



# CODE OF CONDUCT



**Professional  
Conduct**



**Professional  
Competence**



**Personal  
Conduct**



**Catholic and  
Mercy Ethos**



## Introduction to Code of Conduct

### MOUNT LILYDALE MERCY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

Enthused by the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Mount Lilydale Mercy College Catholic Coeducational Community aims to foster justice, compassion, hope and hospitality in the Mercy Tradition.

We commit ourselves to the provision of a supportive environment where each student is encouraged to develop a Love of God, of Life, of Others and of Learning.

Inspired by Catherine McAuley, we value:

**SPIRITUALITY**

**LEARNING**

**COMMUNITY**



#### PROCESS/BACKGROUND

The College Campus Directors (4) were given the task by the College Executive in January 2009 to develop a 'Code of Conduct' based on the VIT Model and Principles and as a Catholic school in the Mercy tradition to include the Catholic and Mercy ethos dimension.

The process began with a general explanation and overview of the aims and objectives and that specific workshops be conducted at Campus Meetings to elicit staff responses on the four dimensions in terms of "How do we apply the VIT Principles at Mount Lilydale Mercy College".

Draft responses were collated at the end of 2009 and the process continued in 2010 to further refine the responses via more staff consultation and group work activity. Staff were given a draft summary of each section with further amendments made with each consultation process. A final copy of the "Code of Conduct" was distributed to all staff at the commencement of the 2011 academic year.

#### Campus Directors

##### 2009-2010

In 2016 the College Executive re-examined this document and decided to re-present it to staff. The Executive believes that it complements the MEL Code of Conduct.

# The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct

## INTRODUCTION

The Code of Conduct has been developed for and by the Victorian teaching profession.

It identifies a set of principles, which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a teacher by their colleagues and the community.

It is based on the values set out in the accompanying Code of Ethics, namely

**Integrity**  
**Respect**  
**Responsibility**

and draws on the Victorian Institute of Teaching's Standards of Professional Practice, and Codes of Conduct for teachers developed by schools and other registration authorities.

## PURPOSE

The Code of Conduct codifies what is already common practice within the teaching profession. Its purpose is to:

- promote adherence to the values teachers see as underpinning their profession
- provide a set of principles which will guide teachers in their everyday conduct and assist them to solve ethical dilemmas
- affirm the public accountability of the teaching profession
- promote public confidence in the teaching profession
- highlight the moral, legal and mission driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where young children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe.
- At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.
- To create and maintain a safe and nurturing culture, schools will actively and continually develop and review all policies, processes and practices, informed by emerging thinking and evidence.

## **SECTION 1: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

### **Mount Lilydale Mercy College Commitment to Child Safety**

*The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. 'The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school'. (Congregation for Catholic education 1997, par. 9)*

Mount Lilydale Mercy College holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of the College.

Mount Lilydale Mercy College has a universal expectation for the protection of children. It is resolutely committed to ensuring that all those engaged in at Mount Lilydale Mercy College promote the inherent dignity of children and young people and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment. This is particularly so for the most vulnerable children, including aboriginal children, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Mount Lilydale Mercy College has a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe. When allegations of abuse concerning children and young people are raised, Mount Lilydale Mercy College will take prompt action to have these appropriately referred and investigated. Mount Lilydale Mercy College strives for continual improvement that is responsive to emerging thinking, evidence and practice, so as to eliminate the possibility of abuse or children being placed at risk occurring in the first place.

Creating child-safe school environments is a dynamic process that involves active participation and responsibility by all who work at Mount Lilydale Mercy College, families and their communities. It is marked by collaboration, vigilance and proactive approaches across policies, procedures, curriculum and practices.

Every person involved in Catholic education at Mount Lilydale Mercy College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Mount Lilydale Mercy College understands and enacts the requirements placed upon it under Ministerial Order 870. This is especially true in relation to Mandatory Reporting. Mount Lilydale Mercy College understands and promotes that Teachers, Principals and nurses are mandated to report to DHHS Child Protection as soon as practicable if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm, as a result of physical and/or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type. The reasonable belief is formed in the course of practicing their profession/ employment.

Note: Any adult must report information to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under 16 years of age by a person aged 18 years or over. Police should be informed as soon as it is practicable to do so, unless the person has a reasonable excuse not to. (e.g. fear for own safety or safety of others, information has already been disclosed). Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence (maximum penalty is 3 years imprisonment).

Regardless of legislation, all staff have a duty of care to take active and reasonable steps to protect young people in their care from risks of reasonably foreseeable harm.

Such steps include reporting concerns to authorities and to the school leadership team can be found in the implementation Guidelines.

A teacher's professional conduct is characterised by the quality of the relationships they have with their students, their students' parents (guardians and caregivers), families and communities and their colleagues.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS**

### **Principle 1.1: Teachers provide opportunities for all students to learn.**

The main focus of teaching is student learning. Teachers demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- a. Knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities.
- b. Maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment.
- c. Accepting professional responsibility for the provision of quality teaching.
- d. Having high expectations of every student, recognising and developing each student's abilities, skills and talents.
- e. Considering all viewpoints fairly.
- f. Communicating well and appropriately with their students.

### **How Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle:**

#### ***Learning***

Ensure that staff develop a rapport and understanding of their students with a view to catering for their individual needs, differences and abilities. This can be achieved by delivering ILP's, differentiation and modification of work through well prepared and engaging activities that cover the curriculum.

Proper differentiation would suggest that every child in the classroom is challenged and extended at their own level.

#### ***Communication***

To respect the individual through listening and allowing for individual thinking. This is achieved by the classroom teacher being well prepared and providing a positive classroom environment.

## Principle 1.2: Teachers treat their students with courtesy and dignity

Teachers:

- a. Work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- b. Model and engage in respectful and impartial language
- c. Protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm
- d. Enhance student autonomy and sense of self worth and encourage students to develop and reflect on their own values
- e. Respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only reveal confidential matters when appropriate. That is:
  - The student has consented to the information being used in a certain way
  - To prevent or lessen a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare of a person (including the student) Mandatory Reporting
  - As part of an investigation into unlawful activity
  - If the disclosure is required or mandated by law
  - To prevent a crime or enforce the law
- f. Refrain from discussing student's personal problems in situations where the information will not be treated confidentially
- g. Use consequences commensurate with the offence when disciplining students.

### **How Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle:**

#### ***Respect for the Individual***

Staff need to be respectful of all students in the class in terms of their beliefs, values, abilities and willingness to learn. This is achieved by role modeling Jesus Christ's message of forgiveness, love and compassion.

#### ***Respect for personal confidential information.***

Staff need to ensure that they are aware of student's personal information and treat same with compassion and empathy.

#### ***Respect for the classroom environment.***

Ensure classroom management rules are clear, consistent and fair reflecting Gospel values.

Knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities.

Maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment for every student.

In fulfilling their role, teachers carry out a wide range of responsibilities. They support students by knowing their strengths and the limits of their professional expertise. Teachers:

### **Principle 1.3: Teachers work within the limits of their professional expertise**

In fulfilling their role, teachers carry out a wide range of responsibilities. They support students by knowing their strengths and the limits of their professional expertise. Teachers:

- a. Seek to ensure that they have the physical, mental and emotional capacity to carry out their professional responsibilities.
- b. Are aware of the role of other professionals and agencies and when students should be referred to them for assistance.
- c. Are truthful when making statements about their qualifications and competencies.

#### **How Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle:**

##### ***Academic qualifications and registration/s***

Staff ensure they have appropriate academic qualifications and registration/s. These must include current VIT registration. CECV accreditation to teach in a Catholic school should be current or ongoing and other registrations could include subject associations, First Aid accreditation and complete online requirements eg: mandatory reporting etc.

Mandated online learning modules: MEL, CEM, VT, VCAA and CECV

##### ***Staff expertise***

Staff are knowledgeable and visionary in pedagogy and educational philosophy. Staff ensure this by continuing their own professional learning in the latest educational trends such as AusVELS, ICT and Victorian Curriculum. Staff have a responsibility to maintain their professional standing and Professional Development.

### **Principle 1.4: Teachers maintain objectivity in their relationships with students**

In their professional role, teachers do not behave as a friend or a parent. They:

- a. Interact with students without displaying bias or preference.
- b. Make decisions in students' best interests.
- c. Do not draw students into their personal agendas.
- d. Do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity and goals.

#### **How Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle:**

##### ***Staff Professionalism***

Staff to ensure a knowledge of the student support structure operating within the College to provide assistance for students such as Wellbeing Team, Learning Support Team, First Aid, Careers Department.

##### ***Staff Interaction***

Staff treat all students in accordance with the College Mission Statement which fosters justice, compassion, hope and hospitality.

Staff adopt a Restorative Practice approach as an integral part of staff- student relationships in terms of student behavior.

## **Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school, whether at school or not**

Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students. The following examples outline some of those limits.

A professional relationship will be violated if a teacher:

- a. Has a sexual relationship with a student.
- b. Uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students.
- c. Touches a student without a valid reason
- d. Holds conversations of a personal nature, or has contact with a student via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context.
- e. Accepts gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from students or their parents.

A professional relationship may be compromised if a teacher:

- a. Attends parties or socialises with students.
- b. Invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present.

### **How Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle:**

#### ***Professional relationships***

Staff need to be aware of their professional obligations and Duty of Care at all times, including their attendance at social gatherings outside school hours.

Staff need to ensure they consistently maintain a professional relationship; not a personal relationship with students. This includes any form of communication including social media eg: Facebook, Instagram etc

Staff should also ensure that dialogue between teacher and student at any College activity is professional and avoids the use of inappropriate language and material.



## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS (GUARDIANS, CAREGIVERS), FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

### **Principle 1.6 & 1.7: Teachers maintain a professional and collaborative relationship with parents (guardians and caregivers)**

Teachers should be respectful of and courteous to parents. Teachers:

- a. Consider parents' perspectives when making decisions which have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a student.
- b. Communicate and consult with parents in a timely, understandable and sensitive manner.
- c. Take appropriate action when responding to parental concerns.
- d. Recognise that their students come from a diverse range of cultural contexts and seek to work collaboratively with students' families and communities within those contexts.

#### **How Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle:**

##### ***Relationships with the Whole College Community***

Staff need to be aware and sensitive to the fact that all families are different in terms of values, beliefs, culture, levels of school involvement, support and background.

Ensure that all interactions with parents and families at school committees, meetings, boards and other organisations are positive, inclusive and foster a sense of College community.

Maintain ongoing communication and consultation with parents and families. This could be achieved through emails, telephone calls, informal and formal reports.

Staff need to be approachable, friendly, and professional when dealing with all families at all times.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES

### Principle 1.8: Collegiality is an integral part of the work of teachers

Teachers demonstrate collegiality by:

- a. Treating each other with courtesy and respect.
- b. Valuing the input of their colleagues.
- c. Using appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters.
- d. Sharing expertise and knowledge in a variety of collaborative contexts.
- e. Respecting different approaches to teaching.
- f. Providing support for each other, particularly those new to the profession eg: Peer Coaching and observation, Classroom visits etc.
- g. Sharing information relating to the wellbeing of student.

### How Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle:

#### ***Collegiality***

Ensure that you interact with colleagues on a professional basis by:

- a. Providing support and assistance e.g. mentoring.
- b. Ensures that the documented curriculum is taught
- c. Ensures that individuals each contribute to the ongoing development of faculty resources.
- d. Sharing of resources and working as a team.
- e. Respecting each other's individual teaching styles.
- f. Showing respect and support in our daily interactions with each other.

Team players who are positive and supportive and value the notion of collegiality by:

- a. Celebrating life achievements and special occasions.
- b. Participating fully in the life of the College community and its Mercy traditions and ethos.

## SECTION 2: PERSONAL CONDUCT

### **Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as a whole**

Although there is no definitive boundary between the personal and professional conduct of a teacher, it is expected that teachers will:

- a. Be positive role models at school and in the community.
- b. Respect the rule of law and provide a positive example in the performance of civil obligations.
- c. Not exploit their position for personal or financial gain.
- d. Ensure that their personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of their duties.
- e. Act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues.

#### **How Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle:**

##### ***Professionalism***

Ensuring that all interactions with students and staff are conducted in a socially acceptable and collegial manner, including not taking financial incentives for or involving oneself in action not consistent with our college mission and policy.

##### ***Lifestyle conducive with teachings of the church.***

Be proactive in our citizenship and community works. Attend and participate in College Eucharist's and retreats. Undertake all actions in and out of the College in an ethical law abiding way, ensuring that your private life is not an open forum for students.

##### ***Acceptance and valuing the individual***

Be open and accepting of all in the community, valuing everyone's own unique person and dignity.

##### ***Current and comprehensive classroom management skills / Demonstration of knowledge of current educational trends EG: the Victorian Curriculum, ILP, ICT / In-depth knowledge of subject area***

Undertake regular professional networking, cross preparation and PD to ensure you are up to date with current pedagogy. Staff are expected to participate regularly in opportunities to ensure the ongoing development of current generational trends and social benchmarks

##### ***Involvement in co-curricular activities***

Ensure that you interact positively with students in and out of the classroom to help foster positive relationships and a greater understanding of students and the modern world. Ensure that these activities maintain a professional teacher / student basis.

***Own life role models / Not discussing your personal life with students***

Maintain your professional status: you are a student's teacher – not friend; this relationship must be distinguishable. Do not socialise with students, either in person or via the use of technology. For example in nightclubs or on Facebook, texts, emails etc. Your social /personal life or lifestyle choice must not be exposed to students or their siblings in our community

***Friendly and approachable / Holistic approach / Compassion and empathy***

Understand that you are a guiding influence on young people and that you should be an active listener and advisor whilst maintaining a professional relationship. Ensure that you know both your duty of care and your mandatory reporting obligations.

## SECTION 3: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

**Principle 3.1: Teachers value their professionalism, and set and maintain high standards of competence.**

Teachers:

- Are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise
- Are committed to pursuing their own professional learning
- Complete their duties in a responsible, thorough and timely way.

**Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle through:**

### ***Academic qualifications***

- a. Ensuring they have the appropriate academic qualifications.
- b. Developing, maintaining and updating, an in-depth knowledge of their subject area/s.
- c. Taking on further study or any Professional development that relates to the education, care and spirituality of students, with a view to the formation of the whole person.

### ***Management***

Developing classroom management skills that set and maintain positive relationships.

Having a common vision in light of the Gospel values.

Acknowledging the importance of a holistic approach to education, which includes thinking, problem solving and creativity in young people.

### ***Professional Dress***

Dressing appropriately for the occasion, (in accordance with the Dress code in the Staff Handbook) whether it be classroom teaching, Student Progress Interviews, Sporting events or Nights of Excellence, Award Ceremonies or College Eucharists.

### ***Community***

Acknowledging that we are a part of the wider community through community activities such as Special Persons' Day, Anzac Dawn Service, Remembrance Day, VET activities, Soup Van, Open Day.

Keeping the wider community informed and acknowledged through the Advisory Council, Parents and Friends Association, Policy and Curriculum Committee, and other like organisations.

**Principle 3.2: Teachers are aware of the legal requirements that pertain to their profession. In particular they are cognisant of their legal responsibilities in relation to:**

- Discrimination, harassment and vilification.
- Negligence.
- Mandatory reporting.
- Privacy.
- Occupational health and safety.
- Teacher registration.

**Mount Lilydale Mercy College staff apply this principle through:**

Having a current VIT registration.

Achieving appropriate Academic qualifications.

Demonstrating a knowledge of current educational trends.

Completing On-Line professional development eg: Students with disabilities

Adhering to Mount Lilydale Mercy College policies as per Staff Handbook. These policies reflect the Catholic Education Melbourne, VIT and CECV policies.

Being actively involved in social justice and living by gospel values, as encompassed in the College Mission Statement.

Being non-discriminatory and ensuring justice for all, with compassion, empathy and understanding.

## **SECTION 4: CATHOLIC AND MERCY ETHOS**

The main focus of teaching and student learning at Mount Lilydale Mercy College is in the Mercy tradition. Mount Lilydale Mercy College demonstrates its commitment to Catholic and Mercy Ethos by:

- a. Fostering justice, compassion, faith, hope, love and hospitality in the Mercy tradition.
- b. Developing a love of God, of life, of learning and of others.
- c. Understanding the gospel values of love, service and justice.
- d. Providing a holistic learning environment striving for excellence.
- e. Reflecting the Works of Mercy, spiritual and corporal.
- f. Nurturing prayer and faith development.
- g. Demonstrating a strong sense of social justice.

### **Mount Lilydale Mercy College Staff apply this principle by**

Aspiring to be a Christian community with its Catholic faith and traditions by placing the dignity of each human person at the heart of all that we do.

Embracing Liturgies for students, parents, staff and the wider community.

Having prayer as a central focus for students through; homeroom morning prayer, the prayer table, lunchtime prayer, prayer services in College Chapel.

Having prayer as a central focus for staff through; briefing, meetings, lunchtime prayer, prayer services in College Chapel.

Showing respect as well as an understanding for the history of the College and its traditions - Heritage Centre.

Understanding and respect for the Catholic faith and traditions.

Understanding the Mercy tradition of love, compassion and service inspired by Catherine McAuley.

Demonstration of faith community- active celebration of sacraments, Opening School Eucharist, Mercy Day Mass, End of Year Eucharist.

New staff welcomed into the College community –presentation of candle, bible, MLMC pin, signing of Charter and participate in an induction Programme.

Social justice activities – St Vincent De Paul, Soup Van, Seeds of Justice, Jigalong, Project Compassion, Responsible Community Challenge (RCC).

# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Staff, volunteers and contractors at Mount Lilydale Mercy College are required to abide by this Code.

Under the leadership of the College Principal, the College leadership will:

- ♦ Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
- ♦ Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers; and
- ♦ Nominate a Child Protection Officer to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

## All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Mount Lilydale Mercy College will:

- ♦ Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the College;
- ♦ Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
- ♦ Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
- ♦ Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- ♦ Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
- ♦ Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
- ♦ Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people;
- ♦ Be professional in their actions;
- ♦ Maintain strict impartiality;
- ♦ Comply with specific Mount Lilydale Mercy College guidelines on physical contact with children;
- ♦ Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
- ♦ Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
- ♦ Operate within the policies and guidelines of Mount Lilydale Mercy College; and
- ♦ Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

## No person shall:

- ♦ Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
- ♦ Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
- ♦ Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
- ♦ Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
- ♦ Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
- ♦ Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
- ♦ Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- ♦ Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the Mount Lilydale Mercy College's programs and activities;
- ♦ Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
- ♦ Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- ♦ Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
- ♦ Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
- ♦ Do anything in contravention of Mount Lilydale Mercy College's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_