



**MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL**  
**NORTH CAIRNS**

# **Mother of Good Counsel Parent Information Handbook**



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



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# MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

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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	KATHERINE BOOT
ADMINISTRATION/ ENROLMENTS	DESLEY JONES
EMAIL	<a href="mailto:secretary.nthcairns@cns.catholic.edu.au">secretary.nthcairns@cns.catholic.edu.au</a>
FINANCE OFFICER	EVELYN CONNORS
EMAIL	<a href="mailto:accounts.nthcairns@cns.catholic.edu.au">accounts.nthcairns@cns.catholic.edu.au</a>
PHONE	07 4053 9700
WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.mogc.qld.edu.au">http://www.mogc.qld.edu.au</a>
PARISH PRIESTS	FR ROY NEERVELIL CHACKO & FR SANTHOSH GEORGE
PARISH SECRETARY	ARACELI BARRIOGA
POSTAL ADDRESS	PO BOX 625 CAIRNS QLD 4870
PHONE	07 4046 5285
EMAIL	<a href="mailto:northcairns.parish@cairns.catholic.org.au">northcairns.parish@cairns.catholic.org.au</a>



## MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

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### 1.2 Welcome

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, 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 as the most important personal, spiritual and emotional aspects of a child's development, which combined with a comprehensive and rigorous curriculum, helps each child become an integrated, self-regulated person.

Each child and parent wishing to enrol in this school is called to uphold its values. All children participate in the Religious Education program and are part of a community of learners who strive to meet our expectations and are curious for learning and development.

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

Yours sincerely

*Katherine Boot*

**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 Catholic school situated in the north of Cairns. Mother of Good Counsel School provides a quality learning environment for children, endeavouring to retain the small school atmosphere, where every student is known and valued. We provide up-to-date learning resources and facilities that are 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 approximately 360 children. The Mercy tradition of actively displaying kindness and compassion 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 outcomes for its students that reflect growth and development.



### **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.

- Students are entitled to a Catholic, values-based education. Religious Education and Christian beliefs have a privileged place in our school and students take part in the Religious Education Curriculum, regardless of their Baptismal denomination. Opportunities are provided for students to express and deepen their commitment to God through masses and liturgies, the sacraments, prayer, meditation and involvement in community outreach.
- Striving for individual best is expected.
- Self-management, self-awareness and respect for others are upheld as essential life skills.
- School expectations regarding respect, responsibility and safety are important.
- Extra-curricular activities are a vital part of the school program and support the holistic development of each child. Students are enrolled with the understanding they participate in school-based events and activities.

### **1.6 School Year**

In accordance with the Queensland State Government Department of Education, school instruction 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 parent's 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 are required to sit in the designated area. Staff supervision occurs between 7.50am 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 the 2.50pm bell. Parents are encouraged to utilise Out of School Hours Care, which is located on the school grounds, when students require care outside school hours.

Parents are requested to not enter school grounds until 8.10.





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A usual school day:

<b>8.10am</b>	Before school supervised play
<b>8.30am - 10.40am</b>	Learning time
<b>10.40am - 11.10am</b>	First Break (eating then play)
<b>11.10am - 1.10pm</b>	Learning time
<b>1.10pm - 1.40pm</b>	Second Break (eating then play)
<b>1.40pm - 2.50pm</b>	Learning time
<b>2.50pm</b>	Dismissal
<b>3.10pm</b>	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 Parent Engagement**

#### **MOGC School Board:**

It is a requirement that Diocesan schools have a School Board. While the Principal has responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and management of the school, members of the board work with the Principal, Parish Priest, and staff to provide leadership to the wider school community.

Membership to the MoGC School Board is determined through a self-nomination process, and the discernment process sits with the Parish Priest.



### ***MOGC Connect:***

MoGC Connect is the group that represents parents/carers of the school and encourages parent engagement with the school community that supports the learning and engagement of our children.

MoGC Connect exists to support the school community and encourage parents to have an interest in and contribute to their child's education, and make decisions that impact their child's educational and spiritual growth.

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
- Parent subgroups: The Fathering Project, parent sustainability group, whole-school events, learning opportunities etc.

## ***2. Policies & Procedures***

### ***2.1 Behaviour Support Plan***

Mother of Good Counsel prioritises care for each child. This is achieved through mutual 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

Behaviour is supported and managed according to the school's Behaviour Support Plan, located on the school's website.

As maintaining high behavioural expectations of children is a joint responsibility of parents/carers and staff, we work hand-in-hand to instill a Christian respect for themselves, for others and for property. Parents are expected to work collaboratively with staff to support and modify behaviours that sit outside our expectations. Concerns parents have with the support and management process should be discussed privately with staff.



## **2.2 Enrolment Process**

### **Enrolment Forms**

Official enrolment forms can 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 Code of Conduct for Parents, Volunteers and Visitors.

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

### **Prep students**

Documentary evidence of a child's date of birth is a legal requirement. Students may be enrolled in Prep if they turn five years on or before June 30 of the year commencing Prep.

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

Term 1	Children and parents attend a prep enrolment interview. At this time families are provided with a school tour and it is necessary for parents/carers to inform staff of any adjustments their child may require when commencing school. MoGC is an inclusive school and this information does not impact eligibility for enrolment.
Term 2	First round offers are made to successful applicants. Subsequent offers are made throughout the year when space becomes available.
Term 4	Prep Transition Program commences.

### **Enrolment Procedure – New and 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 or fees with the previous Catholic school.

In addition to the information contained on the enrolment form, all new enrolments require:

- school reports
- plans that support the learning and/or behaviour of students
- details relating to the child's health e.g. special allergies, conditions and their management
- details of disabilities or special needs
- details of medication to be administered while at school. Please note there are legislative requirements for medication given during school hours
- reasons why the child may not be performing as well as expected



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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 be provided with student reports and electronic permission slips. Changes to personal details can be made directly on the MyCE app, or by contacting the office.

#### ***Enrolment Application & Confirmation Fees***

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

### **2.3 School Uniform**

Correct school uniform promotes a sense of unity and belonging, and is required at all times. It is expected that parents support the school's uniform policy and that 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 above, and cover the ankle
- Black shoes/joggers, or black/brown sandals during the 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 must be tied back or plaited. Long fringes that impede vision are pinned back.

Hairstyles are to be conservative, suitable for primary school and not be coloured or have shaved tracks.

**Hair ties/bands** Kept to a minimum; navy, white or yellow.



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#### **Jewellery**

One pair of sleepers/small plain studs in ears only.

Chain with religious medal/cross.

Watches may be worn. Smart watches must not be used for gaming or communication of any kind.

Deviation from these guidelines due to religious tradition is to be discussed with the Principal.

#### **Nail Polish & Fake nails**

Are not permitted.

#### **Mobile Phones**

Student mobile phones are not required at school. Communication regarding students is made through the office. The school is not responsible for loss or damage to mobile phones.

## **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.

**Please note:** 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 8.20am 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. Children arriving at school after 8.30am are required to enter via the Visitor's Entry, accompanied by an adult, before continuing to class. Valuable teaching time is lost by late arrivals.

## **2.6 Departures**

Parents who collect students each afternoon and students walking or riding home are required to vacate the school grounds by 3:00pm. OSHC requires full use of the grounds and needs to conduct their business in the OSHC, library and play 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, parents/carers are required to contact the school via phone or the MyCE app to lodge the absence. In the interest of student safety, unexplained absences are followed up with an SMS to the adult who is the main contact indicated on the enrolment form.

Communication is also required if a child cannot participate in the school's curricular or extra-curricular programs.

## **2.9 Leaving School Grounds**

Children are not permitted to leave school grounds during the school day without 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**

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. Students not at Outside School Hours Care, between 7.50am - 8:10am, sit in the designated area. Formal supervision commences at 8:10am.

School gates remain 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, the area outside Year 1 or outside the library.

### **Stop, Drop, Go**

Stop, Drop, Go on Seymour Street provides a 2-minute convenient pick up process for families, where drivers are required to remain in their car.

- STOP - as close to the front of the zone as possible.
- DROP -
  - Drop-off: students independently get themselves and their belongings out of the car and walk in through the black or blue gate.
  - Pick up: students are required to independently get into the vehicle.
- GO - cars slide safely back into the line of traffic along Seymour St

**If your child requires assistance to exit or enter the vehicle, please park elsewhere, so you can help them without interrupting the flow of traffic in the Stop, Drop, Go zone.**

Junior and senior playgrounds are not available for student 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 are required to 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, buddy class or whole school. Families are welcome and encouraged 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 and Seesaw during the first term of each year.

## ***4. 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 grow to positively contribute to the wider community. A values-centred orientation is evident in all aspects of school life including relationships, processes, celebrations and routines, as well as the formal curriculum.



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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 learners who are confident and creative individuals as well as active and informed citizens.

The curriculum represents *what* students are taught. This is informed by the Australian Curriculum, which outlines the core knowledge, understanding, processes, 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.

As a learning community, Mother of Good Counsel believes:

- learners and learning is respected. Teachers and teaching is respected.
- the school environment is a place where students' learning is encouraged and challenged
- learning should be engaging
- students learn according to their own style and pace to reach their full spiritual, academic, social, emotional and physical potential
- adjustments are provided that optimise student growth and engagement
- 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.



### ***Prep Transition Program***

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 they feel confident when starting school the following year.

## **4.1 Religious Education**

Formal religion lessons are conducted that enable children to develop an understanding of people and events significant to Catholic teachings and the Church's traditions.

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 exposure and learning each week
- provide opportunities to celebrate as a community through masses and liturgies
- provide opportunities for daily engagement in prayer and Christian Meditation
- create opportunities for students to live out Gospel values through and in support of Catholic social teachings
- enable children to explore meaning in life and learning through themselves and the teachings of Jesus
- encourage life-long learning.

## **4.2 Specialist Learning Areas**

### ***Health & Physical Education***

Health and Physical Education promotes the value of movement and physical activity in students' lives and an awareness of personal, social and community health. It provides students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes needed to lead healthy, active and fulfilling lives.

Health and Physical Education (HPE) enables students to:

- participate in regular and varied physical education experiences
- promote the health of their community and make informed decisions regarding 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



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Health & Physical Education lessons are delivered and facilitated by specialist teachers. The Australian Curriculum guides the planning, teaching, assessment and reporting of HPE.

Students participate in these extra-curricular sporting events:

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

### ***The Arts***

The Arts promote the value of creativity and expression in students' lives and foster an awareness of cultural and artistic diversity. Students engage in five Arts subjects in primary school: Dance, Drama, Music, Media Arts, and Visual Arts. These subjects provide students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes needed to appreciate and engage with the arts throughout their lives.

The Arts enable students to:

- participate in regular and varied artistic experiences
- develop their creative and expressive potential through various art forms
- learn how to create, design, represent, communicate, and share their ideas, emotions, observations, and experiences

At Mother of Good Counsel, Dance, Drama and Music are delivered and facilitated by a specialist teacher and Visual Art and Media are taught by classroom teachers. The Australian Curriculum guides the planning, teaching, assessment, and reporting of The Arts.

Students have the opportunity to participate in these extra-curricular artistic events:

- Cairns Show Art Exhibitions
- Hip Hop Extravaganza
- MoGC Has Talent
- End of Year Concert
- Instrumental Music
- Dance Troupe (Year 3-6)

### ***Technologies***

Digital Technologies promote the value of technological literacy and innovation in students' lives and foster an awareness of the impact of technology on society and the environment. Students engage in both Design and Technologies, and Digital Technologies, ensuring they benefit from learning about and working with traditional, contemporary and emerging technologies that shape the world in which we live. These subjects provide students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes needed to navigate and contribute to a technologically advanced world.





Digital & Design Technologies enable students to:

- Participate in regular and varied technological experiences
- Develop their problem-solving and critical thinking skills through the use of technology
- Learn how to create, design, and implement digital solutions to real-world problems

Digital Technology is delivered and facilitated by a specialist teacher, and Design Technology is covered by classroom teachers. The Australian Curriculum guides the planning, teaching, assessment, and reporting of Digital and Design Technologies.

### **4.3 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 and 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.

At Mother of Good Counsel, 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, the ability to regulate emotions and responses, and problem solving.

#### ***Zones of Regulation***

Teachers use the Zones of Regulation framework to support students in developing self regulation and self management skills. Through this approach, students learn strategies to recognise their emotions, enabling them to manage their emotional state and cope with everyday stress, ultimately preparing them for learning and social interaction.



### ***Friendology***

Friendology is a whole-school strategy designed to foster friendship by uniting students, teachers and parents/carers with a shared language of friendship. Students are taught what is typical in a friendship and how to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships. They are also explicitly guided on how to resolve conflicts (referred to as "Friendship Fires"), address Mean-on-Purpose behaviour, and understand that friendships can evolve, and that's perfectly normal.

### ***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 support teacher 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.



#### **4.4 Homework**

It is important for students to consolidate their day's work by completing some revision. Depending on the child's age, a period of time each day should be dedicated to supervised reading, and literacy and numeracy skill revision.

All homework tasks are considered revision of concepts and skills covered during the school day and should not be onerous or cause conflict at home. Homework may include reading, spelling, numeracy skills, basic fact recall and practice, and finishing uncompleted work. A parent's role is to provide support and encouragement, and to take an interest in the work being done.

Homework does not not require teacher marking, it is an encouraged task of virtuous practice, revision and consolidation fostered by parents in the home environment.

##### ***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, relaxing, watching a television program and spending time with 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.

#### **4.5 Assessment & Monitoring Student Progress**

Parents, staff and education authorities work in partnership to achieve the common objective of ensuring children are numerate and literate by the end of primary school.

##### ***Assessment***

The purpose of assessment is to provide guidance and feedback to students, identify weaknesses and strengths, 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 continuously throughout the teaching and learning cycle. Teachers thoroughly plan for assessment, to provide students with opportunities to show their development, knowledge and skill in each Learning Area.



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Examples of assessment include:

- School based testing
- Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN
- 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 conducted at the end of Term One. During this time, teachers confer with parents regarding academic and social progress 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 progress
- Student portfolios
- Ongoing adjustments of student programs, as required

### ***4.6 Communicating Student Progress***

Education is a partnership between home and school, and regular home-school communication is essential. Examples of communication include:

- Parent - Teacher evenings
- End of semester reports
- Participation in classroom activities
- Parent-teacher meetings
- Newsletter, email, Seesaw, MyCE app

### ***4.7 Supporting Diversity***

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

As an inclusive community, Mother of Good Counsel School meets 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 provide adjustments 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 and Numeracy Support Teacher work closely with class teachers to adjust 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 individual programs
- withdrawal programs for small groups of students with similar learning needs

### ***Extension / Enrichment***

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

- extending skill development
- modifying 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 CEDC Support staff ie. physiotherapist, 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 Personalised Learning Program meetings, where 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 tuition 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, via direct deposit, 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 a meeting if you have difficulty meeting this financial commitment. Confidentiality is assured.

### **5.1 School Tuition Fees**

Tuition fees are charged for children attending Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese. These fees are fixed by Catholic Education, Diocese of Cairns, 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 Family Levy, Activities Levy and Resource Levy. Levies allow for the best educational opportunities for students.

Family Levy (charged per family)

- Includes grounds and building maintenance
- The grounds keeping component supports the employment of a part time grounds and maintenance person, and contractors for mowing and other maintenance
- Pays for facilities eg building loans and air-conditioning
- MoGC Connect



### Resource Levy (charged per student)

- Covers items required by students to participate in learning ie classroom resources, printing costs, stationery, device management and purchasing of apps and site licences
- Funds resources and programs throughout the school
- Provides infrastructure, internet access and technical support
- Provision of a one-to-one iPad program in Years 3 – 6
- Access to Chromebooks in Years 4 - 6

### Activities Levy (charged 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

## ***6. Health, Safety & Wellbeing***

### ***6.1 Illnesses & Accidents***

If children are unwell, they should 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 contact details are current. In the case of an accident or emergency, parent/carer contact is made in the contact order provided to the office through enrollment paperwork.

School first-aid kits are equipped to tend to minor accidents that occur in the school environment. 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/carers are required to complete a medication form providing the school with permission to administer medication. Medication, including ventolin puffers, should be marked clearly with the child's name.

## **6.3 Allergies**

Mother of Good Counsel is an Allergy Aware school and has children attending who have life threatening allergies. Students are not permitted to share food and hygiene practices are in place to support all students.

## **6.4 Head Lice**

On discovery of live head lice, parents/carers are notified immediately. Parents/carers are required 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 for 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 on the CEDC website.

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, event-based committees, in class with individual students 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 are required to hold a current Blue Card

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

To ensure safety for all, when volunteering, we require visitors 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 Wednesday (even weeks of the school term), a newsletter is published providing information about what is happening in the school and outlining up-coming events. Parents are encouraged to subscribe to Schoolzine and read this newsletter, which is only available online. Once subscribed, members 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 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.

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

Correspondence requiring a response from staff must be via email.

### **8.3 MyCE**

The My Catholic Education app 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 MyCE app and remain in this space for two years. Instructions for MyCE 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 for us to contact families with important information.

An email is sent to both parent contacts, however only one response can be submitted.





### **8.5 *Seymour Street 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 by current parents, 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 15-minute time slot. In Term 3, parent-teacher interviews are held at teacher or 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 and learning 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 Leadership Team***

Parents requiring a meeting with a member of the Leadership Team 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**

Students borrow books weekly during the term and have limited borrowing during school holidays. Students can borrow over school holidays during the year however all books are returned at the end of the year to enable a stocktake.

SORA, an online library, can be accessed throughout the year. Once students are enrolled and attending the school they automatically receive 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 are sent to families via email. If books have been damaged or lost, a replacement book needs to be purchased or payment for the book can be made at the office.

### **9.2 Excursions & School Camps**

Excursions and school camps are important learning and socialisation experiences organised by school staff to enrich classroom experiences. Parents receive information via Parent Slips, email and Seesaw, of excursion and camp details prior to the event. 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. Parents are required to order and pay for photos using the online payment system. Whole school photos are taken every two years.

### **9.4 Lost Property**

Lost property is stored outside the Library. It is essential that all property is 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 parish presbytery, 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, Rutherford 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 are required to remain in this space. The office closes at 3:30 each 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 8:30, unless notified otherwise. Family members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## **9.8 *Sun Safety***

Mother of Good Counsel is a sun-safe school where children are encouraged to arrive at school wearing sunscreen. During the day, students may reapply sunscreen from the classroom supplies. Children with skin sensitivities are encouraged to provide their own sunscreen. For this reason, children are not to share their individual supply of sunscreen.

Students are required to wear the Mother of Good Counsel wide-brimmed hat available for sale through the office or 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 and drop to the Tuckshop by 8.30. 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 office or 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 or 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 for issues impacting learning and social interactions at school
- Students are 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 Behaviour Support Plan applies if students breach expectations.

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



# MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

## NORTH CAIRNS

