SANTA MARIA COLLEGE PERTH

Operational Instruction G1.3

College Advisory Councils

1.0 Introduction

Mercy Education Limited (MEL) acknowledges the importance of College Advisory Councils in its colleges. The College Advisory Council provides a crucial point of connection between the wider College community and College leaders. Members of the College Advisory Council are valued for their wisdom and the contribution they make to the functioning of the College and work together to ensure that the Mercy ethos underpins the life of the College.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of these Operational Instructions is to provide guidance on the roles and responsibilities of individuals appointed as members of Mercy Education College Advisory Councils.

3.0 College Advisory Councils

3.1 Each MEL College is required to appoint a College Advisory Council. The College Advisory Council is not a governing body and has no canon law, civil law or corporate status. Members of the College Advisory Council do not exercise governance responsibilities or statutory obligations in relation to the operation of a College.

3.2 The purpose of a College Advisory Council is to:

(a) Act as a consultative council for the Principal and the College in the provision of Catholic education.

(b) Promote the Mercy ethos and to ensure the charism is alive and central to all deliberations.

(c) Assist the Principal in school policy making, including the formulation of foundational documents and those policies related to child safety and other workplace requirements.

(d) Engage in discussion with the Principal about the annual school budget and other financial matters.

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

(f) Take part in the preparation and implementation of strategic planning for the future operations of the College.

(g) Facilitate the welcome of parents and students who are new to the College.

(h) Develop strategies for the local promotion of Catholic education.

(i) Provide advice according to members' expertise.

3.3 In addition, representatives of the College Advisory Council should be involved in the following matters:

- School review
- Master planning
- Senior Leadership Position Reviews
- Deputy Principal and Principal Appointment panels

3.4 The College Advisory Council should consist of no fewer than seven (7) and no more than (12) members, appointed by the College Principal. When appointing members to the College Advisory Council, the Principal must consider a balance of gender, cultural diversity and skill sets.

3.5 A skills matrix is to be maintained by the Principal, and reviewed annually by the College Advisory Council.

3.6 A formal letter of appointment is to be provided to each College Advisory Council member, outlining their terms of appointment, including a consent to act. Each member must return the signed consent to act. The letter of appointment should include the following documents:

- G1.3 College Advisory Council Terms of Reference
- G1.3 College Advisory Council Operational Instruction
- MEL Code of Conduct
- Mission, Vision and Values of Mercy Education
- College Strategic Plan
- MEL Policy G6.0 Conflict of Interest and Declaration Form
- MEL Policy G10.0 Child Safety & Wellbeing

3.7 All College Advisory Council positions are voluntary, and no remuneration is payable.

3.8 All College Advisory Council members are covered by the College's professional indemnity insurance, for work undertaken while discharging their duties.

3.9 A formal induction process is to be undertaken by the College when appointing new members to the College Advisory Council and ongoing training undertaken from time to time as required by the College or the MEL Board. Refer to Appendix A – Induction and Ongoing Formation

3.10 The operations of the College Advisory Council will be in accordance with the Mercy Education College Advisory Council Terms of Reference.

3.11 A sample agenda for College Advisory Council meetings is provided at Appendix B.

3.12 By the end of Term 1 each year, every MEL College must provide names and contact details of their CAC members to the Executive Assistant to the CEO, so CAC members can be added to relevant MEL National Office communications.

4.0 Implementation

This Operating Instruction is to be implemented across all MEL Colleges no later than the commencement of the 2027 academic year.

Once approved by the MEL Board, all Principals will be provided with this version of the Operating Instruction and supported by National Office staff to make any necessary changes to their current CAC membership and functioning in line with these requirements.

5.0 Related Documents

This Operational Instruction should be read in conjunction with the following:

MEL documents

- G2.1 Operational Instruction: College Strategic Plans
- G6.0 Policy: Conflict of Interest
- G8.0 Policy: Code of Conduct – Employees and Volunteers
- G10.0 Policy: Child Safety and Wellbeing
- College Child Safety Policy
- College Code of Conduct for employees and volunteers

6.0 Review History

August 2026 – major review of this Operational Instruction and accompanying Terms of Reference. Consultation included College Principals, MEL Executive and MEPCOM.

This Operational Instruction replaces two previous Operational Instructions – College Advisory Councils and College Advisory Council Form

Version	Date Approved	Next Review	Subject Matter Expert	Executive Sponsor	Approved
1.0	Dec 2022	Dec 2025	Company Secretary		MEL Executive
1.1	June 2026	Aug 2026	Company Secretary	CEO	CEO
2.0	Aug 2026	Aug 2027	Company Secretary	Chief Executive Officer	MEL Board

Operational Instruction G1.3

College Advisory Councils

APPENDIX A INDUCTION & ONGOING FORMATION

1 Purpose

In the capacity of support for the Mercy ethos of the College, the College Advisory Council (CAC) promotes the Mercy ethos and ensures the charism is alive and central to all deliberations.

During the period of appointment, each member of the Council is expected to participate in Mercy ethos programs provided by the College or by Mercy Education Ltd (MEL).

2 Induction for new members of College Advisory Councils

The following areas are to be covered over several meetings for new CACs and/or discussed individually with new CAC members. Whilst not all areas fall within the responsibilities of the CAC, it provides a broad overview of the operations of MEL and the College.

2.1 Mission, Vision, Values

MANDATORY

2.1.1 The College Mission, Vision, Values and those of MEL as the governing authority are to be presented and understood by members.

2.1.2 The CAC is to be familiar with the 'Charter as a Mercy School' and support the college to form their strategic planning in alignment with the Charter.

2.1.3 All members of the CAC must sign the MEL Code of Conduct Employees & Volunteers – College administration to maintain records.

2.1.4 CAC members will be invited to College events (provide more details as appropriate).

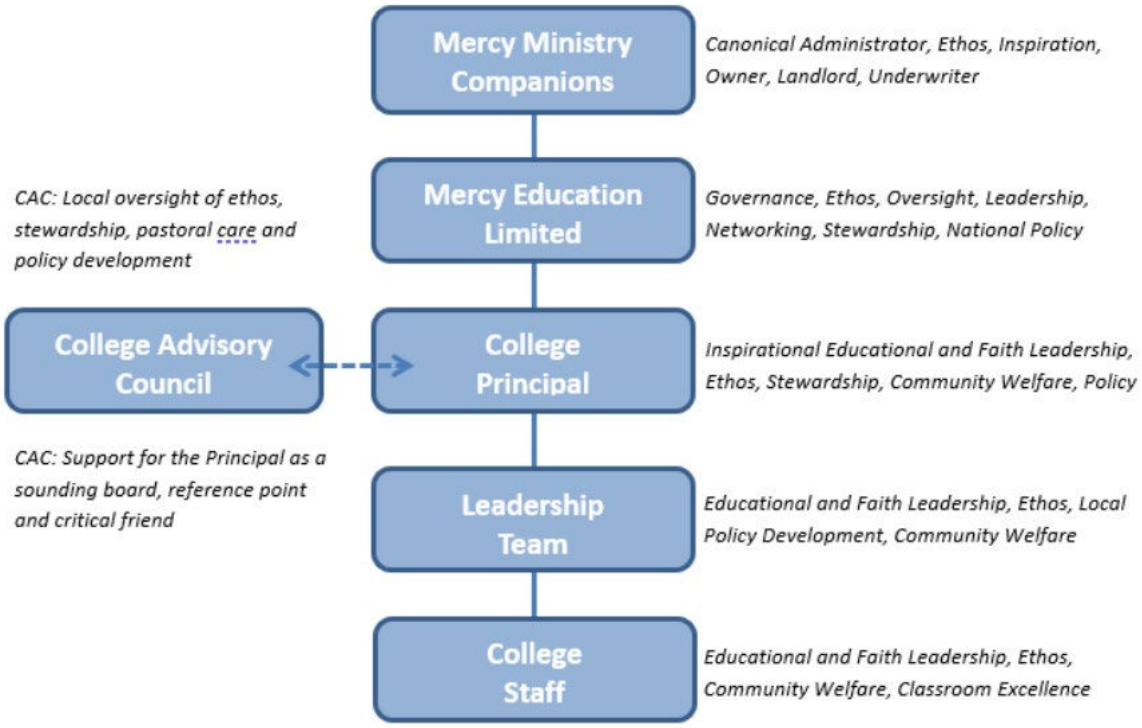
2.2 Governance

MANDATORY

2.2.1 Mercy Ministry Companions (MMC) is Mercy Education's formal Church entity, its canonical sponsor

- Detail the canonical sponsor's history as a Church entity including Mercy Education's canonical sponsorship previously under the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG)
- How did the sponsor start the mission and specifically this school?
- Outline the role of the Canonical authority and its relationship to the operations of the school – its leadership and the CAC
- List the reserve powers of the canonical authority

2.2.2 The civil governing authority of a Mercy Education school is Mercy Education Ltd. The company member of Mercy Education is Mercy Ministry Companions Ltd (MMCL)



2.2.3 Detail the scope of authority (advisory only) of the CAC

- Mercy Education CACs are appointed by the Principal, have no governing authority, are advisory in capacity, act under the MEL CAC Terms of Reference
- The Principal should utilise a skills matrix tool to identify CAC member breadth across necessary attributes
- An agreed recruitment process for succession planning and nominations to the CAC is to be documented

2.2.4 Outline the role responsibilities of the CAC members – individual and collective, including (refer to Section 3 of the Operational Instruction for full details):

- Promotion of ethos
- Policy Development
- Support for college leadership

2.2.5 CAC members must be familiar with the MEL Conflict of Interest Policy (G6.0) and complete their COI Declaration Form – Principal to maintain a Conflict Register for the CAC.

2.3 Child Safety and Wellbeing

MANDATORY

2.3.1 Outline the college's determination and MEL's requirements regarding child safety and wellbeing

2.3.2 All members of the CAC must hold a current, valid Working with Children Check, unless exempted from this requirement by the relevant State law. College administration to maintain records

2.3.3 *All members of the CAC must complete annual safeguarding training provided by MENO Child Safeguarding Officer at the commencement of Term 1.*

2.3.4 All members of the CAC must be informed of the reporting processes within the College and MEL if they have a concern about the safety and/or wellbeing of any student

2.3.5 No identifying or confidential information relating to individual incidents of child safety and wellbeing is to be shared with the CAC in order to protect the privacy and wellbeing of all involved.

2.4 Finance & Legal

MANDATORY

2.4.1 Strategic Planning involvement / approval

- The CAC is to support the college leadership team in the scoping, development, articulation and monitoring of the College Strategic Plan (refer also to G2.1 College Strategic Plans)

2.4.2 Fiduciary duties

- The CAC's role in the finances of the College is financial advisory only.

FOR INFORMATION

- Provide information about government funding and school private income source (i.e. fees)
- Outline school budget process– philosophy of construction, actual financial benchmarking of school against like schools, actual budget analysis
- Discuss costs of governance – levies, any other outgoings to support the Church, parish or Catholic education office
- Insurances and requirements for a school
- Capital Works capacity, including outline of procedures for capital works – refurbishments, new construction, heritage overlays, council and MEL/MMC/Diocesan permits/approval procedures

2.5 Risk & Compliance

MANDATORY

2.5.1 The risk and compliance involvement of the CAC is advisory only.

FOR INFORMATION

2.5.2 Note the College's risk register requirements

2.5.3 Outline Work, Health & Safety obligations, including insurance arrangements for worker's compensation

2.5.4 Provide information on College's human resources processes and child safety obligations on employees, volunteers and contractors

2.5.5 Present MEL's compliance register requirements

2.5.6 Describe processes for College to access legal support (ie: through MEL Legal & Risk Unit)

3 Ongoing Formation

Faith, life and ministry professional learning and spiritual formation is an important aspect of the College Advisory Council. This is an ongoing process, with support and focus provided at the College level as well as through opportunities provided by MEL.

3.1 College-based

3.1.1 A program of formation outlining the College's charism e.g. Mercy and other significant founder or patronal Saint formation is a key foundational program for all CAC members.

3.1.2 At least annually, the Principal/College leadership team will provide input to the CAC which supports members to deepen their faith and spiritual formation.

3.2 MEL

3.2.1 At least annually, MEL will provide formation opportunities for CAC members across the MEL College communities

APPENDIX B COLLEGE ADVISORY COUNCIL AGENDA (Sample)

1) Meeting Introduction

1.1. Prayer
1.2. Acknowledgement of Country
1.3. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies
1.4. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest
1.5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
1.6. Correspondence

2) Standing Agenda Items

2.1 Child Safety
2.2 Faith and Mission
2.3 Occupational Health & Safety
2.4 Policy or regulatory updates/consultation
2.5 Community engagement
2.6 Reports:
i. Principals Report
ii. Finance Report
iii. Buildings & Facilities Report
iv. Any other reports – e.g., Learning & Teaching, Student Wellbeing, Strategic Planning

3) Any other Business

4) Details of next meeting