



MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL
NORTH CAIRNS

Mother of Good Counsel Parent Information Handbook 2023



Let everything you do be done in love
Corinthians 16:14



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1. Introduction

1.1 School Details

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	RUTH MALLON
LEADERSHIP SECRETARY	LISA RATCLIFFE
ADMINISTRATION/ ENROLMENTS	DESLEY JONES
FINANCE OFFICER	EVELYN CONNORS
PHONE	07 4053 9700
EMAIL	secretary.nthcairns@cns.catholic.edu.au
INTERNET	http://www.mogc.qld.edu.au
PARISH PRIEST	FR ROY NEERVELIL CHACKO CFIC
PARISH SECRETARY	MARY KLECZAJ
PHONE	07 4053 1179



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1.2 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. You are the first educators of your child and we are here to support you. We trust you always feel welcome here and as we work together for the education of children, let's ensure that the time is spent in co-operation, collaboration and mutual respect and support.

We base our 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 to develop their own abilities to become an integrated, self-regulated person.

Each child and parent wishing to enrol in this school is called to uphold the values of this school. All children are expected to participate in the Religious Education program and agree to become a part of a community of learners who are seeking knowledge to participate in this amazing world of creation.

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

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 About Our School

Mother of Good Counsel School is a parish-based, co-educational school situated in the North of Cairns. Mother of Good Counsel School provides a quality learning environment for children, in particular endeavouring to retain the 'small school' atmosphere, where every student is known and valued. We provide up-to-date learning resources and facilities, and are proudly staffed by experienced and professional teachers whose pedagogical frameworks are grounded in current research.

The school was founded in 1936 by the Sisters of Mercy and has since grown to accommodate a population of around 370 children. The Mercy tradition of actively displaying Christ's 'loving kindness' is evidenced in the school's awareness and support of community and international concerns.

Mother Of Good Counsel School's commitment to educational excellence is reflected in its strong focus on student well-being, and success in achieving good outcomes for its students. This is due to the high calibre of programs, dedicated staff and encouraged strong parental support.



1.5 Our Beliefs

Wellbeing is the cornerstone to effective learning.

Mother of Good Counsel is a Catholic School built on collaboration, support and restorative practices, where students, staff and parents work together to provide the best possible opportunities for ongoing success.

- All children are entitled to a Catholic, values-based Education, regardless of their Baptismal denomination. Religious Education and Christian beliefs have a privileged place in our school and students take part in the Religious Education Curriculum. Opportunities are provided for students to express and deepen their commitment to God through masses and liturgies, Sacraments, prayer, meditation and involvement in community outreach.
- Striving for individual best is encouraged.
- Self-management, self-awareness and respect for others are upheld as essential life skills.
- School expectations regarding respect, responsibility and safety are very important.
- Extra-curricular activities are a vital part of the school program. Students are enrolled with the understanding they participate in excursions, class camps, sport, carnivals and similar activities.

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. Each Semester is divided into two terms. Specific dates are provided in advance for parents' information.

1.7 School Times

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

School gates are unlocked at 7.50am. Students who enter the school prior to 8.10am must sit in the Prep - Year 3 eating area. Supervision by staff occurs between 8.10am and 3.10pm. Parents are urged NOT to leave children at school prior to 7:50am and to collect children as soon as possible after school is dismissed. If you need to drop your child at school prior to 8:10am or are unable to collect your child promptly after school, we suggest you utilise Out of School Hours Care, which is located on the school grounds.

Parents are requested to not enter school grounds until 8.10am.



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A usual school day:

8.10am	Staff supervision commences
8.30am - 10.40am	Class
10.40am - 11.10am	First Break (for eating and play)
11.10am - 1.10pm	Class
1.10pm - 1.40pm	Second Break (for eating and play)
1.40pm - 2.50pm	Class
2.50pm	Dismissal
3.10pm	Staff supervision concludes

1.8 Outside School Hours Care

An Outside School Hours Care Program operates from Mother of Good Counsel School. Currently provided:

Before School Care: 6.30am - 8.30am

After School Care: 2.50pm – 6.00pm

Vacation Care: 6:30am – 6:00pm

For further information, contact OSHC on 4252 5739 or 0408 935 004

1.9 MOGC Connect - Parent Engagement

MoGC Connect is the formal organisation, which represents parents/carers of the school and encourages parent engagement with the school community and the learning of our children.

MoGC Connect exists to support the school community and is involved in the total life of the school. MoGC Connect encourages parents to have an interest in and contribute to their child's education. It is important that parents share in decisions affecting their child's educational and spiritual growth, and support excellence in teaching and learning, both at school and at home.

MoGC Connect is actively involved through:

- Supporting the Catholic ethos of the school
- Creating a social, friendly environment within the school
- Being stakeholders in the educational process
- Sharing ideas, strengthening values and fostering initiatives
- The Fathering Project, parent sustainability group, learning opportunities 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 care and respect by staff, students and parents. A high standard of behaviour is expected at all times whether:

- in class
- within or outside school grounds
- in school uniform or casual clothes

Behavioural incidents are handled according to the school's Positive Behaviour and Relationship Plan. The Positive Behaviour and Relationship Plan can be found on our school website.

As maintaining high behavioural expectations is a joint responsibility of parents and staff, we work hand in hand to develop in children a Christian respect for themselves, for others and for property. Where it is deemed necessary, parents are notified and expected to work collaboratively with staff to resolve behavioural 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 a legal requirement. Students may be enrolled in Prep if they turn five years on or before June 30th of the year commencing Prep.

The timeline for Prep enrolments is continuous, with formalisation in the year prior to the commencement of Prep:

Term 1	Enrolment interviews occur (child and parents attend)
Term 2	First round offers are made to successful applicants, with subsequent offers occurring if space allows, throughout the year
Term 4	Prep Transition Program



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Enrolment Application & Confirmation Fees

At the time of submitting an enrolment application, the school requires a \$50 per child application fee to cover administration costs. If the student is offered a position, the school requires a confirmation fee of \$100 per child to hold the child's position. This amount is deducted from the first issue of school fees, however it is non-refundable if the student does not commence at Mother of Good Counsel School.

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

Enrolment Forms

Official enrolment forms may be downloaded from the school's website. Implicit in the acceptance of an enrolment is the understanding students and parents agree to adhere to the expectations and standards set by the school and outlined in the Parent Code of Conduct.

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, and if there are no outstanding issues with the previous Catholic school.

In addition to the information contained on the enrolment form, parents should provide:

- reports from previous schools
- learning or behaviour plans from the previous school
- details relating to the child's health e.g. special allergies, treatment, etc
- details of disabilities or special needs
- details of medication to be administered while at school. Please note the legislative requirements for medication given during school time
- reasons why the child may not be performing as well as expected

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

Current phone numbers, addresses and workplaces are necessary so parents/carers can be contacted in an emergency situation and can be provided with student information eg. student reports and electronic permission slips. Parents / Carers can make these changes directly on the Parent Portal, or by contacting the office.



2.3 School Uniform

Correct school uniform promotes a sense of unity and belonging, and is required to be worn at all times. It is expected that parents support the school's requirements that full and correct uniforms 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 child's teacher. **ALL** items of clothing should be clearly marked with the child's name.

Uniform:

- MOGC hat (No hat, no play!)
- Prep students wear a yellow broad brimmed hat
- Navy blue or white socks that sit just above the ankle
- Plain black shoes/joggers or black/brown sandals during summer season
- Tri colour MOGC polo shirt
- Navy skirt, skort or shorts

Children are designated a house team colour. House shirts are worn on Fridays.

A plain navy blue jumper or jacket may be worn in the cooler months. No hoodies or motifs are allowed.

The following applies to all children from Prep to Year 6

Hair	Long/collar length hair <u>must be tied back or plaited</u> . Long fringes that impede vision should be pinned back. This discourages head lice and is a recommended practice by Queensland Health. Hairstyles are to be conservative and suitable to Primary School eg. not coloured and no shaved tracks.
Hair ties/bands	Kept to a minimum; navy, white or gold
Jewellery	One pair of sleepers/small plain studs in ears only. Signet rings may be worn. Chain with religious medal/cross is allowed. No other forms of jewellery are to be worn. Watches may be worn. Smart watches must not be used for communication of any kind.
Nail Polish	Is not allowed.
Mobile Phones	If brought to school, mobile phones should be handed in at the office or to the classroom teacher for safe keeping during the day. Phones are not to be used at school.



2.4 Custodial Matters

It is the responsibility of parents to resolve custodial issues and provide the school with written notification of decisions handed down by the courts. If there are no court orders in place, each parent has equal rights to the access of their children. If court orders are in place, the school tries to release children to the custodial parent according to court orders. It must be understood that the adults named in the orders are those required to adhere to the requirements of the order. Staff do not take sides in family disputes and will act in the best interests of the child, in accordance with the court.

2.5 Arrivals

It is important that children are punctual, and arrive by 8.25am for the commencement of school at 8.30am. Classroom rolls are taken at 8.30am. If your child arrives after 8.30am they will be noted as a late arrival on the roll. Children arriving at school after 8.30am must enter via the Visitor's Entry to our Administration area to report to the office, accompanied by an adult, before continuing to class. Valuable teaching time is lost by continuous interruptions when students arrive late.

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. OSHC requires full use of the grounds from 3:10pm and needs to conduct their business in those spaces.

2.7 Attendance

Attendance at school is compulsory by law from the Prep year, and is necessary if students are to gain the greatest possible benefit from school activities.

2.8 Absentees

When a student is absent from school, parents are required to contact the school via phone call, Parent Portal or email to explain the absence. This is noted via the electronic roll system. In the interest of student safety, unexplained absences are followed up with an SMS to the adult who is the first contact indicated on the enrolment form. Communication is also required if a child cannot participate in the school's programs, eg. sports, physical education etc.



2.9 Leaving School Grounds

Children are not permitted to leave school grounds during the school day without being signed out by a parent/carer.

Parents are required to report to the office to sign their child out. Children will be notified by school staff, to meet parents at the office.

2.10 Before & After School Procedures

Our school gates are locked until 7.50am. Students arriving prior to 7.50am are encouraged to enrol in Before School Care at our OSHC facility. If students are not at Outside School Hours Care, between 7.50am - 8:10am, they sit in the Prep-Year 3 eating area. Supervision commences at 8:10am.

In the afternoons, school gates are locked until approximately 2:45pm. At that time, parents are welcome to walk in and wait for their child outside their classroom or at a designated meeting point. If an adult is not waiting for them, students are directed to move to the Stop-Drop-Go area (carers are required to remain in their car), the area outside Year 1 or outside the library (carers walk in for collection).

Junior and senior playgrounds are not available for family use after school as these areas are utilised by Outside School Hours Care.

2.11 Use of School Grounds Outside School Hours

Permission

Persons wishing to use the basketball court or school oval must obtain written permission from the school Leadership Team **prior** to use. Gates are locked when the school is not in use, and trespassers will be legally dealt with.

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 Leadership Team of the school.

Parking of Vehicles

Vehicles may be parked only in the designated areas and under the conditions signposted.



3. Faith Life of the School

Through the experience of a Catholic Education, children develop a deep relationship with God and an understanding of His love for humanity.

3.1 Liturgy & Masses

Students celebrate Eucharist/Liturgy at least once each term as a year level or whole school. The sacrament of Reconciliation is made available to Year 3-6 students. Families are invited to attend liturgical celebrations.

3.2 Sacramental Program

Year 3-6 students who are baptised in the Catholic Faith are invited to participate in the Parish Sacramental Program. Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist programs are coordinated by the parish and supported by parents through a series of meetings. Program information is provided to families via the school newsletter, Seesaw and Parent Portal in the first term of each year.

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, Mother of Good Counsel School provides students with an education that empowers them to take their place in the world as spiritual, moral and well-integrated people who will grow to positively contribute to the 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.

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

The curriculum represents *what* students are taught. This is informed by the Australian Curriculum, which outlines 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 becoming responsible, active and informed citizens.



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As a learning community, Mother of Good Counsel believes:

- Learners and learning is respected
- The learning environment is a place where students' learning is encouraged and challenged
- Learning should be engaging
- 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
- Learners are empowered when nurtured and encouraged to be confident, critical, reflective and creative thinkers.

The Key Learning Areas are:

- Religion
- English
- Maths
- Science
- Humanities and Social Sciences (History, Geography, Civics & Citizenship, Business & Economics)
- The Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama, Media)
- Health and Physical Education
- Technology (Digital & Design)
- Languages (Year 5 and Year 6)

Parent information sessions occur 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 help build positive and meaningful partnerships between home and school. Attendance at these sessions is highly recommended.

Pre-prep Information Sessions and transition sessions for students are conducted in Term 4 of the year prior to children commencing Prep. These sessions inform parents of practices and expectations and assist families to prepare for their child's first year of school. The transition sessions allow students to become familiar and comfortable within the school setting, so that they feel confident when starting school the following year.



4.2 Religious Education

Formal religion lessons are conducted. 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.

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.

Mother of Good Counsel aims to:

- Follow a planned sequential program of formal Religious Education comprising 2.5 hours of teaching and learning per 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 in 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.

4.3 Health & Physical Education

Health and Physical Education at Mother of Good Counsel School 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 relating to food, nutrition and safety of self and others
- develop and refine personal and social skills to promote positive interactions, be resilient and manage their own lives

At Mother of Good Counsel, Health & Physical Education for Prep to Year 6 students, is delivered through a program facilitated by specialist teachers. The Australian Curriculum guides teachers in their planning, teaching, assessment and reporting of HPE.



Students participate in

- Cross Country Carnival (Prep - Yr 6)
- Athletics Carnival (Prep - Yr 6)
- Swimming Lessons (Yr 1 - Yr 6)
- Swimming Carnival (Yr 3 - Yr 6)

4.4 Social & Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) supports students to develop the 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, learn self regulation, make responsible decisions and handle challenging situations effectively. These skills develop emotional literacy in individuals and the school community, and are best fostered in caring, engaging, collaborative 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 society.

SEL is fostered through a variety of practices at MOGC:

Second Step Program

Recognising parents and carers as the 'First Step', Mother of Good Counsel utilises the 'Second Step' program to explicitly teach language and strategies that promote empathy, positive relationship building and the ability to regulate emotions and responses.

Playground Guardians

Year Six students, as leaders of the school:

- support teachers on playground duty
- assist students who need assistance finding a friend
- mediate minor disputes
- encourage safe and inclusive play
- model positive and inclusive behaviour.

Buddy Program

Classes participate in structured, teacher-directed 'buddy time'. 'Buddy Time' encourages children to form positive and supportive relationships across year levels.

Student Mentoring

Small group mentoring is a powerful tool for young people who need support in relationship building, self regulation etc. Small groups of students work with our wellbeing coach to receive specific instruction and support in areas of need.



Mat Chat & Lunch Bunch

Mat Chat and Lunch Bunch are coordinated by our wellbeing coach and school counsellor. Students who wish to participate in these programs can take a friend to these play time sessions, which assist students with their group interactions and socialising skills.

Circle Time

'Circle Time' is a strategy used to provide students with opportunities for reflection regarding their actions and interactions, and to develop positive ways of thinking and acting. Staff are trained Circle Solution facilitators.

4.5 Homework

It is important for students to consolidate their day's work by completing some revision. Homework should not be onerous or cause conflict at home. Depending on the child's age, a period of time each day should be dedicated to supervised reading and literacy skill revision.

All homework tasks are considered revision of concepts and skills covered during the school day. Homework may include reading, literacy, spelling and numeracy skills, basic fact recall and practice, and finishing uncompleted work. The parents' role is to provide support and encouragement and to take an interest in the work being done.

Homework will not include mandatory written work to be completed or marked, although some students may prefer to take up options provided, for practising and learning through written activities (as their preferred learning style).

Why is homework so important?

- Homework encourages independent learning skills and good work habits. Homework, which involves practice and revision of what is known, helps to consolidate learning.

Homework tips for parents

- 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 the work being completed
- Take an interest in assigned homework and discuss tasks with your child
- Praise and taking pleasure in your child's efforts and achievements is a more proactive motivator than punishment and fear.



4.6 Assessment & Monitoring Student Progress

All stakeholders (parents, staff, 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.

Assessment

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.

Assessment takes many forms and occurs continually. 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
- Progressive Achievement Tests - Reading & Maths
- Pre and post testing for targeted programs
- Observations
- Learning area tests
- Open investigations
- Research-based tasks
- In-class work, discussions, group activities

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

Monitoring Processes

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



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 reports
- Participation in classroom activities
- Parent-teacher meetings
- Newsletter, Email, Seesaw, Parent Portal

4.9 Supporting Diversity

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

As an inclusive community, Mother Of Good Counsel School continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of students and families. The school community, served by the Diocese of Cairns, embraces inclusion as a means of enhancing the wellbeing 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 support for all students at Mother Of Good Counsel School is to differentiate access to student learning in the mainstream classroom curriculum within the classroom environment.

Early Intervention

Mother Of Good Counsel recognises the importance of the early learning years. Research repeatedly indicates that the earlier learning difficulties are identified, the more effective intervention strategies are. Identifying individual needs and providing effective support in numeracy and literacy development is a priority. Support is provided for students through class-based differentiation and small group support.

Differentiation

The Leader of Diversity and Literacy/Numeracy Teacher work closely with class teachers to modify teaching and learning strategies to enable success for students in the classroom. This includes:

- support for specific skill development
- support programs targeted to student needs
- modifications to the student's class program
- in-class support for students to engage with individually modified programs
- withdrawal programs for small groups of students with similar learning needs



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Extension / Enrichment

Mother of Good Counsel strives to cater for academically able students within the classroom setting:

- extending skill development
- modifications to the student's class programs and expectations
- in-class support for students to be challenged through individually modified programs

Access to Support

Students access support after a thorough process of assessment and staff collaboration. This may incorporate a combination of:

- teacher referral to our Diverse Learners Management Team
- school based assessments
- specialist assessments by available CES Support staff ie. speech/language pathologist, educational psychologist, occupational therapist
- specialist referrals
- diagnostic and benchmark testing

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

Collaboration with Families

Parents whose children require support, or who have targeted needs may be required to attend Care Team Meetings or targeted Learning and Goal Setting meetings, where all stakeholders discuss the needs of the child and best strategies for supporting them.

5. Costs

Costs for parents are made up of two components: school fees and school levies. Contact the school directly for specific information regarding these.

Accounts for school fees and levies are sent out each term. Payments may be made on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly or term basis according to your preference. Payment can be made by direct deposit or at the school office via eftpos and credit card.

Operating expenses are covered in part by Government grants and are subsidised by school fees. School fee concessions can be arranged by appointment with the Principal, for families in difficult circumstances. Contact the principal to arrange an interview if you have difficulty meeting this financial commitment. Confidentiality is assured. 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.



No child shall be denied a Catholic education due to financial hardship.

5.1 School Fees

Tuition fees are charged for children attending Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese. These fees are fixed by the Diocesan Education Services, are the same for every primary school in the Diocese, and are determined before the commencement of each year.

5.2 School Levies

Payments include levies, which vary from school to school, and may include items such as a Building Levy, Student Activities Levy and General Purpose Levy. Levies allow for the best educational opportunities for students.

Capital Levy (per family)

- Includes grounds, building maintenance and facilities
- The grounds keeping component supports the employment of a part time grounds/maintenance person and contractors for mowing and other maintenance
- Pays for facilities eg building loans and air-conditioning
- IT Levy (per family)
- Provides infrastructure, internet access and technical support
- MoGC Connect Levy (per family)
- Provides money to fund resources and programs throughout the school.
- Resource Levy (per student)
- Covers items required by students to participate in classes eg. classroom resources, stationery, device maintenance and purchasing, apps, site licences and printing costs
- Provision of a one-to-one iPad program in Years 2 – 4 (which becomes a BYOD in Years 5 and 6)
- Access to Chromebooks in Years 4 - 6

Activities Levy (per student)

- Covers sport and swimming options for all students. Included is equipment, facility hire and specialist lessons
- Children attend cultural presentations, incursions, excursions and a dance program as part of the ARTS curriculum.
- Camp for students in Years 4 and 6
- Curriculum based excursions for students in Year 2 and 5



6. Health, Safety & Wellbeing

6.1 Illnesses & Accidents

If children are unwell, they must not attend school. Parents of children who present with a temperature or obvious signs of illness will be contacted, for the child to be collected from school immediately.

Mother of Good Counsel requires information that enables staff to act as needs 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 or emergency, parent/carer contact is made in the order provided to the office.

School First Aid Kits are equipped to tend to minor accidents that occur in the playground. In the case of a severe accident or serious illness, an ambulance is called and staff endeavour to contact parents as soon as possible. If a parent/carer is reachable and on their way, children are transported to hospital in the care of Queensland Ambulance.

If a parent/carer is unreachable, children are transported to hospital by ambulance, in the care of a staff member.

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 as well as prescription drugs. Parents/guardians must complete a medication form providing the school with permission to administer medication. Medication such as ventolin puffers should be marked clearly with the child's name.

6.3 Allergies

Mother of Good Counsel has children attending school who have life threatening allergies to nuts. 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's hair before their return to school. Parents are notified when head lice is discovered in their child's class, asking for all parents to check and, if necessary, treat their child's hair:

1. Kill the lice by using a proprietary shampoo/lotion (available at a pharmacy)
2. Remove the eggs (nits) by combing with a fine tooth comb
3. 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 Department of Health's exclusion regulations as posted on the [National Health and Medical Research Council Website](#) for:

Chicken Pox	Rubella	Viral Hepatitis
Conjunctivitis	Measles	Colds/Flu
Diarrhoea	Whooping-Cough	Ringworm/Scabies
Mumps	Diphtheria	Impetigo

7. Roles & Responsibilities

7.1 Expectations of Parents

We want to work in partnership with parents, sharing information and building respectful relationships, so that together, we can improve the quality of learning and ways of being for every person in our community.

Student Details

It is important that parents inform the school of any changes in address, contact names, telephone numbers or other particulars stated on the original enrolment form. This information should be updated via the Parent Portal or the school office, when changes occur - for the safety and wellbeing of children.

7.2 Code of Conduct of Parents, Carers and Visitors

A document outlining the expectations of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Cairns in regards to this Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

This code of conduct applies to parents, volunteers and visitors who interact within Mother of Good Counsel School and attend school meetings and functions conducted within and outside of school hours.



7.3 Volunteering at MOGC

At Mother of Good Counsel School, we encourage parents and carers to be actively involved in the learning journey of students. There are many ways family members can contribute to our community: MoGC Connect groups, in class with individuals or small groups, excursions, camps, baking for and working in the tuckshop.

In order to work with our students, family members are required to

- Complete our [Online Volunteer Training and Quiz](#)
- Volunteers who are not parents must hold a current Blue Card
- Proof of Covid vaccination is required, from January 23, 2022.

Additional site-specific information for volunteers may also be required e.g. prior to volunteering at school camps.

To ensure safety for all, when volunteering, we require you to sign in and out at the office.

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 (even weeks of the school term), a newsletter is published outlining up-coming events and providing information about what is happening in the school. Parents are encouraged to read this newsletter, which is only available online. We suggest that parents subscribe to Schoolzine, so they receive an alert when the newsletter is published online: <http://www.mogc.qld.edu.au/parent-information/newsletters/>

Information to appear in the newsletter must be approved by the Leadership Team and emailed to the office by 8am on the Monday prior to the newsletter's publication.

8.2 Seesaw

Seesaw is the primary whole school communication platform for Mother of Good Counsel. The app can be downloaded to any hand-held or desktop device. Staff and students use the Seesaw student journal to store student work samples and enable parents/carers to be an interactive part of their child's learning journey. We encourage every parent to have access to Seesaw. Only direct parents/carers are provided with access to Seesaw.

Class teachers and Leadership will send information and reminders via the Seesaw App.

Correspondence requiring a response from staff must be via email.



8.3 Parent Portal

The Parent Portal is a secure space where parents can access information regarding the progress of students, parent-specific information about the school and manage their contact details. End of Semester student reports are available electronically via the Parent Portal and remain on the portal for two years. Instructions for Parent Portal access are available from the school office.

8.4 Parent Slips (Edsmart)

Mother of Good Counsel uses Parent Slips, a paperless process to gain permission from parents for students to attend excursions, camps and school events outside the normal school day. It is essential that contact details are correct to enable you to be contacted with important information.

8.5 Seymour St Electronic Sign

Notification of upcoming and current events are displayed on the Seymour St electronic sign so that information is disseminated at pick up and drop off times.

8.6 Facebook

The MOGC Community Hub is a Facebook group for parents of the school, and can only be accessed upon request. This space allows opportunities for reminders to be posted and photos/celebratory items to be shared. Notices from the community and the school can be posted.

8.7 Parent-Teacher Interviews

In Term 1 of each Year, parents are asked to attend a meeting with their child's teacher to discuss their growth and progress. Information is sent to the registered email address of families and through Parent Teacher Online (PTO), parents choose a suitable 10 minute time slot. In Term 3, parent-teacher interviews are held at parent request.

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



8.8 Meeting with the Principal

Parents requiring a meeting with the Principal are required to contact the school office to find a mutually suitable time.

8.9 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.

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

9. General Information

9.1 School Library

The students borrow books weekly during the term and have limited borrowing during school holidays. Students can borrow over school holidays during the year but all books are returned at the end of the year over the Christmas break.

The school also offers an online library that can be accessed 24/7 at all times of the year called SORA. Once students are enrolled and attending the school they will be automatically given a login to start accessing these books. The platform provides audio books as well as picture books and a variety of books for older readers.

Overdue notices will be sent via email. If books have been damaged or lost a replacement book will need to be purchased or you can pay for the book directly to the school. If you do have any questions you can contact the library staff for any queries or clarification.

9.2 Excursions & School Camps

Educational excursions and school camps are important learning and socialising experiences organised by class teachers to enrich classroom experiences. Parents receive information via Parent Slips, email and Seesaw, of excursion/camp details prior to events. Students are expected to participate in camps and excursions. Requests for exemption must be referred to the Principal, in writing. The cost of camps is included in school levies, and will not be refunded if the Principal has not granted an exemption prior to the event.

9.3 School Photos

Class, individual and student family photos are taken each year. It is required that parents order and pay for photos using the online payment system.



9.4 Lost Property

Lost property is stored outside the Library. It is essential that **all** property be marked clearly with the child's name and regularly checked 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 with students and parents pay for orders online.

9.6 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. The area in front of the church and adjacent to the OSHC room is an unsafe pick up area as many students walk or ride in this pedestrian zone to approach the crossing on Sheridan St.

There is parking for parents along Seymour Street and O'Keefe Street. The pickup and drop off zone at Seymour St functions efficiently when drivers are courteous and respectful. This area is supervised until 3:10pm. Students who have not been collected at that time must sit and wait courteously. Our office is locked at 3:30 every day. It is a parental responsibility, for the wellbeing of students, to ensure they are collected in a timely manner.

9.7 Assembly

School assembly is held each Friday at 8:30am. Family members are welcome to attend.

9.8 Sun Safety

Mother of Good Counsel is a sun safe school where children are encouraged to come to school wearing sunscreen. During the day, students are welcome to reapply sunscreen. Children are not to share their individual supply of sunscreen, in case others have unknown allergies.

Students are required to wear the Mother of Good Counsel hat available for sale through Uniform Link, or through our tuckshop's Flexischools online ordering. A long sleeved polo shirt option is available and can be ordered through Uniform Link.



9.9 Tuckshop

The 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 and via the MOGC newsletter.

Tuckshop operates each Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for both lunch breaks. Main meal options, served at first break, must be pre-ordered. Mother of Good Counsel School utilises an online Flexischools system as well as a paper bag lunch order system.

The Flexischools system is operated through a downloadable app.

When using paper bags, 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.

9.10 Instrumental Music

Students in Years 2 - 6 are provided the opportunity to learn a musical instrument through a parent funded program offered during school time. Students can learn guitar, violin, viola, clarinet, saxophone or modern voice coaching from an external, qualified teacher in a small group learning environment. Families can access the instrumental program if school fee payment is current and depending on availability. Please make enquiries through the office.

9.11 Counsellor

Counselling services are available to students who experience difficulty engaging in the school environment and require emotional and/or social support. Clear guidelines are in place regarding access to these services, which do not take the place of external counselling services for ongoing or long term issues. Our school counsellor can assist according to school and diocesan policies, which includes:

- Teachers initiate the referral process, with parental consent required for ongoing individual sessions
- Counselling services are available only for issues affecting learning and social interactions at school
- Students may be withdrawn from class for services to be provided
- Group and class discussions may occur and include the counsellor without individual consent



9.12 Internet Safety

Students access the school network and Internet while at school. While we have measures in place to limit access to sites, this does not guarantee that inappropriate material will not be accessed. We educate the students about protocols and expectations regarding internet access and cyber safety, and what to do if they come across inappropriate or unfavourable material. Our school digital citizenship expectations and Positive Relationships and Behaviour Plan applies if students breach our expectations.

Mother of Good Counsel subscribes to Internet Safe Education, a complete cyber safety resource for parents to support families to create a safe internet/device environment in the home setting. Details are shared with families at the commencement of each school year.

