particular way of the Catholic Church.

Within that Mother of Good Counsel aims to:

- Follow a planned sequential program of formal Religious Education comprising up to 2 hours of teaching and learning a week
- Provide opportunities to celebrate as a community through Masses and Liturgies
- Provide opportunities for daily prayer in a variety of forms including Christian Meditation
- Create opportunities for students to live out Gospel values through involvement in, and support of Catholic social teachings
- Enable children to find meaning in life and learning through exploring the person and teachings of Jesus
- Encourage life long learning, with a desire to search for truth and to do what is right through accountable choices and responsible actions.

3.1 Liturgy & Worship

Students celebrate Eucharist/Liturgy at least once each term as a class, year level or whole school. The sacrament of Reconciliation is made available to students on a regular basis. Families are invited to attend all liturgical celebrations.

3.2 Sacramental Program

Year 3-6 students who are baptised in the Catholic Faith are invited to participate in the sacramental program. First Communion and Confirmation programs are coordinated by Parish Coordinator and supported by the Assistant Principal Religious Education (APRE). Parents, through a series of school meetings, manage the program and work is also done at home. Program information is provided to families in the first term of each year.
3.3 The Gospel Values

JUSTICE
TRUTH
LEARNING
EXCELLENCE
REVERENCE
COMMUNITY
RESPECT
TRUST
OPENNESS
JOY
SERVICE
SENSE OF WONDER
LOVE
CARE
DIGNITY
WITNESS
FORGIVENESS
COMMITMENT
PEACE
COMPASSION
HOPE
ENDURANCE
LOVE OF BEAUTY
FAITH
4. **Curriculum**

4.1 **What is Curriculum?**

Mother of Good Counsel is committed to preparing students for the future by providing an education congruent with Gospel values and teachings of the Catholic Church. In a world of rapid change, MOGC provides students with an education that empowers them to take their place in the world as spiritual, moral and well-integrated people who contribute positively to the life of the church and wider community. A Christ-centred orientation is evident in all aspects of school life including relationships, structures, celebrations and routines, as well as the formal curriculum.

MOGC responds to the educational, pastoral and spiritual needs of students through a curriculum that promotes high-quality schooling for all students, creating successful learners who are confident and creative individuals as well as active and informed citizens of the 21st Century. Teachers at MOGC are committed to educating the whole child.

The curriculum represents what students are taught. This is informed by the Australian Curriculum and syllabi set out by the Queensland Studies Authority, which outline the core knowledge, understanding, skills and general capabilities important for students. The curriculum describes what young people should learn as they progress through schooling and forms the foundation for high quality teaching to meet the needs of students. The curriculum plays a vital role in forming attitudes and skills necessary to become responsible, active and informed citizens of Australia’s future generations.

At Mother of Good Counsel, implementation of a National Curriculum means we offer students:

- Essential content and achievement standards;
- Clear descriptions of the knowledge, understandings and skills students are to acquire or develop;
- Regular reporting of student achievement on a national five point scale.

As a learning community, Mother of Good Counsel believes:

- Learners have a right to receive respect from other learners;
- The learning environment is a place where students’ learning is encouraged and challenged;
- Learning should be fun;
- Students learn at their own pace and in their own style to reach their full potential (spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally and physically);
- Students’ individual needs are catered for and each learner is valued as unique, having their own talents and strengths;
- All learners are encouraged to reach their full potential;
- Learners are empowered when nurtured and encouraged to be confident, critical, reflective and creative thinkers.

The Key Learning Areas are:

- Religion
- English
- Maths
- Science
- History
- Geography
- The Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama, Media)
- Health and Physical Education
• Technology
• Languages Other Than English (Japanese)

In 2012, Mother of Good Counsel implemented the Australian Curriculum in English, Maths, and Science. Other Learning Areas – History, Geography, The Arts, Health and Physical Education and Technology have been / are being implemented, as they become available.

Parent information sessions are organised at the beginning of each school year, where parents are informed of curriculum requirements pertaining to specific year levels. Classroom teachers facilitate these sessions to assist parents in their understanding of curriculum covered in the various learning areas as well as routines, practices and expectations. Information sessions are an important first step in getting to know classroom teachers and helps build positive and meaningful partnerships between home and school. Attendance at these sessions is highly recommended.

Prep Information Sessions are conducted in Term 4 of the year prior to children commencing Prep. Parents are notified of dates for these meetings by letter. These meetings also inform parents of practices and expectations, which assist families to prepare for their child’s first year of school.

4.2 Religious Education

Formal religion lessons are conducted regularly. Lessons enable children to develop an understanding of God, the Holy Spirit and the person of Jesus Christ, and knowledge of the Church’s traditions and teachings.

4.3 Health & Physical Education

Health and Physical Education at MOGC promotes the value of physical activity in students’ lives. It provides students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes needed to lead healthy, active and fulfilling lives.

The Health and Physical Education (HPE) Learning Area enables students to:

• Participate in regular and varied physical education experiences;
• Promote the health of their community and to make informed decisions relating to personal health (especially relating to food and nutrition) and safety of self and others; and
• Develop and refine personal and social skills to promote positive interactions, be resilient and manage their own lives.

At Mother of Good Counsel School, Physical Education through physical activity and skills lessons are provided for Prep to Year 6 through a program facilitated by a specialist teacher. Classroom teachers teach the Health and Personal Development components of the learning area. The Australian Curriculum guides teachers in their planning, teaching, assessment and reporting of HPE.

4.4 Social & Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) supports students to develop fundamental skills necessary for wellbeing and life effectiveness. SEL enables students to recognise and manage emotions, demonstrate care and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions and handle challenging situations effectively. These skills develop emotional literacy in individuals and school communities and are best fostered in caring, engaging, participatory learning environments. Established social and emotional skills provide the foundation for academic achievement, maintenance of good mental and physical health, quality relationships and responsible participation in a democratic society.
SEL develops social, emotional, and motivational competence of young people and optimises their social-emotional and academic success. It encourages prevention, promotion, and intervention efforts (school, home and community) in order to build the social and emotional strengths of young people.

Social Emotional Learning is fostered through a variety of practices at MOGC:

**Second Step Program**

The Second Step Program is a universal prevention program based on research connecting social-emotional competence and self regulation skills to success in school and life. The program is:

- Developmentally appropriate with skills and concepts built sequentially across all year levels.
- Designed to reinforce skills through both structured and informal practice
- Based on best practices for teaching primary school students

**Program Achieve**

Mother of Good Counsel utilises ‘Program Achieve’ to explicitly teach students language and strategies that promote Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along and Emotional Resilience and develop positive Habits of Mind. Acquisition of these five foundations is critical to children achieving their potential in life.

**Playground Guardians**

Year Six students are utilised during play times to:

- support teachers on playground duty.
- help new students settle into the school.
- assist students who are hurt or need assistance finding a friend.
- mediate minor disputes.
- encourage safe and inclusive play.
- model positive and inclusive behaviour.

**Better Buddy Program**

Classes participate in structured, teacher-directed 'buddy time'. ‘Buddy Time’ encourages children to form positive and supportive relationships with one another. The mascot of the Better Buddies is Buddy Bear, a fun loving and caring purple bear.

**Mentoring Program**

The Mother of Good Counsel Mentoring Program, first introduced at MOGC in 2003, is considered highly successful by students, staff, parents and mentors. Mentoring is a powerful tool for young people selected for the program. Students are released from class to participate in activities for one hour each week over a five week period, to enhance their social and emotional learning.

**YCDI Mentoring**

The ‘You Can Do It’ mentoring program, first introduced at MOGC in 2003, is considered highly successful by students, staff, parents and mentors. YCDI Mentoring is a powerful tool for young people who are not reaching their potential due to not succeeding in one or more of the foundations. Students are released from class activities for one hour each week to receive specific instruction and support with one of the five foundations and to focus on developing positive Habits of Mind.
4.5 Homework

It is important that students consolidate their day’s work by completing regular homework and revision. Homework should not be onerous or cause conflict at home. All homework tasks are considered revision of concepts covered during the school day. Homework may include, but is not limited to written work, literacy and numeracy skills and finishing uncompleted work. The role of parents is to provide support and encouragement and above all, to take an interest in the work being done. Parents should not complete homework on their child’s behalf. Depending on the child’s age and level of reading, a period of time each day should be dedicated to supervised reading.

Why is homework so important?

- Homework encourages independent learning skills essential for later schooling;
- Homework establishes good work habits. A regular and consistent approach to study prevents last-minute panic;
- Homework, which involves practice and revision of what is known, helps to consolidate learning. Students need to exercise newly acquired skills.

Homework tips for parents

- Help your child find a quiet place where noise is not intrusive, lighting is adequate and there is a sufficient surface for books and papers;
- There is no ideal time, however help your child establish a time when he or she can work best and keep this time consistent so a routine develops;
- Balance the amount of time spent on homework with other needs such as sport, having fun, watching a television program and spending time with the family;
- Provide support for project work by helping locate materials such as books, maps and pictures.
- Take an interest in assigned homework and discuss tasks with your child. Frequently review your child’s diary and assignments to ensure you are aware of progress and keep track of day-to-day tasks;
- Praise and taking pleasure in your child’s efforts and achievements is a more proactive motivator than punishment and fear.

4.6 School Assessment

Schools have a responsibility to assess the achievements of students. The purpose of assessment is to provide guidance and feedback to students, to identify weaknesses and strengths, to communicate student progress, and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programs and techniques. At Mother of Good Counsel assessment is conducted throughout the semester and is cumulative.

To supplement student assessment, parent-teacher meetings are arranged at the end of Term One. During this session, teachers confer with parents regarding academic progress and behavioural patterns of students. Interviews during Semester Two are available on request by the class teacher or a parent. A written report is provided at the end of each semester.

4.7 Assessment & Monitoring Student Progress

All stakeholders (parents, teachers, principals, education authorities and government) work in partnership to achieve the common objective of ensuring children are numerate, and able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level by the end of primary school.

Monitoring Processes

- Tracking through whole school assessments;
• Developing a profile of student progress;
• Compiling student portfolios;
• Modification of student programs.

**Assessment**
Assessment takes many forms and occurs continually throughout each semester. Teachers thoroughly plan for assessment to ensure students are provided with opportunities to show their development in each Learning Area. Examples of assessment include:

- School based testing
- Year 3 and 5 Naplan tests
- Pre and post testing for targeted programs
- Observations
- Learning Area Tests
- Project/Assignment Work

### 4.8 Communicating Student Progress

Education is a partnership between home and school, and therefore regular parent-teacher communication is essential.

Examples of communication include:

- Parent - Teacher evenings;
- End of semester written reports;
- Participation in classroom activities;
- Parent-teacher meetings.

### 4.9 Learning Support

Mother Of Good Counsel is an inclusive school that recognises children begin school with differing backgrounds, abilities and motivations. Similarly, children cope with the stresses of academic learning in different ways.

As an inclusive community, MOGC consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. The school community, served by the Diocese of Cairns, embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for us all.

The primary focus of Learning Support at MOGC is to support student learning in the mainstream classroom curriculum within the classroom environment. Target areas include Early Intervention (P-3), Remediation and Extension/Enrichment.

**Early Intervention**

Mother Of Good Counsel recognises the importance of the early learning years. Research repeatedly indicates the earlier learning difficulties are identified, the more effective intervention strategies are. Preventative and remedial programs are given priority including:

- Whole School Assessment - identification of phonemic awareness, mathematical concepts and reading comprehension;
- 1:1 and small group support in phonological awareness, mathematical concepts, reading comprehension;
- 1:1 and small group literacy development;
• 1:1 and small group support in delivery of speech/language programs;
• 1:1 and small group support for oral language development of students learning English as a second language.

Remediation

The Learning Support Coordinator works closely with class teachers to modify teaching and learning strategies to enable success for students in the classroom. This includes:

• 1:1 support for specific skill development;
• Support programs targeted to student needs;
• Modifications to the student’s class program;
• In-class support for students to pursue individually modified programs;
• Withdrawal programs for small groups of students with similar learning needs;
• 1:1 support for development of speech and language programs.

Extension / Enrichment

Mother of Good Counsel strives to cater for academically able students within the classroom setting. At times Learning Support is called upon to support highly able students by providing access to specialised Internet programs or cross-classroom programming.

Access to Support

Students access support after a thorough process of assessment. This incorporates a combination of:

• School based assessments;
• Teacher referral;
• Specialist assessments ie. speech/language pathologist, educational psychologist;
• Specialist referral;
• Information from Benchmark Testing.

The Learning Support Coordinator monitors programming and progress of students accessing support. Whilst some children require ongoing support, others access short-term programs.

4.10 Use of Computers and Electronic Devices

2016 will see the introduction of a One to One iPad program for students in Years 2 & 3, extending to Year 4 in 2017.

Students in every year level are required to access the internet and use electronic devices, as part of their everyday learning experiences, and to ensure that they are exposed to all elements of the curriculum. Mother of Good Counsel provides a variety of electronic devices for students to access, including computers, laptops, iPads and Chromebooks. Students will use these as tools of learning, in classes from Prep through to Year 6. All students and their parents will be required to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement. The school will continually remind students of their obligations regarding the acceptable use of devices and the internet, and will follow through with consequences if students are not using those resources in an appropriate manner.

Students should not use electronic devices at school except for the devices we provide. If a device is brought to school (eg. Mobile phone, ipod), it should be handed to the teacher for safe keeping. Devices are not to be used for internet access or to take photos or listen to music while the child is at school. If devices are used at school, they will be confiscated and handed to the principal, who will ask parents to come to school to collect the item.
5. **Fees & Levies**

5.1 **School Fees**

No child shall be denied a Catholic education due to financial hardship. Tuition fees are charged for children attending Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese. These fees are fixed by the Diocesan Education Office and are determined before the commencement of each year. The school tuition fee covers children from Prep to Year 6.

Accounts are sent out each term and fee payments may be made on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly or term basis according to your preference. Payment should be made at the school office via eftpos, credit card, cash, cheque, direct debit or direct deposit. If you wish to pay via direct debit or direct deposit, please contact the office for a form.

A Diocesan policy is in place, allowing a fee discount to holders of certain Centrelink Cards. [Click here for more information.](#) [Link to CES website.](#)

A Diocesan fee collection policy is in place and is followed if payment is not received; end of Semester reports are withheld until payments are settled. If you are experiencing difficulties with fee payment, please make an appointment to speak to the principal, to arrange assistance or support.

5.2 **School Levies**

**P & F Levy**

Provides money to fund resources and projects throughout the school.

**Grounds Keeping & Maintenance Levy**

Helps meet the costs of maintaining buildings, classrooms and grounds and supports the employment of a grounds / maintenance person, which helps to limit the number of working bees.

**Facilities Levy**

Specifically utilised to pay the building loan and electricity / air-conditioning, internet and other services to classrooms.

**General Purpose Levy**

An annual levy utilised for the purchase and use of art and craft materials, photocopying and supplementary learning materials and resources for classroom use.

**Book Levy**

Purchases everyday stationery supplies, student workbooks and online subscriptions to learning spaces.

**Activity Levy**

Covers swimming and sport options for students. The levy also includes the hire of facilities for special events throughout the year, and children are given the opportunity to attend some cultural presentations and a dance program.
ICT Levy

Assists in updating resources, device maintenance and purchasing Apps and site licenses. Payment of this levy from Prep to Year 4 allows parents to pay a last balloon payment, so that their child becomes the owner of the iPad they have been using across Years 2, 3 and 4. They are expected to continue to access this device at home and school during Years 5 and 6.

6. Health, Safety & Wellbeing

6.1 Illnesses & Accidents

Mother of Good Counsel requires information that enables staff to act effectually should the need arise. It is a parental responsibility to ensure school records are maintained and addresses and telephone numbers are current. In the case of an accident, parents are the first contacted.

School First Aid Kits are equipped to tend to minor accidents that occur in the playground. In cases of severe accidents or serious illness, an Ambulance is called and staff endeavours to contact parents as soon as possible. If a parent/guardian is unreachable, children are transported to hospital by ambulance.

6.2 Administering Medication

Under Queensland legislation, Mother of Good Counsel requires a doctor’s letter outlining medication to be administered during school hours. The letter must state the child’s name and date of birth, name of medication and dosage required. This applies to all ‘over the counter’ medicines such as Panadol and prescribed antibiotics. Medication such as ventolin puffers should be marked clearly with the child’s name. Parents/guardians must complete a medication form providing the school with permission to administer medication.

6.3 Allergies

Mother of Good Counsel has children attending school who have life threatening allergies to peanuts. We appreciate you refraining from sending nut products to school.

6.4 Head Lice

On discovery of live head lice, parents are notified immediately and asked to treat their child before their return to school. Notes are sent home to parents when head lice is discovered in their child’s class asking for all parents to check and, if necessary, treat their child’s hair:

- Kill the lice by using a proprietary shampoo/lotion (available at a pharmacy);
- Remove the eggs (nits) by combing with a fine tooth comb;
- Prevent re-infestation by conducting regular check-ups and prompt treatment when lice and/or nits are discovered.

6.5 Exclusive Diseases

Mother of Good Counsel is obliged to follow the Health Department’s exclusion regulations as posted on the National Health and Medical Research Council Website.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chicken Pox</th>
<th>Rubella</th>
<th>Viral Hepatitis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conjunctivitis</td>
<td>Measles</td>
<td>Colds/Flu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diarrhoea</td>
<td>Whooping Cough</td>
<td>Ringworm/Scabies</td>
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<td>Mumps</td>
<td>Diphtheria</td>
<td>Impetigo</td>
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7. Roles & Responsibilities

7.1 Expectations of Parents

Catholic Education Services has devised a Code of Conduct for parents and Volunteers of Catholic Education, Diocese of Cairns. This Code of Conduct applies to all parents, volunteers and visitors who interact within our schools and Catholic Education Services in the Diocese of Cairns. It covers the following areas:

- Be communities sustained by life giving relationships;
- Build constructive covenants with all partners;
- The printed brochure is available from our office.

Pupil Details

It is important parents inform the school of any changes in address, contact names, telephone numbers or other particulars stated on the original Enrolment Form. This information must be provided when changes occur for the safety and well being of children.

7.2 Parental Consent Form

Parents may be asked to complete a parental consent form for their children to participate in special activities. These forms should be carefully read as they outline the conditions that apply when children are transported by bus or other means to sporting, cultural and educational activities. Without written parental permission, students will miss out on these special opportunities.
8. **Communication**

An essential element of a collaborative working partnership is establishing and maintaining positive communication. The following methods are employed to foster effective communication.

8.1 **Newsletter**

Every second Tuesday, our newsletter is published online, outlining up-coming events and providing information about what is happening in the school. Parents are encouraged to read this newsletter and check with children for other notes that may be sent home. The newsletter can be accessed via the school website.

Information to appear in the newsletter must be approved by the principal and emailed to the secretary no later than midday on the Monday prior to the newsletter’s publication. This deadline is crucial to everyone for the timely access of the newsletter.

8.2 **Skoolbag App**

We update calendar information and send reminders to parents via the Skoolbag App. Alerts to parents are a useful reminder, using this contemporary communication facility. The App is available for downloading to any mobile device. Instructions relating to downloading are available at [http://www.skoolbag.com.au/forparents.php](http://www.skoolbag.com.au/forparents.php)

8.3 **Parent-Teacher Interviews**

Parents requiring an interview with class teachers are expected to contact the teacher directly to arrange a suitable time. Teachers are unable to organise or conduct interviews during teaching time. Parents are expected to approach the classroom teacher regarding concerns with their child’s learning and classroom activities prior to approaching the principal.

8.4 **Meeting with the Principal**

Parents requiring an interview with the Principal should contact the school office to make the necessary arrangements.

8.5 **Information Sessions**

At various times throughout the year, meetings are conducted to explain aspects of the curriculum, discuss expectations of parents and students and to collaborate with and support parents in the process of raising their children.

At the beginning of the school year, class teachers conduct information sessions to provide an overview of the years curriculum and events.

8.6 **Copies of Reports**

The school issues reports each semester, as well as forwarding Naplan results. If parents require copies of such reports, because of the time involved, at least three days notice is required, and a $10 fee per report must be paid, in advance.
9. General Information

9.1 School Library

An excellent library and resource centre is established at Mother of Good Counsel. Student loans are limited to two weeks and children are expected to supply a library bag used to protect books in transit.

It is expected parents replace books damaged or lost due to carelessness. Parents are welcome to browse and borrow. Please contact the Librarian if you wish to use this facility.

9.2 Excursions & School Camps

Educational excursions and school camps are important learning and socialising experiences and are conducted by class teachers to enrich classroom experiences. Parents receive written notification of excursion/camp details prior to events. Students are expected to participate in camps and excursion. Requests for exemption must be referred to the Principal in writing. Parents experiencing financial difficulty in regard to such activities should contact the Principal personally.

9.3 School Photos

Class, individual and family photos are taken each year. It is expected parents order and pay for photos prior to photo day. If you do not wish your child to appear in class or school photos, please ensure this is made clear to office staff prior to photo sessions.

9.4 Lost Property

Lost property is stored outside the Sport equipment shed. It is essential all property be marked clearly with the child’s name and regular checks conducted to ensure names remain visible. At the end of each term, unclaimed lost property is sent to the St Vincent De Paul Society Shop.

9.5 Book Club

Mother of Good Counsel participates in the Scholastic Book Club scheme. Brochures are sent home each term. Parents are encouraged to pay for orders online or alternatively, orders may be place in an envelope, with the correct money, and given to class teachers by the due date.

9.6 Student Code of Conduct

Mother of Good Counsel has six school rules:

- Remember safety first
- Respect others and their property
- Right place, right time
- Follow directions quickly and quietly
- Do your best work on time
- Keep hands and feet to yourself

9.7 Parking of Vehicles

There are designated areas for parking. The staff car park is adjacent to the basketball court and parents are not to use this area as a pickup or drop off point for children. Parents are directed to park along Seymour Street and O’Keefe Street.

9.8 Assembly

School assembly is held each Friday at 8:40am. During assembly children participate in prayer, sing the National Anthem, present awards, celebrate special achievements and convey important information. Family members are welcome to attend assembly.

9.9 Sun Safety

Mother of Good Counsel is a sun safe school where children are encouraged to come to school wearing sunscreen, and to re-apply it during the day.

Students must wear the MOGC bucket hat available for sale at the office.

9.10 Tuckshop

Mother of Good Counsel tuckshop provides healthy food made on the premises from fresh, high quality ingredients. The tuckshop menu can be found on the school’s website.

Our tuckshop operates each Monday, Wednesday and Friday for both lunch breaks. Mother of Good Counsel utilises a paper bag lunch order system as well as an on-line ordering system. All mains, salads, sandwiches and sausage rolls must be pre-ordered and are delivered to your child’s classroom. Clearly write your child’s name, class and order on a paper bag, include the correct money (where possible) and drop to the Tuckshop by 8.30am. Please use separate bags for 1st and 2nd breaks.

The tuckshop relies on volunteers to operate efficiently and effectively. All assistance is welcome and greatly appreciated. Please express your interest at the tuckshop.

9.11 Instrumental Music

Students are provided with the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Music teachers from Saint Mary’s College provide Individual tuition for string, wind and percussion instruments. This is a “user pays” system, so a separate bill will be issued by St Mary’s, to families who use this service.

9.12 Counsellor

Counselling services are available to students requiring emotional and/or social support that is impacting their schooling. Parents or teachers may initiate the referral process, however parental consent is required. Depending on the student’s needs, our counsellor may advise the use of outside services or agencies, as the school counsellor’s availability is limited.

9.13 Internet Safety

At the commencement of each year, students and parents sign an ‘Acceptable Use Agreement’ contract before students can access the school network and internet.
9.14 Bringing Items to School

We discourage students from bringing items to school. Toys, special interest, sporting and other equipment should be kept at home. Students who bring items for “Show and Tell” or for special reasons should keep those items in the classroom. It is not the responsibility of the school to keep items secure.

Students are requested not to bring mobile phones, electronic games and devices to school. If they do, for any reason, the following guidelines apply:

- The school accepts no responsibility for the misplacement, loss, damage or theft of any items brought to school by students. It would be advisable for parents to insure such items as personal property;
- Devices may not be kept on their person, or in class desks during the school day (a padlock on their school bag is advisable);
- All devices will be required to be switched off and put away from the time children enter the school grounds until they have left the school grounds after school;
- Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in the item being confiscated and secured in the school office. The item will be returned when the child’s parents have contacted the school and discussed these guidelines with the Principal.

9.15 Stop, Drop & Go

This TWO MINUTE loading zone operates like a fast moving taxi rank, allowing for the picking up of students from the FRONT of the zone. Two minutes provides enough time for children to exit the school and enter the car without holding up traffic and is enforceable by Council’s Local Law Officers.

Children must exit and enter the vehicle from the footpath side.

In the afternoons:

- Delay your arrival until after 2:45pm. If you arrive early, do not park in the zone!
- Display your surname on your passenger visor, so that children can be called and ready for pick up;
- As space becomes available, drive slowly to the head of the line and collect only at the head of the line (the spaces marked in yellow);
- Do not double park. If there is no space in the zone, drivers must drive around the block until they can re-enter the zone;
- Drivers are to stay in the car unless assisting with the loading of baggage and passengers;
- Do not park for more than two minutes during signed hours of operation. If others abuse the zone, don’t follow their lead;
- Ensure passengers have secured seatbelts before driving off.
Honour & Truth