SANTA MARIA COLLEGE PERTH

Terms of Reference G1.3

COLLEGE ADVISORY COUNCILS

1 Introduction

Mercy Education Limited (MEL) is an incorporated ministry of Mercy Ministry Companions (MMC). MMC is responsible for ensuring, as faithfully as Catherine McAuley and her sisters, that the Catholic identity, charism and spirituality of schools previously under the stewardship of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG), thrive into the future.

MMC delegates the responsibility of these thirteen colleges' governance to MEL. There are nine schools in Victoria, three in Western Australia and one in South Australia.

Santa Maria College is a college that is operated and governed by MEL.

2 Purpose

The MEL Board (the Board) has responsibility for the strategic direction and oversight of the operation and management of MEL colleges schools, including Santa Maria College. Clear lines of authority, reporting and delegation from the Board through the MEL Chief Executive Officer delegate the day-to-day operational management of Santa Maria College to its principal.

The College Advisory Council provides a crucial point of connection between the wider college community and college leaders. While the College Advisory Council does not have governance responsibility or decision-making authority, it supports the principal and college leadership and provides an important connection to the wider Catholic faith community including parish/es and the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The College Advisory Council's role, as determined by the Board through this Terms of Reference, supports the overall governance of Santa Maria College.

The Board, as the governing body of Santa Maria College, is responsible for the common good of Catholic education in all MEL Colleges and thus is ultimately responsible for making any decision about the establishment of a council and its arrangements.

3 Role and objectives

The College Advisory Council provides a forum for discussion and discernment, where parent voice and community perspective are available to inform and support the decisions made by the principal where students' wellbeing and outcomes are paramount.

It is important that College Advisory Council members understand that their primary role is to assist and advise on college matters to support the principal in their leadership role. College Advisory Councils do not have a legal identity and do not become involved in the day-to-day management of the college. The College Advisory Council must act within the parameters of this Terms of Reference.

The objectives of the College Advisory Council are to review and advise on the strategic direction and performance of the college and to support the college to achieve its purpose.

4 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the College Advisory Council are to:

4.1 Act as a consultative Council for the College and the Principal in the provision of Catholic education.

4.2 Promote the Mercy ethos and to ensure the charism is alive and central to all deliberations.

4.3 Assist the Principal in college policy making, including the formulation of foundational documents and those policies related to child safety and other workplace requirements.

4.4 Engage in discussion with the Principal about the annual school budget and other financial matters.

4.5 Give such practical support to the College as required in matters such as capital development, the maintenance of College facilities and equipment.

4.6 Take part in the preparation and implementation of strategic planning for the future operations of the College.

4.7 Facilitate the welcome of parents and students new to the College.

4.8 Develop strategies for the local promotion of Catholic education.

4.9 Provide advice according to members' expertise.

5 Specific delegations

The College Advisory Council is not a governing body and has no canon, civil law or corporate status. The College Advisory Council has no delegated authority from the Board of MEL.

6 Terms of reference

6.1 Accountability

- The College Advisory Council is commissioned by and responsible to the Principal of the College.
- The College Advisory Council has no decision-making authority.

6.2 Child Safety and Wellbeing

Adherence to MEL and the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing requirements must be at the forefront of any appointment process. As a condition of appointment, council members must have a Working with Children Check, and sign and comply with MEL's *Code of Conduct* which includes child safety expectations and requirements.

6.3 Conflict of interest

MEL is committed to building College Advisory Councils that are free from fraud or corruption, or the perception of fraud or corruption. Conflict of interest arises where a councillor's duty to the school is affected by a personal (actual, potential or perceived) interest.

In such cases, the line between personal and professional conduct may become blurred and interfere with a councillor's capacity to provide advice and fulfil their responsibilities on the council. Conflicts of interest may arise, but do not need to present a problem to any College Advisory Council or MEL if they are openly and effectively managed.

The MEL *Conflict of Interest Policy* addresses the requirements for disclosure and management of conflicts of interest and extends to council members and all members of any committees of the council. It is a requirement of the role that council and committee members abide by and comply with this policy.

6.4 Appointment to the College Advisory Council

6.4.1 All appointments to the College Advisory Council are made by the Principal

6.4.2 The Chair of the College Advisory Council will be elected by the members of the College Advisory Council

6.4.3 Council members will be appointed for three years at the end of which time membership will be reviewed, with a maximum of three (3) terms of three-year appointments. In special circumstances the Principal may re-appoint a member of the Council for a further period not exceeding 12 months.

6.4.4 The Council shall consist of no fewer than seven (7) and no more than twelve (12) members comprising the following:
- The Principal
- No fewer than six (6) and no more than eleven (11) persons appointed by the Principal, some of whom shall be parents of current students of the College.
- Any person who supports the mission and vision of the College is eligible to apply to be a member of the College Advisory Council.
- Variety of skill sets as outlined in a skills matrix, reviewed annually by the College Advisory Council

6.4.5 A person is eligible for election as a member of the College Advisory Council if they:
- give their signed consent to act as a member of the College Advisory Council
- are not ineligible to hold the position due to infringements of the Corporations Act, ACNC Act or are convicted of any offence involving fraud or dishonesty or any other serious offence which is punishable by imprisonment
- hold a current Working with Children Check unless exempted from this requirement by the relevant State law
- sign the MEL Code of Conduct

6.4.6 A person who is a member of the Council shall cease to be a member if they:
- cease to adhere to the eligibility requirements
- resign
- die
- become bankrupt or enters an arrangement with his or her creditors or assigns the benefit of his or her estate for the benefit of his or her creditors.
- by reason of physical or mental health the person is unable to perform his or her duties.
- are convicted of any offence involving fraud or dishonesty or any other serious offence which is punishable by imprisonment.
- are absent from three consecutive meetings of the Council without an apology.
- are removed as a member by the Principal, within his or her right, and after due consideration, no reason has to be given.

6.4.7 Staff Members
- The College Principal is the Council Secretary of the College Advisory Council. The College Principal has voting rights.
- The Business Manager has no voting rights
- Other College Leadership members as required. Other College Leadership members have no voting rights.
- At the Principal's discretion, members of the school staff may be invited from time to time to attend meetings depending on the content of the agenda. Invited school staff members do not have voting rights.
- A Minute Secretary may attend the meetings and assist the Principal in administrative arrangements for the College Advisory Council operations. The Minute Secretary has no vote as their role is purely administrative. Alternatively, a secretary is appointed by the Council from among its members at the first meeting of the Council after the end of the term of the previous secretary. If appointed from

within the ranks of the Council, the secretary does not have an additional vote as well as their ordinary vote on the Council.

6.5 Quorum

A quorum for any meeting will be a simple majority of the members (more than 50%).

6.6 Frequency of Meetings:

The College Advisory Council will convene at least six meetings each year. Further or ad hoc meetings may be scheduled by the Principal.

6.7 Procedures for Meeting

6.7.1 The College Advisory Council will use its best endeavours to facilitate electronic meetings to maximise participation and scope of membership.

6.7.2 The Principal shall give prior written notice of each meeting to the Council members specifying the date, time and place of the meeting. At least one week in advance of an upcoming meeting, the Principal shall provide for all members, an agenda for the meeting, a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting and all relevant papers. The agenda shall be prepared by the Principal in consultation with the Chair of the College Advisory Council.

6.7.3 "DRAFT" minutes of the meeting will be supplied to the College Advisory Council Chair within seven days of the meeting. After correction or confirmation by the College Advisory Council Chair these minutes will be marked as "REVIEWED".

6.7.4 The "REVIEWED" minutes of the meeting will be made available for distribution to the Chief Executive and Board of Mercy Education Limited.

6.7.5 The "REVIEWED" minutes will be considered at the following meeting of the Council and, upon approval, will become "FINAL".

6.7.6 The College Advisory Council will ensure that all information of a confidential and sensitive nature is managed in an appropriate manner.

6.7.7 The College Advisory Council is not remunerated and is not authorised to incur expenditure without the approval of the Principal.

6.8 Committees of the College Advisory Council

6.8.1 The College Advisory Council shall maintain a separate Finance Committee which will meet at least four times each year.

6.8.2 The Chair of the Finance Committee shall be a member of the College Advisory Council and shall be appointed to the role of Committee Chair by the College Advisory Council.

6.8.3 The Finance Committee should include at least two members who are not school staff members and who have current employment, previous experience or formal qualifications in accounting and business.

6.8.4 The college Business Manager shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance committee.

6.8.5 The Finance Committee is responsible for the oversight of and summary reporting to College Advisory Council of the following aspects of school finances:

- To regularly monitor and review the financial performance of the College
- To make recommendations to the College Advisory Council on policy matters relating to finance or capital works.
- To consider and recommend to the College Advisory Council the annual budget
- To advise the Principal on matters relating to financial controls, accounting standards, practices and procedures
- To provide financial advice to the College Advisory Council on major capital projects and proposals for new projects put forward

- To address other matters that may be referred to the Committee by the College Advisory Council from time-to-time

6.9 Additional Committees

6.9.1 The College Advisory Council may elect to have a Capital Planning / Building & Facilities group which is a committee of the College Advisory Council or a committee of the Finance Committee.

6.9.2 The College Advisory Council may implement other committees as agreed on a temporary or permanent basis e.g., Strategic Planning, Wellbeing, Marketing and Communication, Policy

6.9.3 Where additional committees are established, the Chair of such committees will be a member of the College Advisory Council

7 Review History

June 2026 – Logo and layout updated to comply with new policy framework. No content substantively changed.

Version	Approval Date	Next Review	Subject Matter Expert	Exec Team Sponsor	Approver
1.0	Jan 2012			MEL Boad	MEL Board
2.0	Dec 2022	Dec 2025		MEL Executive	MEL Board
2.1	June 2026	Aug 2026			MEL Board
3.0	Aug 2026	Aug 2029	Company Secretary	Chief Executive Officer	MEL Board