



MATER DEI
INCLUSION FOR ALL

Parent Handbook 2014



INTRODUCTION

The following information is intended as a guide to detail Mater Dei school information, policies and procedures for 2014. Please read carefully and complete the attached form to receipt your acknowledgement of the following.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mater Dei is a coeducational school for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 who have been assessed with mild to moderate cognitive delay as their primary disability. Mater Dei is a Congregational school located within the Wollongong Diocese under the auspices of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan whose ethos is one of peace, prayer, service, hospitality, stewardship and social justice.

School Philosophy

The underpinning philosophy of every student's enrolment at Mater Dei is inclusion into the wider community. Inclusion is based on the dignity and uniqueness of each person, self-esteem, respect, equity, independence, interdependence and responsibility. We work collaboratively with parents, carers and advocates of the students entrusted into our care thus providing a student-centred community at Mater Dei. In this way it is our hope that students will live as independently as possible in the least restrictive and most stimulating environment in the wider community.

School Services

Mater Dei School is only one of a number of services offered at Mater Dei. Other services include:

- **Mater Dei Early Intervention Program**

This is a family-centred program providing an education and therapy program for children from birth to 6 years of age. In addition the early intervention program offers support to these children's families and carers and supports them as they determine the most appropriate school setting for their children.

- **Living Skills Program**

This is predominantly a residential program offering individualized independent living skills for students who are in Years 7-12 (or from 12 to 18 years of age) and support for their families. The students reside for between one and two nights each week during the school term, in one of four community-based houses in the Macarthur area. The preferred placement is for a maximum of two nights each week.

- **Development Program**

This program assists Mater Dei's growth by raising awareness and financial support in the wider community. At Mater Dei we receive approximately 80% of our funding from government sources and the remaining 20% is raised from our Fee policy and initiatives undertaken by the Development Program eg Mater Dei's Annual Charity Golf day, Mater Dei Lipstick Lunch, our annual Fundraising Dinner, Mater Dei's Peace Egg, Mater Dei Foundation membership and preparation of funding submissions.

- **Administration** staff will answer your questions and concerns or redirect you to one of the Program Managers where relevant. Each member of staff in Administration has a specific area of responsibility. The following personnel comprise the Mater Dei Administration team:

Name	Main responsibilities	Days/Hours of Work
Emma Bray	Administrative Assistant to the Business Manager	Tues, Wed, Thurs
Michele Dunshea	Administrative Assistant to the AP	Mon, Tues, Wed
Helen Flett	Reception	Mon, Wed & Thurs
Lisa Gruar	Payroll, student fees	Tues, Wed & Thurs
Anne Lauder	Business Manager	Mon to Fri
Carmen Nardi	Development Coordinator	Mon to Fri
Luisa Penman	PA to the CEO/Principal	Mon to Fri
Katrina Sims	Reception, IT Support	Mon, Tues & Fri
Simone Wilson	Development	Thurs, Fri

Mater Dei Management

Mater Dei is managed by a Board of Directors through the CEO/Principal. In turn, each Program is under the leadership of a Program Manager.

CEO/Principal	Mr Tony Fitzgerald
Assistant Principal	Ms Samantha Giles
Administration & Business Manager	Ms Anne Lauder
Director of Services	Mrs Pamela Templeton
Director of Development	Ms Debbie Gates
Executive Assistant to the CEO/Principal	Mrs Karen Taylor

School Executive

Principal	Mr Tony Fitzgerald
Assistant Principal	Ms Samantha Giles
Executive Assistant to the CEO/Principal	Mrs Karen Taylor
Religion Education Coordinator	Mrs Helen Fahey
Primary Coordinator	Mrs Rebecca Gibbs
Secondary Coordinator	Mrs Alison Meani

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

If a student is away from school on any given day the parent/carer will receive a phone call from Mater Dei staff requesting a reason for the absence, which will then be recorded on the student's absentee register. If explanation has been given via the phone call parents/carers are no longer required to notify their child's teacher in writing. If no explanation has been given via phone your child will need to bring a written note, on a reasonable size piece of paper, stating the child's name, the dates and the reason for absence when they return to school within 7 days of their absence. A doctor's certificate is now required for four or more days of illness/sickness related absence.

Parents and carers are now also required to place a written request with School Principal's for extended periods of leave (5 days or more) not related to illness/sickness. Upon written request an Application for Exemption from Attendance at School will be sent home for completion and will need to

be returned before exemption can be granted. If exemption is granted, the student will be issued with a Certificate of Exemption.

ANAPHYLAXIS AND FOOD

Anaphylaxis is a dramatic, often immediate, life threatening reaction to allergens. The most common causes of anaphylaxis in childhood are: nuts, dairy, eggs, seafood and sesame seeds. The smell of, or contact with, these allergens is enough to cause hives, stomach aches and diarrhoea and can potentially lead to an anaphylactic reaction. The children affected at Mater Dei (at this stage) are all anaphylactic to nuts and eggs. As a result Mater Dei is a NUT AND EGG FREE SCHOOL. *We ask that you do not send any nut or egg products into the school with your child. We also do not allow students to share food at school.*

ASSEMBLIES/PASTORAL PERIOD

Assemblies and pastoral periods take place during the first session on a Friday. Assemblies have a set routine and structure that involves an entrance procession and song, prayer, Awards, Special Presentations and the National Anthem. A full school Principal's Assembly is held at the beginning of each term and towards the end of each term in the Hall at 9:30am. Parents and carers are welcome to attend Principal's Assemblies held each term, dates and times are published in our fortnightly newsletters.

Every other Friday at 9:30am, the Primary students and the Secondary students alternate between Pastoral Assemblies and Pastoral Periods. Pastoral periods allow students to carry out individual, small or large group work on a range of issues such as school rules, values and attitudes, bullying, resilience, social and play skills and friendship skills.

AWARDS

Student behaviour and good choices are encouraged and recognised by the following Award structure at Mater Dei:

- Each student is eligible to be awarded in class an Academic Award, Uniform Award, Merit Award or Safe Traveller Award. It is expected that a student would receive at least one of these awards each week.
- Each student is eligible for a Principal's Award once they have been awarded at least 15 awards in one term made up of Academic, Uniform, Merit or Safe Traveller Awards. Principal's Awards are to be awarded at a Principal's Assembly. Parents will be notified if your child is to receive a Principal's Award at an assembly via the school diary.
- Each student is nominated to receive a Citizenship Award at least once a year by their Pastoral Teacher. Citizenship Awards are awarded at Pastoral Assemblies by the Primary or Secondary Coordinator.
- Each student is eligible to receive a Swimming Award at least once a year. These awards are handed out in class by our AUSTSWIM Instructors for encouragement or improvement of skills during swimming sessions.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At Mater Dei we believe in a supportive and harmonious school atmosphere in which all members of staff, children, parents and guardians are consistently treated with dignity, respect and compassion. We believe that the rights and responsibilities of all should be recognised in a place of quality learning and teaching, that specifically caters for each student's disability and reflects their individual needs.

Mater Dei will ensure that in providing a positive approach to behaviour management, the balance between duty of care, dignity of risk and Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) issues will always be carefully considered. Please refer to the Mater Dei Behaviour Management Policy Document and Behaviour

Management Guidelines on our school website. Where individual students are consistently encountering difficulty in meeting appropriate behaviour outcomes, individual student behaviour management plans will be devised and implemented.

CANTEEN

Our school canteen is coordinated by a group of volunteer mums and operates only on Fridays for recess and lunch. Price lists are sent home for each term. Infants students may order their recess and lunch by clearly indicating on a lunch bag, their name, class, class teacher, the items ordered and the amount of money enclosed. Primary and Secondary students may purchase items over the counter at recess and order their lunch by clearly indicating on a lunch bag, their name, class, class teacher, the items ordered and the amount of money enclosed. Orders can be sent in any day during that week up to and including Thursday. Any parents/carers interested in helping out on canteen are welcomed and encouraged to come along any Friday from 10am.

CENTRELINK

Is your child turning 16 this year? Please let us know so we can help assist you with your applications for the Disability Support Pension, Pensioner Education Supplement and Mobility Allowance through Centrelink.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mater Dei is committed to ensuring that it complies with the requirements of Child Protection Legislation. This legislation is intended to view child protection as providing a safe and supportive environment for children and also all members of staff by ensuring that systems and processes are in place for preventing, identifying and investigating reportable conduct.

Mater Dei staff are also mandatory reporters of any physical, emotional, mental and sexual abuse of children up to the age of 16 years, under the Keep Them Safe Guidelines. Abuse of this kind may come to our attention through observations or student disclosure.

Volunteers/visitors

All volunteers over the age of 16 years must complete a Working with Children Check before they can act as a volunteer in the school. This can be done by going to www.newcheck.kids.nsw.gov.au, filling out the online application form and then presenting proof of identity at a NSW Motor Registry. All volunteers and visitors must sign the book located in Reception upon entering the school stating their name, the time they arrive and the person they are reporting to and wear a visitors lanyard. When leaving the school they must sign out and return their lanyard. This is done for safety purposes and in the case of emergency where we can check to see who is on the school premises.

CLASS GROUPINGS AND STAFF FOR 2014

Class Name	Teacher's Name	Year Groups
Infants C	Mrs Michelle Charles	Kinder, Year 1
Infants GW	Mrs Rebecca Gibbs (M,T,W)) & Mrs Carla Warby (Th,F)	Kinder, Year 1
Infants S	Mrs Anne Salway	Year 2
Primary KR	Miss Katie Roberts	Year 3, 4
Primary MR	Mrs Mary Rudd	Year 4, 5, 6
Primary RH	Mrs Gayle Roberts (M-W) & Mrs Rebecca Hanrahan (Th-F)	Year 5, 6
Secondary C	Mr Sid Conte	Year 7 & 8
Secondary FK	Mrs Helen Fahey (M-W) Mrs Rowena Kennedy (Th – F)	Year 7, 8 & 9
Secondary SS	Mrs Shannon Stanizzo (M-T)	Year 9 & 10

	Mrs Leanne Steedman (W,Th,F)	
Secondary P	Mrs Glynis Patrick	Year 9 & 10
11/12D Satellite Class	Mr Andre Daniels	Year 11 & 12
11/12 MW	Mrs Carla Warby (M-T) Mrs Alison Meani (W – F)	Year 11 & 12
Leader of Pedagogy	Mrs Jacqueline Gorey	Various
RFF Classes	Mrs Gail Chapman (T-W)	Various
Performing Arts	Mr Stephen Samiya	Various

CLASSROOM RESOURCE ITEMS

Students do not need to bring any resources to school. All school supplies are provided by Mater Dei, however, students normally bring a box of tissues and container of wipes to school at the beginning of the school year to use in class as needed throughout the year.

COMMUNICATION

With teachers

The first point of contact for parents/carers concerning day to day issues at school should be your child's Pastoral Teacher.

Consistent and clear communication with teachers is vital for the passing on of relevant information and details that assists us in meeting the needs of your child each day here at school. Any change to routine, medication, family circumstances, health or the well being of your child should be communicated with your child's teacher as soon as possible. Communication may be through the student diary, via email or via telephone. In 2013 each class will also have an electronic "class blog" that parentst/carers will have access to for updates on what has and is occurring in your child's class.

Individual Class Blogs

Every class at Mater Dei has an individual class blog which is updated by teachers at least twice a week. At the beginning of the year, parents and carers are given their child's class password to access the class blog. The class blog contains information and photos of what activities the students have been involved in that week, as well reminders and general messages about upcoming events.

School Newsletter

The fortnightly Mater Dei School Newsletter is distributed to students' parents/carers every second Friday. The Newsletter may also be received via email once Administration has received your email address. Special flyers are forwarded with the Newsletter and via email.

Mater Dei Website

The Mater Dei website ensures extended communication with all members of the Mater Dei community and those seeking information about the Organisation, its programs and facilities. The website is updated weekly. The Mater Dei School Newsletter and additional flyers are added to the Mater Dei website www.materdei.org.au. Many important Mater Dei school policies may be accessed on the school website.

SMS Alert/Reminder

Mater Dei also has in place an SMS Alert/Reminder for staff, parents/carers and taxi drivers which is a means of communicating appropriate information to relevant personnel. In no way does this system replace our usual means of communication with staff such as communication/staff meetings, correspondence etc or with parents/carers such as the student diaries, newsletters and telephone calls.

Mater Dei Matters

On a Term basis, "Mater Dei Matters" is published and distributed to parents/carers and members of the local and wider community. This publication is comprised of reports and information from all Program Areas at Mater Dei.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Upon commencement of employment, all members of Mater Dei agree to respect the confidentiality of information and documents which he/she has access to in the course of, or arising from, their employment.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- information about the former, current and future students of Mater Dei
- students' names and addresses
- computer data bases and computer software, and
- all other information obtained from, or in the course of staff members' employment with Mater Dei that is, by its nature, confidential.

Mater Dei members of staff will at all times, respect the Organisation's policy of confidentiality, that includes the following practices:

- only information that is deemed relevant to providing effective programming will be gathered
- all information pertaining to a student will be kept in a locked file both at the Residence and at the school
- copies of information not written by Mater Dei staff may only be released with written permission from the author
- students are able to receive personal mail and to have private telephone conversations and meetings with family, friends etc at the Residences
- students/families may see their own Student File on request, and
- staff sign a confidentiality agreement upon commencement of employment.

COUNSELLING SERVICE

An important part of our supportive Pastoral Care Program for students and staff is the new appointment of our School Counsellor, Mrs Caroline Ooi. Caroline will be available for students and their families Monday to Wednesdays each week. Family support and behaviour intervention are two areas of focus as well as a continuation of our small group work sessions for students. The position replaces the previous arrangement that Mater Dei had with CatholicCare, which ceased at the end of 2013. Referrals can be made to the School Counsellor by either staff or parents.

DIARIES

All students are issued with a Mater Dei school diary at the beginning of each year. This diary is used as a daily communication tool between parents/carers and the school for passing on any relevant information that has occurred at school during that day or at home that morning or previous evening.

FIRST AID

If a student arrives at school unwell or becomes unwell and basic care does not see improvement, parents/ carers are contacted by a member of the First Aid Team to collect their son/daughter. If the parents/carers are unavailable or are unable to come to school directly, then the emergency contact is informed and suitable arrangements are made by a member of the School Executive to care for the student until they are picked up from Mater Dei School. A comprehensive First Aid Policy is available on our school website.

First Aid Team

All members of the Mater Dei First Aid Team are First Aid trained with current qualifications. The Mater Dei First Aid Team comprises of:

Mrs Kerrie Borthwick (Registered Nurse); Mrs Leigh Hough (Teacher's Assistant); Mrs Helen Jacob (Teacher's Assistant); Mrs Donna Morrison (Teacher's Assistant) and Mrs Sue Neal (Teacher's Assistant).

HEADLICE

Parents/carers will be contacted to collect their child straight away from school if any evidence of live OR dead head lice OR head lice eggs are found in student's hair. Please refer to the Mater Dei First Aid Policy for more details.

HOMEWORK

The Mater Dei School day is carefully planned to ensure that all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are relevantly time tabled, taught, assessed and evaluated. As students experience a very busy day, Mater Dei School has a "No Homework Policy" and does not send homework home with students however home reading based on the student's individual needs is encouraged.

INCLUSION PROGRAM

Inclusive Schooling Program

A new model of inclusion was developed following an evaluation that was completed in 2009. This new model includes all students in a Mater Dei primary class attending a local primary session together for a specified session or activity.

Opportunities for Secondary students extend to attending regular sporting sessions and events with other local Catholic High Schools.

Community Access

All Mater Dei classes are encouraged to undertake community access for students where it is relevant to outcomes addressed in class programs and whereupon Mater Dei vehicles are available and appropriate risk assessments have been completed. It may be the case on occasions that following the risk assessment, a student may not participate in a particular community access visit. This will usually be the result of a risk assessment that indicates that either the student, other students, members of staff or members of the public may be at risk of some harm by the student participating in that specific community access visit. Community Access visits are a necessary component of the curriculum at Mater Dei. These visits enhance the Life Skills programs of study by providing opportunities to visit local community sites (*for example, but not limited to, the post office, supermarkets, museums, police stations, tourist information centres, parks, Central Business Districts, shopping centres, medical clinics and hospitals, and other relevant facilities*).

Students will apply the skills they have learned during class time, such as ordering goods, following maps, asking for help, working with budgets and timetables, and so on.

Visits will occur using Mater Dei Vehicle/s throughout 2014, Terms 1 – 4, during normal lesson times, where relevant within the class program. Students will be under the supervision of Mater Dei staff at all times.

Structured Work Placement Program (SWP)

All students in the post-compulsory Years 11 and 12 participate in the Structured Work Placement Program both in school and in the wider community. The skills developed during this regular work placement will be recognised as part of the student's portfolio of life on leaving Mater Dei School. Ongoing assessments address the issues of work skills, attitudes and self-esteem as well as interpersonal, leisure, recreational, decision-making and problem-solving skills.

INDIVIDUAL PLANS (IPs)

An Individual Plan (IP) is written for each student from Kindergarten to Year 12 and involves a collaborative process with the student, parents, carers, Pastoral Teacher and advocates directly concerned, to meet and determine relevant, achievable outcomes for the student to work towards during the following twelve months. The IP is a written plan of action specifying agreed priority outcomes for the subsequent year and its aim is to provide consistent support, education and training across all areas of the student's life.

A Parent – Teacher Interview night will take place towards the end of Term One to discuss student progress and goals over five areas (Curriculum, Communication, Mobility, Safety, Social Skills and Personal Care) which will inform the Mid-Year Individual Planning Report that will be sent home towards the end of Term Two. A second Parent - Teacher Interview Night will take place early Term Four to evaluate current student goals and prioritise new ones in the areas of Curriculum, Communication, Mobility, Safety, Social Skills and Personal Care for the remainder of the year and into the following year. This will inform the End of Year Individual Planning Report that will be sent home towards the end of Term Four.

MEDICATION

In Term 4 2013 Mater Dei implemented a comprehensive Medication Policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. A copy of the Mater Dei Medication Policy can be found on the School Website. If a student is required to have Medication administered at school the parent/carer must notify Kerrie Borthwick, our Registered Nurse, so that a Medication Pack can be sent home. This package contains a hard copy of the Medication Policy as well as all paperwork requiring completion before medication may be sent to school and subsequently administered. Medication will only be administered to a student if a Medication Schedule completed by a Medical Practitioner has been forwarded to the school and the medication is accompanied by a Tracking Form (Annexure C) and a completed Annexure D, E OR F is inside a labeled plastic bag with the medication.

Parents/carers must hand the labeled plastic bag and Tracking Form directly to the Teacher Assistant on morning parent drop-off duty, or to the Taxi Driver who will forward it in their relevant taxi collection bag to the Registered Nurse or First Aid Officer on Taxi duty. The Teacher Assistant will immediately hand the medication to the Registered Nurse (RN) or First Aid Officer on Duty.

Medication will NOT be administered without these procedures being followed correctly.

All medication is stored in a locked cabinet in the First Aid Room and may only be administered by the RN or First Aid Officer on Duty at specified times during the day.

Medication will be returned home each day in a labeled plastic bag together with the Tracking Form.

Please refer to the Mater Dei School Medication Policy on our school website for further information regarding implementation.

MOBILE PHONES, IPODS, DS COMPUTER CONSOLES, GAMEBOYS ETC

No student is allowed to use these items whilst at school. Students are asked to check these items in at reception once they arrive at school and pick them up before taxi time in the afternoon. This is to ensure that these items stay safe and are not lost, broken or stolen. **We strongly encourage students to leave these items at home when and where possible.**

PARENTS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

The P & F Association holds its meetings at school on the first Monday of every month at 7pm. The P & F supports the school in its educational and Faith Mission. The Principal attends each meeting. The P & F also has a Country Fair Committee that coordinates the Mater Dei Country Fair each year in October. Notices from the P & F occur regularly through the school newsletter and via the Mater Dei website. All are welcome to the Annual General Meeting that takes place on the first Monday in March at 7pm each year.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Parents and carers are advised that often photos are taken of students during class or school events that may be used on the Mater Dei website, school newsletter or in publications such as Mater Dei Matters and local newspapers. Student work samples may also appear on the afore mentioned platforms.

If, for any reason, you do not want photographs of your child used or their work published on a website or in a publication, you must notify the Assistant Principal in writing.

POST SCHOOL PROGRAM (PSP) FUNDING

Graduating Year 12 students are eligible to make application for Post School Program Funding in Year 12. PSP funding is provided by the Department of Ageing, Disability & Homecare (ADHC) and provides ongoing training for graduating students for two or more years after they leave school. A Post School Program Information Night is held at the beginning of Term Two each year to explain this funding and the Assistant Principal and Secondary Coordinator facilitates the application process with each Year 12 student and his/her parents, carers and advocates. Students in Years 12, 11 and 10 and their parents/carers are invited and strongly encouraged to attend this very important Information.

PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENTS

It is compulsory for all students with additional and special needs in New South Wales schools ie Department of Education, Catholic Education and Congregational Schools (such as Mater Dei) to have a current Psychometric Assessment completed to comply with each student's enrolment in these particular schools.

This means that students who are enrolled at Mater Dei will need to have a new Psychometric Assessment every three years until they are 16 years and 11 months when their latest assessment remains current. Current arrangements are such that Mater Dei will arrange for an assessment for funding purposes only by Deborah Davies from Southern Highlands Psychological Services (Registered Psychologist #PS0074975) in the month that a student's assessment is due for \$200. Mater Dei School will Invoice families once this assessment has been completed and the results have been written into a report. We will forward a copy of your child's assessment to you as soon as we receive it from Southern Highlands Psychological Services (approximately two weeks after the assessment is facilitated).

If parents/carers require a more detailed service for their child's psychometric assessment, then families may make their own enquiries with other psychologists and forward the results of their child's assessment *no later than the month the student's assessment is due.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mater Dei School's Religious Education Program underpins all teaching and learning at Mater Dei and we celebrate important occasions in the Church calendar with Masses and Liturgies including our annual Opening Mass, Mothers Day Mass, Feast Day Mass, Residential Mass and End of Year Mass. Each class grouping is involved in a Religious Education Program on a daily basis with prayer, spirituality and Bible stories incorporated into the students' teaching and learning. We also prepare students for their First Eucharist and Confirmation in alternate years. A Sacramental Program will run this year in 2014.

SATELLITE CLASS

In our final Year 11/12 program, we also offer the Satellite Class to some students who access a mainstream program at John Therry Catholic High School on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday each week whilst attending Mater Dei on Monday and Tuesday each week. Students wear a John Therry High School uniform and use a John Therry High School Communication Diary on both school campuses. The Mater Dei Satellite Class Teacher remains with the class for each session at Mater Dei and also for each session at John Therry, where the Satellite Class remains as a discrete class from other Year 11 and 12 classes. Specialist John Therry teaching staff take the class for specialist lessons such as Art, Music, and Cooking where students utilize all specialist classrooms and equipment. Whilst at John Therry High School, a full time Teacher's Assistant remains with the class for each session also.

Parents/carers are advised in Term Three of Year 10 if their child is a candidate for the Satellite Class the following year and are asked to attend an Information Session. Students are then prepared for transition

into the Satellite Class by attending a regular group counseling session with our school counselor and regular transition visits to John Therry High School throughout Term Four.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The School Calendar can be accessed on the Mater Dei website: www.materdei.org.au. Important School Dates for 2014 were sent home with the End of Year 2013 Reports for students. Term dates for 2014 are:

Term One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia Day Public Holiday – Monday 27th January • First Day of Term One – Monday 3rd February • Last Day of Term One – Friday 11th April • Easter – Fri 18th April to Mon 21st April (inclusive)
Term Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Day of Term Two – Monday 28th April • Pupil Free Day – Friday 30th May • June Long Weekend – Monday 9th June • Last Day of Term Two – Friday 20th June
Term Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Day of Term Three – Monday 14th July • Pupil Free Day – Friday 22nd August • Last Day of Term Three – Friday 19th September
Term Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October Long Weekend – Monday 6th October • First Day of Term Four – Tuesday 7th October • Pupil Free Day – Thursday 20th and Friday 21st November • Last Day for Year 11 – 12 – Friday 12th December • Last Day for Years K – 10 – Thursday 18th December

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Although Mater Dei is a school committed to meeting the educational needs of students with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities, we recognise that students often present with much wider needs than those indicated by this measure and may include communication and sensory impairment, mobility, emotional and behavioural problems. We welcome each student as an individual, each with his/her own strengths, stage of development, abilities and needs that will be recognized and honoured in a community that is supportive and committed to addressing individual strengths and frailities.

Kindergarten-Year 6

As there is no Board of Studies Life Skills Syllabus for students K to 6, Mater Dei is obligated to the same curriculum requirements that the Board of Studies stipulates for all Primary schools in New South Wales. Mater Dei teacher's make the appropriate curriculum adjustments and provides each student the required support to achieve individual outcomes.

Religious Education permeates all aspects of each student's teaching and learning programs. In addition, students in Kindergarten to Year 6 receive instruction in the following Key Learning Areas (KLAs)

- English
- Mathematics
- Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE)
- Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA)
- Personal Development, Health & Physical Education (PDHPE)
- Science & Technology

Life Skills Courses

The Board of Studies ACE (Assessment Certification Examination) manual records the following; *"For a small percentage of students with special education needs, in particular for those students with an intellectual disability, it may be determined that the regular outcomes and content in one or more Board syllabuses*

are not appropriate. For these students, the Life Skills outcomes and content in the syllabus can provide the basis for a relevant and meaningful program”ACE Manual. Section 3.2, p.17.

Because Mater Dei students are enrolled for the formal credential of the (Life Skills) Record of School Achievement and (Life Skills) Higher School Certificate, the Mater Dei curriculum and timetable **must** follow Board of Studies mandatory requirements. *“To be awarded the Record of School Achievement/Higher School Certificate, students undertaking one or more courses based on Life Skills outcomes and content must meet mandatory curriculum requirements in each key learning area (KLA)”*. ACE Manual. Section 3.3, p.18.

All Mater Dei students are able to access the Life Skills outcomes and content. As quoted from the ACE Manual above, Life Skills courses are written specifically with the needs of students with an intellectual disability in mind. Evidence of achievement of outcomes can be **based on ongoing observations** during teaching and learning or from assessment tasks specifically designed to assess achievement at particular points in the course of study. **Students may require support to achieve Life Skills outcomes.**

Year 7-10

Students in Years 7 to 10 receive instruction in Religious Education as well as the following Key Learning Areas (KLAs) as per BOS Mandatory requirements:

Stage 4 (Life Skills)	Stage 5 (Life Skills)
English	English
Mathematics	Mathematics
Science	Science
History	Australian History
Geography	Australian Geography
PDHPE	PDHPE
Mandatory TAS	Food Technology
Visual Arts/Music (12 months each)	Creative Arts (Dance, Music or Visual Arts)
LOTE	

Students in Year 10 will receive a Record of School Achievement listing all courses that have been completed and a School Profile describing the student’s achievements.

Year 11 and 12

Students in Years 11 and 12 receive instruction in Religious Education as well as the following Key Learning Areas (KLAs):

Stage 6 Satellite Class	Stage 6 Mater Dei Class
English	English
Mathematics	Mathematics
Work & Community	Work & Community
Creative Arts - Music	Creative Arts – Visual Arts
Creative Arts – Visual Arts	Creative Arts – Music
PDHPE	PDHPE
TAS – Food Technology	TAS – Food Technology
VET – Business Services	

Students in Year 11 will undertake the Year 11 Preliminary Life Skills Course then progress to the Year 12 Higher School Certificate Life Skills Course. Students in Year 12 will receive a Higher School Certificate Testamur, a Year 12 Record of Achievement from the Board of Studies and a School Profile describing the student’s achievements.

SCHOOL FEES

As per the Enrolment Application, enrolment carries an obligation to pay ALL required school fees and levies. School fee statements are sent to parents/carers at the beginning of Terms 1, 2 and 3. Payments can be made in full or part using the following methods: BPAY, Direct Debit, Cash or Cheque/Money Order. Parents/carers may contact Mrs Lisa Gruar (Administration - Payroll, student fees) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays to discuss payment options of school fees. School fees do not include retreats or excursions.

If for any reason parents/carers experience financial difficulty in meeting school fee commitments, they should contact Mrs Lisa Gruar or the CEO/Principal Mr Tony Fitzgerald immediately to advise of financial difficulty and discuss a payment option.

For safety and security reasons we strongly recommend that a large amount of cash is not brought to the school by students.

SCHOOL HOURS

School commences:	9:00am
Supervised Eating:	10:30am to 10:45am
Recess:	10:45am to 11:15am
Supervised Eating:	12:45pm to 1:00pm
Lunch:	1:00pm to 1:30pm
School finishes:	3:00pm

Supervision is provided for students from 8:45am to 3:15pm. Mater Dei operates without school bells.

Late arrival to school

It is important that students are punctual for class. Arriving late in the morning may cause considerable disruption to classroom routines. Any student who arrives after 9:00am must be signed in by a parent/carer at Reception. Parents/carers are asked not to escort their child to class, as a staff member will organise for your child to get to class safely.

Early dismissal from school

Any parent/carer who wish to take their child out of school at any time during the day need to complete the Early Departure notification at Reception and wait while their child is brought from class. No child is to leave the school premises prior to 3:00pm without authorization from the school office.

SCHOOL RULES

The Mater Dei School rules are fair, simple, enforceable, positively stated and owned. All rules are based on key areas that include safety, treatment, learning, peace, stewardship and communication.

The Mater Dei School Rules are:

1. I am kind.
2. I am safe.
3. I am respectful.
4. I am a good learner.

SMOKING POLICY

No smoking is permitted in the school buildings or grounds.

SPORT PROGRAM

In 2014, sport sessions will take place as following:

- Tuesdays 1:30pm to 2:30pm - All Secondary students
- Wednesdays 1:30pm to 2:30pm - All Infants and Primary students.

All secondary students will have the opportunity to participate in dance/aerobics, yoga, team sports, cross training rotations throughout the year. All infants and primary students will have the opportunity to participate in dance/aerobics, yoga and team sport rotations throughout the year. Students will remain in the same sport for one complete rotation. The school Sports Program costs \$75 a year and this year will be added on to each student's schedule of fees for the year.

Students are to wear their school sports uniform on their designated sports day, including hats.

All students are expected to participate every week in our Sport Program unless medical reasons prevent them from doing so. Times when students cannot participate, should be covered by a note from parents and carers and given to your child's Pastoral Teacher via the school diary.

SUN PROTECTION

Mater Dei strongly enforce rules such as "no hat, play in the shade" with all students. Parents/carers are asked to send a school hat each day in your child's school bag for them to wear at meal breaks, sport sessions and community access. Families are also asked to apply sunscreen to their child prior to leaving home each morning. Sunscreen is available at school for re-application where necessary during the day, however students are asked to re-apply sunscreen themselves whilst being closely monitored by staff.

SWIMMING PROGRAM

Our Swimming Program is part of our student's sport, physical education and special focus programs. Our intensive learn-to swim and water safety programs also make up part of the indicative hours required by the Board of Studies for PDHPE for students. The program is run by qualified AUSTSWIM instructors, accompanied by class teachers and teacher's assistants in our Mater Dei Swimming Pool. All students except Kindergarten, have swimming classes weekly either for one semester or for all year, depending on timetabling.

On the day of swimming, students must bring their swimming gear in a separate bag with every item clearly labeled with your child's name. Swimming gear should include swimming costume, towel, comb or brush, thongs, plastic bag for wet gear and goggles if needed.

All students are expected to participate every week in our Swimming Program unless for one of the following reasons: Ear or nose infection, grommets or perforated ear drums, cuts or abrasions, continence issues, feminine hygiene issues.

A note or phone call from parents is required on the occasion that your child may not swim. As this activity makes up part of the indicative hours required by the Board of Studies for PDHPE, it is essential that unless for those reasons above (and other medical reasons) ALL STUDENTS in good health must regularly participate in this program. Each student will be notified at the beginning of each year when their swimming day will be.

TECHNOLOGY

Students and staff at Mater Dei have access to an ever growing list of technology resources including lap tops, interactive whiteboards, IPADS and the Internet. Technology is a powerful resource for learning, as well as an efficient means of communication whose benefits exceed any disadvantages. Acceptable use of these resources is monitored at all times, with particular attention to security arrangements for both staff and students.

THERAPY SESSIONS

If your child accesses speech or occupational therapy and you would like them to receive these services during school time, we can facilitate this by providing a therapy space at school during school hours. Please have your therapist contact the school to make arrangements.

TRANSPORT TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Parent pick-up and drop-off

When parents/carers bring their child into school between 8:45am and 9:15am, we ask that you "kiss and drop" your child at the chapel doors at the other end of the school. Parents will need to veer to the left at the end of the school driveway when approaching the school and follow the road to Wivenhoe and the Chapel. Mater Dei staff will be available each morning from 8:45am to 9:15am and each afternoon from 2:55pm to 3:15pm to direct parents and to help students alight two cars at a time. Students are not to get out of cars or get into cars unless directed by Mater Dei staff. For the safety of all, please follow the directions of the Mater Dei staff present. Parents will still be asked to sign their child in and out of school each morning and afternoon at the designated "kiss and drop".

After 9:15am for drop-off in the morning and after 3:15pm for pick up in the afternoons, students will need to be signed in or out of school via the school reception.

Student Special Transport Scheme (SSTS)

If you are unable to provide or arrange transport to school for your child, transport services may be available from the Student Special Transport Scheme (SSTS). The scheme provides transport to eligible students with a disability. Our Administration & Business Manager, Ms Anne Lauder, is able to provide current details regarding this service and assist with your application.

Students who are successful in their application for the SSTS are transported to and from school on what Mater Dei call "taxis". Students arrive at school via taxis that are named different colours. Teacher's Assistants receive the students at the "taxi ramp" and ensure students make their way safely to class. In the afternoon, students stay in their classrooms with their Pastoral Teachers and Teacher Assistants until their colour taxi is called via the intercom. Students move to the taxi ramp where they are supervised to safely board the appropriate taxi.

Change of Routine

Parents/carers are asked to notify the school either by phone, in person or writing if there is any change to the normal routine for your child leaving school. If we do not receive notification the child will be sent home by the usual method. Families who use the SSTS for transport to and from school, are also solely responsible for contacting the taxi driver in regards to any change of routine for transport.



UNIFORM GUIDELINES 2014

At Mater Dei we believe that students should be encouraged to wear an appropriately designed school uniform at all times. We believe that the specified uniform should be worn in full by all students. No Mater Dei student will be discriminated against because of parent/carer financial stress or because of particular physical constraints as a result of their disability. In these circumstances parents/carers should contact the Assistant Principal or CEO/Principal.

The following uniform and grooming guidelines are applicable for all students K to 12 from the commencement of 2014. **The expectation is that all students will need to be in the complete, specified new Mater Dei uniform for school and sport, supplied by Yeronga School Uniforms.** This follows a lengthy consultation process with parents and carers and a phase period of the last two years. Satellite students are the exception to the guidelines only as they adhere to the John Therry High School uniform and grooming guidelines.

Access to a comprehensive Uniform Policy is also available on our school website.

From February 2014 onwards, the following is the required summer (Term 1 and 4), winter (Term 2 and 3) and sports uniform:

Boys Summer Uniform (Term 1 & 4)	Boys Winter Uniform (Term 2 & 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mater Dei white summer over shirt Grey Mater Dei regulation shorts (108's) Regulation Mater Dei hat Plain grey ankle socks Plain black leather school shoes Mater Dei school bag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mater Dei white long sleeved collared shirt Grey Mater Dei regulation trousers (134's) Mater Dei navy jumper Mater Dei navy unisex blazer (Yr 7 to 12 only) Mater Dei navy microfiber unisex tracksuit jacket (Yr K to 6 only) Mater Dei tie Regulation Mater Dei hat Plain grey ankle socks Plain black leather school shoes Mater Dei school bag
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Yrs K-6</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Yrs 7-12</p> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Yrs K-6</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Yrs 7-12</p> </div> </div>

Girls Summer Uniform (Term 1 & 4)	Girls Winter Uniform (Term 2 & 3)
--	--

- Mater Dei summer white/gold/navy school dress
- Plain white ankle socks
- Plain black leather school shoes
- Navy or white ribbons in hair
- Regulation Mater Dei hat



Yrs K-6



Yrs 7-12

- Mater Dei white Peter Pan long sleeved shirt
- Mater Dei grey/navy check winter tunic
- Mater Dei navy jumper
- Mater Dei navy unisex blazer (Yr 7 to 12 only)
- Mater Dei navy microfiber unisex tracksuit jacket (Yr K to 6 only)
- Mater Dei tie
- Regulation Mater Dei hat
- Navy stockings or navy long socks
- Plain black leather school shoes
- Mater Dei school bag



Yrs K-6



Yrs 7-12

Boys and Girls Sport Uniform

- Mater Dei navy microfiber unisex track pants and jacket
- Mater Dei navy microfiber unisex sports shorts
- Mater Dei white and navy unisex summer polo shirt
- Plain white sport socks
- Regulation Mater Dei hat



Yrs K-12 Summer



Yrs K-12 Winter

Our School uniform identifies us as a community. The way our uniform is worn reflects who we are as a community and how much we value our School. In addition to wearing the correct items of clothing students are encouraged to adhere to the following guidelines for grooming.

Grooming Guidelines for Girls:

- Hair should be clean, neat & tidy.
- Hair should be a natural colour.
- Excess use of product (mousse, gels and sprays) is discouraged.
- Hair styles should be moderate, avoiding extremes, so as not to draw attention or cause comment.
- Girls shoulder length hair needs to be fully tied back off the face and eyes.
- Only school coloured hair accessories are to be worn.
- No Jewellery except:
 - Watch
 - one set of plain, silver or gold, studs or sleepers in the lower ear lobe
 - a neck chain with a religious symbol is permitted to be worn under the uniform
- No facial or other visible piercings are to be worn.
- Make-up is not to be worn.
- Fingernails are to be natural and of an acceptable length. Nail polish is not to be worn.
- The school hat must be worn outside at all times.

Grooming Guidelines for Boys:

- Hair should be clean, neat & tidy.
- Hair should be a natural colour.
- Excess use of product (mousse, gels and sprays) is discouraged.
- Hair styles should be moderate, avoiding extremes, so as not to draw attention or cause comment.
- The following hairstyles are not acceptable:
 - Long hair below the collar
 - Undercuts
 - Sculptured or shaved designs
 - Hair, which hangs across the face
- Boys are encouraged to be clean shaven.
- No earrings or other visible piercings to be worn.
- No Jewellery except:
 - Watch
 - A neck chain with a religious symbol is permitted to be worn under the uniform
- The school hat must be worn outside at all times.

Guidelines for Grooming and Uniform Infringements

Parents and carers will be the first point of contact in circumstances where students present for school with uniform or grooming outside these guidelines. In circumstances where students present for school from the Living Skills Program the issue will be taken up with the Director of Services.

Actions that staff may take to rectify the infringement may include (but are not limited to):

- Rectifying breeches of grooming (eg. unkempt hair; hair not tied back; removal of nail polish or make-up etc.) upon a student's arrival at school.

- Confiscating the non-uniform item for the day with student's collecting it from their teacher at the end of the day to take home and not bring back to school again (eg. excess jewellery, extra piercings).
- Limiting a student's participation in community access activities or structured work placement that day (eg. inappropriate clothing for SWP, non Mater Dei new school uniform items – from beginning of 2014).
- A student remaining at home until the infringement is either rectified or modified (eg. an extreme hairstyle cut and colour).
- Establishing a mentoring program between a student and specific staff member for teaching, monitoring and rewarding of appropriate grooming skills (eg. a male staff member may mentor a male student in regards to shaving).

The Assistant Principal or CEO/Principal have the right to waver uniform requirements in special circumstances and will make all final decisions on matters relating to uniform and grooming.