



Merici College  
Information Handbook 2020

Wise Street  
BRADDON  
ACT 2612

Telephone: 6243 4100  
Facsimile: 6243 4199  
Email: [principal.merici@merici.act.edu.au](mailto:principal.merici@merici.act.edu.au)  
Website: [www.merici.act.edu.au](http://www.merici.act.edu.au)

Mrs Loretta Wholley  
Principal

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome! Merici College is named in honour of St Angela Merici, a famous educator during the Renaissance period. We are a Years 7–12 Catholic all-girls' college, situated in Braddon in the heart of Canberra.

Established in 1959 and known at that time as Canberra Catholic Girls' High School, we are dedicated to excellence in the education of young women. From 1983, the year of our Silver Jubilee, the school has been known as Merici College.

We are very proud to be the oldest established Catholic girls' secondary school in Canberra. Merici is a vibrant community committed to preparing confident and competent young women well equipped to contribute to the world beyond high school. We create innovative learning environments that meet the needs of individual students and inspire them to strive for the highest levels of personal achievement.

As a Catholic school, our central aim is to guide each individual towards full human development. We strive for each student to grow emotionally, socially, intellectually, spiritually and physically, supported by the principles of the Catholic faith. Merici is enriched by families from diverse Christian and other faith traditions.

We are a dynamic, welcoming and energetic community with a rich and varied curriculum and an outstanding system of pastoral care. Our Mission Statement is a lived reality within the College: 'Merici challenges you to love life, have hope, be faithful and build futures more wondrous than you dare to dream'. Our approach to all areas of college life – pastoral care, curriculum, service-learning, leadership and our co-curricular program – reflects our dedication to this vision. It is grounded in the scripture message of St Paul to the Corinthians of a true Christian community where 'faith, hope and love abide' (1 Cor 13:13).

We are a school at the forefront of technology, with a fully integrated Bring Your Own Device laptop program which is committed to enhancing learning through technology for all students. Our Principles of Powerful Learning are testament to our desire to ensure that teaching and learning at the College are based on the most recent educational research. We are an International Baccalaureate Candidate School (IB) and are on the journey to being recognised as an IB World School offering the Middle Years and Diploma Programme in 2020. We seek to work closely in partnership with students and their parents to maximise student performance and success in response to every student's ability level.

We are committed to innovation and continuous improvement. This, together with well-equipped facilities and a rigorous academic program in both the Junior (Years 7–9) and Senior (Years 10–12) school ensure that we are exceptionally well placed to guide students through their adolescent years into young adulthood.

In 2019 we began our 3-year strategic plan and continue with the refurbishment program. These are very exciting times at Merici and we look forward to accomplishing great things as we celebrate over 60 years of educating young women in Canberra.

Join us as we work together to support and challenge your daughter to develop her talents and share them generously with others.



Mrs Loretta Wholley  
Principal

## CATHOLIC ETHOS AND VALUES

Our aim is to guide our students towards full human development in an authentic Catholic community. As such, we are committed not only to academic excellence but to the holistic development of each student. We believe in the innate dignity of every person and seek to have all of our relationships reflect the love of God as witnessed through the person of Jesus Christ. As a community, we celebrate the spiritual liturgical life of the Catholic Church. Students are also called to bring our values of faith, hope and love to life through the Christian Service Learning Program.

### ST ANGELA MERICI

The College is named for St Angela Merici whose life provides inspiration to us in the way we structure our community and care for our students.

Angela Merici was born in Desenzano, Italy, in 1474. Her birthplace and the area where she worked for a major part of her life are in that section of northern Italy that can rightly be called the 'cradle of the Renaissance Movement'.

During the time of Angela, religious revolt rocked the Church; the Venetian Lombardy area was at war and family life was threatened. Inspired by Gospel challenges, Angela served the needs of the rich and poor alike. Those of prominent position sought her as their guide and their inspiration; to the lowly and the poor she brought help and comfort. Her love and sensitivity to human needs won her the title, 'Madre Angela', from the people of Brescia in Lombardy.

Angela was concerned about the lives of girls, as they were generally uneducated at that time, as well as the life of people in slums. After trips to many places including the Holy Land and Rome, in 1535 she, with others, founded the Order of Ursulines in Italy, named for its patron saint, Saint Ursula, a martyr.

Angela's spirituality is one that affirms and celebrates each individual person; we are all children of God and therefore precious. The individual should be nurtured and cared for in a supportive community that works for the good of all. St Angela is a model for us in her deep relationship with God, her practical love for others, her simplicity and her wisdom. In 2007, we celebrated the 200th anniversary of her canonisation as a saint.

*Angela was beatified in 1768 by Pope Clement XIII and canonised in 1807 by Pope Pius VII. Her major shrine can be found at the Church of Saint Afra, Brescia, Italy. Angela's feast day is observed on 27 January.*



## THE MERICI COLLEGE MISSION & VISION STATEMENT

MERICI CHALLENGES YOU TO  
LOVE LIFE, HAVE HOPE, BE FAITHFUL  
AND BUILD FUTURES MORE WONDROUS  
THAN YOU DARE TO DREAM

As a Catholic community aspiring for excellence, Merici College is inspired by our Catholic teachings:

"Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Philippians 4:8)

We are an innovative, progressive and caring learning community, committed to the well-being of our students and driven by our Catholic values. We work in partnership with parents to provide a nurturing and inclusive environment, which develops young women who can lead and have impact within their communities by showing respect for others, empathy, intercultural understanding and positive stewardship. In order to facilitate the ongoing spiritual, emotional, academic and social development of our young women, Merici College has a comprehensive Pastoral Care system based on Christian beliefs. We create a positive and inclusive learning environment that develops and challenges students who are compassionate, confident and active members of our global community. Our vision for each young woman is that she feels fully prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly globalised world where differences are valued and respected.

We take St Angela Merici as our guide and as such view each student as a unique individual with inherent dignity.

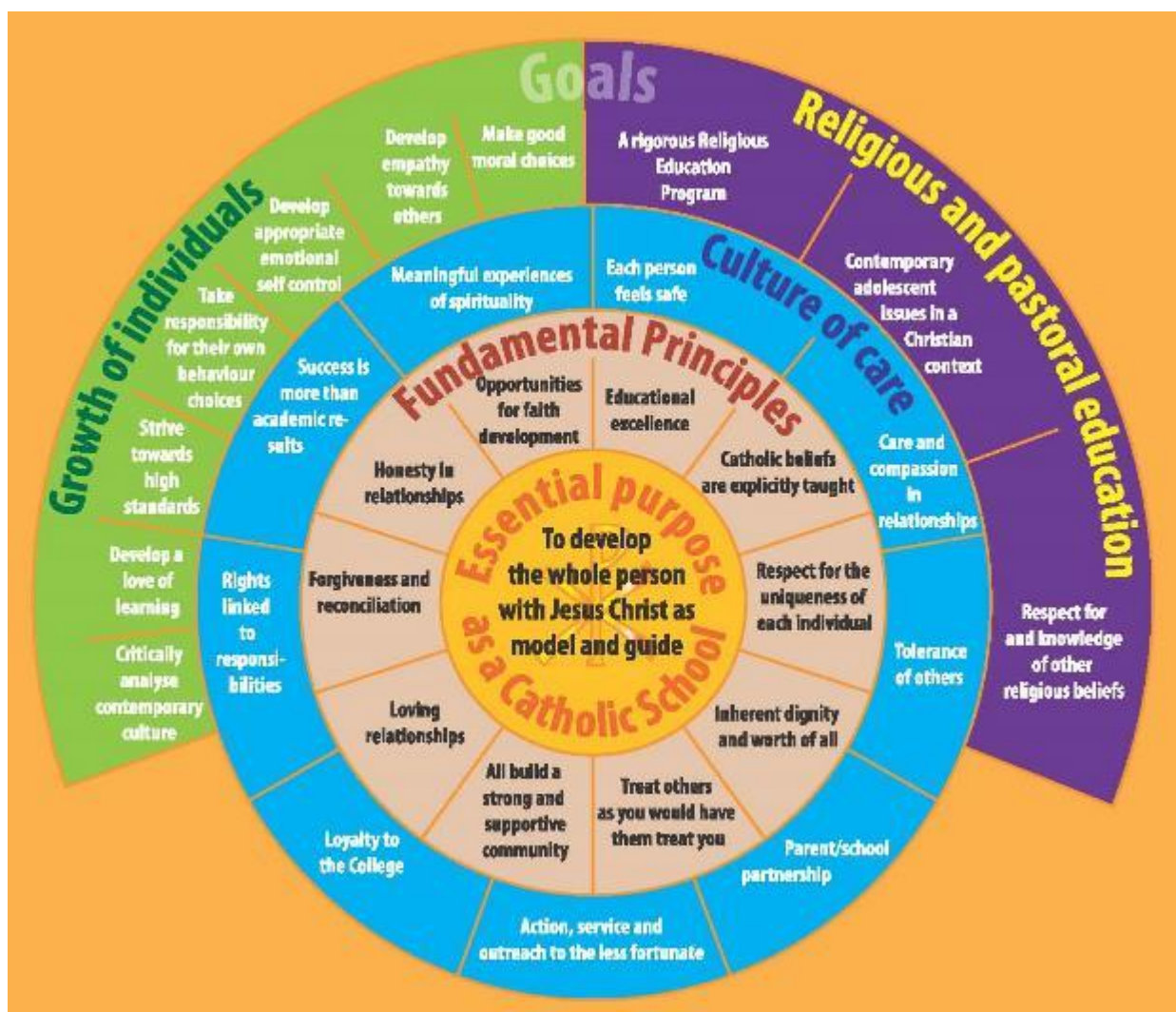
"The more you esteem them, the more you will love them; the more you love them, the more you will care for and watch over them. And it will be impossible for you not to cherish them day and night, and to have them all engraved in your heart, one by one, for this is how real love acts and works." (St Angela Merici)

Teaching and Learning at Merici College is designed, implemented and evaluated to achieve excellence in education. We promote enthusiasm and energy for learning within our classrooms by utilising a variety of strategies to meet individual student needs. We encourage ownership of learning, higher-order and critical thinking and reflection to empower students and allow them to develop the self-discipline and drive required to become life-long learners.

Our focus is on developing students holistically, so that they become compassionate and active members of our global community: young women who value ethical behaviour, who have a strong yet realistic sense of their own worth, and who are ready to take their place the world.

"Love your daughters equally, do not have any preference for one rather than the other, because they are all children of God, and you do not know what He wishes to make of them." (St Angela Merici)

## OUR VALUES



At Merici, we are explicit about the values we espouse. The diagram above was developed from a whole-school survey aimed at identifying and clarifying those values central to our community. In stating these, the diagram links the values to the environment that we are seeking to create and to our goals, both for religious and pastoral education and for the development of the individual.

### PASTORAL CARE AND STUDENT WELLBEING

Merici's formal and informal pastoral care structures and processes affirm the dignity and worth of every student and provide a sense of belonging, security and wellbeing. We empower our students to develop feelings of hope about the future, allowing them to act purposefully and positively. Students set goals for the future and make plans to meet these goals. They explore positive expectations, positive risk-taking, realistic thinking and problem-solving. In addition, we meet the growing need to educate our students about living in a global digital community and focus on digital citizenship.

Pastoral care in the College seeks to foster growth in students in partnership with parents, families, community agencies and the Church. A formal Pastoral Care program is developed each year to address contemporary and emerging adolescent issues and to support learning through the Student Success Program. Each year this program is guided by the College theme and a selection from the Principles of Powerful Learning. Senior students assist in providing administrative support to teachers, delivering supervised lessons, building relationships and engaging in discussions with younger students.

## The House System

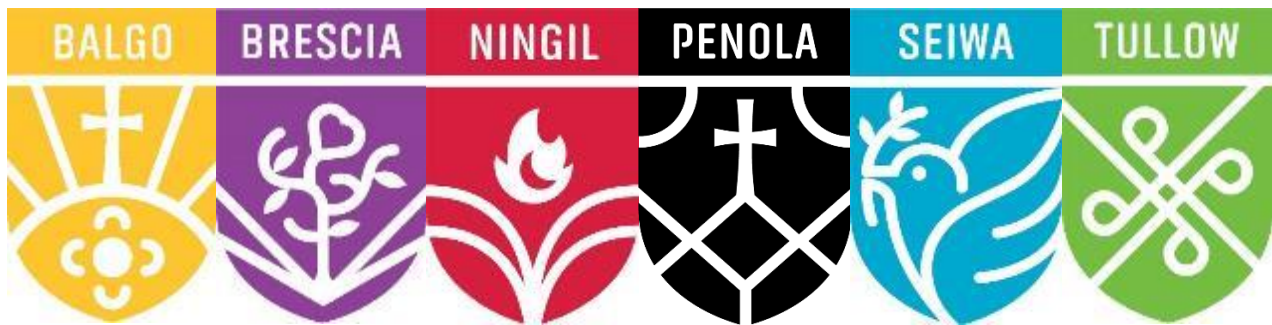
Each student at Merici is placed into a Pastoral Care class that is itself within a House that they will stay with throughout their entire time at the College. Pastoral Care classes are vertically arranged, consisting of a few students from each year level. The older students play an important role in supporting younger students particularly when new to the College. Each House has a dedicated House charity, allowing for students to play an active role in supporting the wider community.

Pastoral Care classes each have dedicated teacher who will meet with the classes each morning and for the extended Pastoral Care time once a week. Each House has a House Coordinator who plays an important role in the care of the students.

While the Pastoral Care system operates formally through the House system, it is not restricted to this program. Pastoral care is integral to the mission of Merici College, which aims to:

- engender wellbeing, belonging and security
- affirm the dignity and worth of the individual
- assist in personal growth to full potential
- provide relationships of care and support
- encourage growth and expression of compassion, tolerance and reconciliation.

## Houses

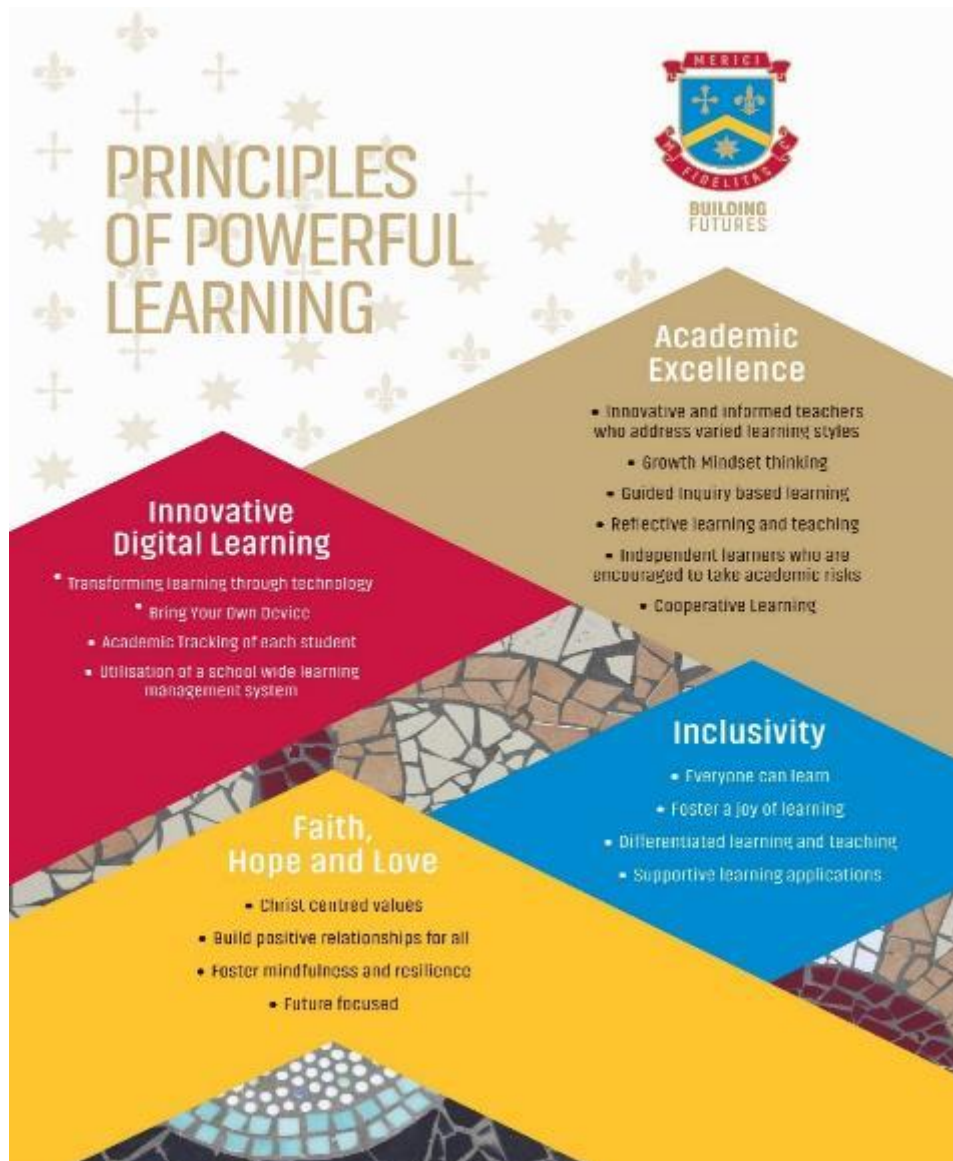


## Student Success Program (SSP)

In recognition of the fact that pastoral and academic performance strongly influence each other, Pastoral Care teachers engage in our Student Success Program to assist students to reach their full potential. This program is run during dedicated Pastoral Care time and is designed to allow Pastoral Care teachers to support each student's academic journey, identify areas of need in study skills, and provide the information and access to resources that students need in order to improve their academic performance.

## MERICI COLLEGE PRINCIPLES OF POWERFUL LEARNING

'We should turn out people who love learning so much and learn so well that they will be able to learn whatever needs to be learned.' (John Holt, 1923–1985)



Merici College is an innovative school where students embrace their learning. One of Merici College's educational goals is to instil within our students a lifelong love of learning. Students who develop a love of learning and the ability to apply what they have learned to new and challenging situations will be well equipped to face the many challenges of life.

The Merici Principles of Powerful Learning are our ongoing blueprint for teaching and learning in the College. The four tiers of Powerful Learning are inextricably linked to the holistic development of strong, intelligent young women who make values-based decisions, based on Christ-centred relationships, and who aim for academic excellence to build their futures. Integral to the design are the use of the Merici logo colours and background images of the mosaic from the Merici Indigenous Garden, reflecting Merici's ongoing commitment to our Indigenous students and local Indigenous heritage.

The Principles of Powerful Learning underpin all aspects of our teaching strategies, from lessons in the classroom to assessment and beyond. They are a set of principles that have been tested against local and national directions. As a staff we embed the Principles of Powerful Learning in our documentation, our professional learning, our professional dialogue and most importantly, in our classrooms. This ongoing initiative across the school results in quality education for our students.



## DIGITAL COMMUNITY AGREEMENT

### What is the Merici Digital Community?

Merici's approach to managing student and staff use of technology, formed after extensive research and community consultation, has evolved into us seeing ourselves as the 'Merici Digital Community'. This enables us to manage the needs of our students and promotes their responsibility to become efficient, highly enabled users of technology.

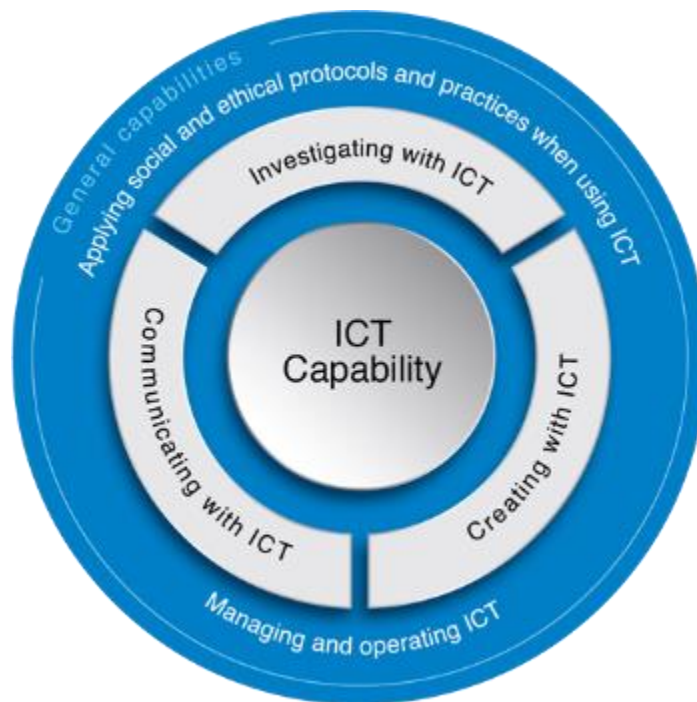
Students, parents and staff are all members of this inclusive community and being a member means that we all agree to support the following key principles.

1. Protect yourself
2. Respect yourself
3. Protect others
4. Respect others
5. Protect intellectual property
6. Respect intellectual property
7. Think Twice



## TECHNOLOGY IN THE CURRICULUM

"In the Australian Curriculum, students develop Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school. ICT capability involves students learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment." (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/information-and-communication-technology-ict-capability/>)



The ICT capability learning continuum is organised into five interrelated elements

Merici College supports a wide range of technologies. Through experience, we have found the value in investing in the very best available technology to enable the latest suite of applications to work at full capacity in our various subject areas. This digital environment is important to prepare our students with the experience and skills that are now a norm for most households and expected of a modern 21st century workforce. One concrete goal is that all our Year 10 students achieve a nationally recognised vocational certificate: Certificate I in Information, Digital Media and Technology.

With over 20 years of experience in delivering ICT to students through our laptop program, Merici has recently updated its capacity to an industry-mapped wireless network that has been carefully designed to handle the load of our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program. Merici has 300 24" touch screen all-in-one desktop computers in computer labs and flexible learning spaces. We have a purpose-built, on-site repair facility and a team of dedicated IT staff.

### **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)**

In 2015, Merici College moved to a BYOD program, a technological trend in both the educational and corporate worlds. The objective of the BYOD program is to engage students using their own devices to achieve learning in the classroom with technology and to enable them to continue learning anywhere, anytime.

All students are required to have a laptop or tablet. We publish minimum specifications on the website. BYOD is designed to give you, as students and families, freedom to make technology choices that suit you and your circumstances, while enabling your daughter to integrate with Merici's digital platform.

The College continues to provide a laptop service whereby we offer families the opportunity to purchase a school-approved laptop through a service provider, and we deliver ongoing technical support.

All students and parents must read and sign their Digital Community Agreement before being allowed to use any electronic device in class.

## Learning and ICT

Through using technology, students are able to:

- develop high level skills
- use ICT as a tool in relevant and challenging ways which are fully integrated into the curriculum – laptops are not used simply to replace exercise books
- link their learning with the outside world through moderated internet access
- develop co-operative learning skills
- be challenged and motivated to learn in new ways
- have immediate access to technology in class, and for research and homework at recess, lunch and at home.
- Communicate with their teachers outside of class time via email which assists with continuous learning.



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 Author: Suzanne Pezney, [suzanne.pezney@gmail.com](mailto:suzanne.pezney@gmail.com)

When it comes to the use of the technology in the classroom it is important to recognise the increasingly diverse nature of the method of application in each subject area. From the Arts and Media to Science and Physical Education, from History and Mathematics to English and the Languages, technology plays a role in shaping how lessons are prepared and communicated both in the classroom and online via our Learning Management System (LMS), known as Moodle. Moodle becomes a shared interactive environment for the class where the opportunities for communication and collaboration are significantly enhanced through students' ongoing access. Students complete much of their work on their device, but there are times where the use of the device may not be appropriate.

## Moodle

Moodle provides a virtual learning environment. Used extensively across the College, it is a tool for communication and organisation and allows students to retrieve school files from any location with internet access. Every class at Merici College has a Moodle page, which is accessed through a student's Merici username and password. Moodle also enhances the Parent-Teacher-Student partnership in student education, so Moodle passwords are considered a 'family' password and students are expected to logon for their parents when required. Depending on the way that classes have been structured by the teacher, students will have access to:

- subject-specific documents, for example assessment outlines, major work tasks and assignments
- class notice board with message or internet links from the teacher
- class calendar
- electronic learning activities that enable students to submit work online
- online discussion forums and journals
- class email from the teacher.

## CURRICULUM

The junior curriculum at Merici College is based on the Syllabus Treasures New and Old, transitioning to Walk in the Light (Catholic Education Canberra and Goulburn) and the Australian Curriculum. The incorporation of Australian Curriculum content (understanding, knowledge and skills), cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities has followed the ACT implementation plan. We use the IB Middle years Programme (MYP) as a framework for delivering the Australian Curriculum in Years 7-10.

## International Baccalaureate

Merici College is a candidate school\* for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (Years 11 and 12) and the Middle Years Programme (Years 7-10) and are pursuing authorization as a full IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy- a commitment to high-quality, challenging, international education - that we believe is important for our students and aligns with our Merici Vision and Mission.

Teaching in IB programmes is:

- based on inquiry
- focused on conceptual understanding
- developed in local and global contexts
- focused on effective teamwork and collaboration differentiated to meet the needs of all learners informed by assessment (formative and summative)

Teaching and learning is focused on the IB Learner Profile, which develops a distinctive set of attributes. These qualities are: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.



\* Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Merici College believes that all students can learn and acknowledges different learning styles. We encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and we aim to develop enthusiasm, enjoyment and love of learning. This encompasses all students, irrespective of abilities, and we ensure that all students have the opportunity to be educated with their peers, accepting each other as persons with gifts that enrich the whole community. The Inclusive Education Team promotes inclusive practices that strive for the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual development of all students.

While the standard classroom employs progressive and effective techniques to provide for mixed abilities, the College also acknowledges the specific needs of students requiring additional learning opportunities.

Students with identified learning difficulties may have been identified through:

- information from parents
- NAPLAN results
- information as part of the transition from Primary School to High School
- information from class teachers
- being recognised as a student with a disability (as identified by Catholic Education as required by the Australian Government definition).

Skilled teachers and assistants provide specialist support for students requiring help with basic skills and those who need to be challenged beyond the normal requirements of classroom activities.

The support and extension provided to students with additional needs may consist of one or more of the following:

- modified assessment
- differentiated curriculum
- individual programs
- teacher-assistant time
- collaborative teaching and learning
- Homework Club
- Cross-Age Tutoring
- Hub sessions
- computer technology.



## **Enrolment Policy**

Parents or guardians of students with a disability (as identified by Catholic Education as required by the Australian Government definition) are required to have a panel meeting to determine their level of need. The panel consists of:

- the Principal
- Inclusive Education Coordinator
- the Learning Support teacher
- parent/s and child
- other professionals if required.

## **The Hub**

Students can be booked into the Merici Hub by their classroom teacher to receive help and support in organisation, researching and undertaking assignments.

## **Homework Club**

All students who are experiencing difficulties with their studies, or in need of additional support with assessment, are encouraged to access homework assistance in the Homework Club that runs after school in the iC, Monday to Wednesday 3.15-4.15pm. Students are encouraged to book in via the Inclusive Education Coordinator and may attend on an 'as needed' basis.

## Cross-Age Tutoring

Cross-Age Tutoring is available from students in Years 10, 11 and 12 for students in the junior years. Senior students are paired with junior students according to academic interests and needs. Students may meet before school, at lunch time or after school.

## JUDITH FOLLETT INFORMATION CENTRE: iC

Staffed by a dedicated Teacher Librarian and Library Assistants actively supporting and nurturing formal and informal learning.



## Opening Hours

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am–5.00pm (closed recess)

Friday: 8.30am–4.00 pm (closed recess)

## The Physical Environment

A flexible learning area that incorporates twenty desktop computers BYOD workstations facilitating individual, group and class learning

A multimedia learning area with thirty computer workstations, active board and full data projection facilities

A small group room with active board and full data projection facilities, which can be used for a variety of teaching and learning experiences

A Reading area surrounding the fiction collection, providing a wonderful reading space for students in both lesson and recreational time. All Junior classes have regular reading periods in this area.

## The Resources

**Extensive print resources:** fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, serials/periodicals, newspapers, which support the curriculum and recreational reading.

**Extensive digital resources – The Virtual iC** – electronic and digital resources for fiction and non-fiction, including Sara by Overdrive, digital newspapers (SMH, The Age, FR), Merici College LibGuides, databases, journals, Oliver online catalogue, World Book Encyclopaedia, Facts on File, ClickView videos, online magazines, e-books and study guides. Merici College LibGuides can be accessed via the College web page and Moodle.

## General Services

- Books available for a two-week period
- Kobo e-readers with extensive e-book libraries, available for borrowing
- DVDs available for viewing in the iC and for home
- Scanning
- Printing/photocopying
- Periodicals available (one-week loan period)
- Virtual iC available 24/7 through Moodle

## Co-curricular

**Cosy Café** on Monday lunchtimes during Terms 2 and 3. Students eat their lunch in the iC whilst reading in the Reading Area. Hot chocolate is provided in the winter terms.

**iC Book Club** - The club meets weekly at lunchtime in friendship or year groups - a book is chosen to be read together and meet fortnightly to discuss.

**Digital DeTox** – One a week students are encouraged to replace technology with puzzles, colouring in, card games or board games.

**Chess Club** – A group of keen chess players meet weekly at lunch time.

## ABORIGINAL CONTACT TEACHER & PROGRAM

Merici College has an Aboriginal Contact Teacher, who provides an essential link between the College and students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and their families. The Aboriginal Contact Teacher coordinates tutoring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in literacy and numeracy and works with students and their families to 'close the gap' for this group of students.

A group known as the "Narragunnawali Mob" seeks to create an environment where the community experiences Indigenous Australian culture and gives opportunity to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to celebrate their heritage, to highlight positive experiences, acknowledge the past, and develop relationships with the local Ngunnawal people. Narragunnawali means 'alive, wellbeing, coming together' in the Ngunnawal language. The Narragunnawali Mob is also known by its shorter name, the Merici Mob.



Reconciliation is about equal and respectful relationships between Australians with and without Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. Reconciliation is for all members of our Merici community: students, families and staff from all cultural backgrounds.

## COUNSELLING SERVICE

Merici College utilises counselling personnel from CatholicCare. The counselling service is available as part of the Pastoral Care system of the school. The role of the Counsellor is to focus on the emotional, social and educational wellbeing of Merici students.

As well as individual sessions with students during school time, the Counsellors work with families, consult with parents, carers and teachers, and carry out some group work. For long term therapy, the Counsellors will also refer students and families to specialist services and professionals when appropriate.

The Counsellors at Merici College have skills in areas such as child development, the assessment and treatment of a range of mental health problems, and social and interpersonal relationships. The Counsellors welcome contact with students having difficulty with some part of their life, whether or not it affects their schoolwork. The problem does not have to be a big one; it is better to seek help sooner than later.

If something is interfering with a student's learning, or affecting their general wellbeing, contact with a counsellor may be appropriate. Referrals to the Counsellors come from teachers, parents, family members, students themselves and services outside the school.

Some typical concerns include:

- Depression
- Anxiety and fears
- Anger issues
- Family conflict
- Self-harm
- Loss and grief
- Peer relationships
- Separation, divorce and step-families
- Stress
- Post-traumatic stress

The Counsellors may also be involved in a range of other activities including:

- Conducting support and therapy groups with students
- Consultation with staff
- Parent education
- Referrals to other agencies or specialists
- Policy development
- Community liaison

Counsellors are available throughout the week, with the exception of Wednesday afternoons. House Coordinators can also support the establishment of a session with the counsellors.



## DEFENCE TRANSITION MENTOR

At Merici College we are fortunate to have a significant number of students from Australian Defence Force (ADF) families. To facilitate the transition into College life we have a Defence Transition Mentor (DTM). The role of the Defence Transition Mentor is to support the Defence School Transition Aide Program and assist young people from Defence families as they progress through their secondary schooling years.

The objective of the program is to ensure that all ADF students achieve the highest educational outcome during their years at Merici. This is achieved through mentoring, personal and social wellbeing, furthering educational pursuits, offering guidance when required, and supporting these aspiring young adults during times of parental absence.



## PERSONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Merici College is committed to ensuring that all members of the community, particularly students, feel safe and are free from verbal and physical abuse and harassment in the school grounds, classroom and allied teaching and sporting areas. The College employs a comprehensive anti-bullying and harassment policy that consistently demonstrates fairness and equity in managing and supporting students. This policy is in line with the ACT Education and Training Directorate Providing Safe Schools P-12 policy and is also in line with the implementation strategies of the National Safe Schools Framework.

Within the parameters of the National Safe Schools Framework, pastoral care and behaviour management at Merici are closely linked, as both aim to promote a respectful, secure and healthy environment for all members of the College. Our behaviour management protocols and systems are informed by a commitment to the Principles of Restorative Practices and are designed to ensure the wellbeing of all members of the community and to encourage the development of responsible behaviour in students. Our approach is based on the Glasser model where students are aware of their rights and responsibilities and where, if difficulties arise, they discuss their behaviour with their teacher, recognise the impact of that behaviour, take responsibility for it and formulate a mutually acceptable plan for the future.

## **Expectations of Student Behaviour**

In the classroom students should:

- be courteous and considerate at all times
- respect each other's opinions and property
- be punctual and well prepared
- participate in all classroom activities
- not endanger their own health and safety, and that of others, by their behaviour.

Within the College they should demonstrate:

- respect and care for others in all interactions
- respect for school and personal property
- avoidance of dangerous or unsafe practices.

In setting good health habits, students are not permitted to smoke or use alcohol or drugs when at school, on a school-organised activity, or when wearing school uniform. All senior students and their parents sign an agreement about their attendance, work ethic, uniform, behaviour and commitment to the College.

## **Positive Peer Relations**

Through our interactions we aim to foster a healthy culture in which high levels of achievement take place within a positive social environment. Our Positive Peers Relations Policy is designed to promote high standards of behaviour for our students based on cooperation, mutual responsibility and self-discipline, and to promote positive, inclusive relationships among students. This policy, enacted both within the curriculum and co-curricular programs, is designed to be respectful of the dignity and rights of each student and to provide learning opportunities that are responsive to the student's unique growth and development.

## **INDUCTION OF NEW STUDENTS**

Merici is committed to ensuring that new students and their parents feel welcome and comfortable in their new environment. We have an extensive induction process in place for all new students. We try to ensure that new students to the College have a personal interview with the Principal and their House Coordinator prior to beginning at the College. The House Coordinator and Pastoral Care teacher take particular responsibility for ensuring that the student settles in quickly. A student 'buddy' from their Pastoral Care class is assigned to ensure that new students are able to find their way to classes and, in the early days, are looked after at breaks. All new students also have an induction in the Information Centre and to the College network, and undergo some simple testing of literacy and numeracy skills to enable us to identify areas of strength and/or areas where the student may require some support.

## **LOCKERS AND VALUABLES**

Each student is issued with a locker located in her House area near her Pastoral Care room. Students do not carry their bags with them, leaving them instead in the locker. They may access their locker before school, at recess and at lunch.

Large sums of money should not be brought to school. Valuables of any kind should be stored in the student's own locker, secured with a good quality key lock. Locks are supplied to students in Years 7 and 8. We prefer students not to use combination locks other than those issued by the school. The use of iPods, iPhones, Mp3 players and mobile telephones is not permitted during lessons and formal activities. They are brought to school at the student's own risk. All articles of uniform and valuable items should be clearly named.

## DAILY ORGANISATION

The College runs on a five-day cycle, with six periods allocated to each day. Students move to their morning Pastoral Care room after the warning bell at 8.45am. Warning bells ring five minutes before the end of Recess and the end of Lunch. Students have three minutes to move from Period 1 to Period 2, Period 3 to Period 4 and between Period 5 and Period 6.

Class	Length	Start	Finish
PC	0:10	8:45	8:55
Period 1	0:50	8:58	9:48
Period 2	0:50	9:51	10:41
Recess	0:20	10:41	11:01
Period 3	0:50	11:01	11:51
Period 4	0:50	11:54	12:44
Lunch	0:40	12:44	1:24
Period 5	0:50	1:24	2:14
Period 6 – Junior	0:50	2:17	3:07
Period 6 – Senior	1:08		3:25

The lessons in Periods 5 and 6 reverse in odd and even weeks. Lessons for Senior students will finish at 3:25pm Monday to Thursday.

## ATTENDANCE

Students are required to attend all timetabled lessons during the school day. It is required that Junior students attend from 8.45am to 3.07pm.

Religious activities, Pastoral Care and Sports Carnivals are important, compulsory elements of our school life and must be attended by all students in Years 7 through to Year 12. Attendance rolls are marked each period and students frequently late or absent without valid reasons will be referred to their House Coordinator.

Any absence during the day must be explained by a note from the student's legal guardian or parent and must be presented either in the Pastoral Care class that day for a short absence, or the first day the student returns to school following the absence. If a student is absent from school, parents are required to inform the school either by phone (6243 4165) or email ([attendance@merici.act.edu.au](mailto:attendance@merici.act.edu.au)). An SMS message regarding absent students will be sent to parents if their child is absent. Parents must opt out of this service if it is deemed not necessary.

Students are responsible for catching up on work missed due to illness or other circumstances. Excessive absences without explanation may prevent the awarding of grades in a semester and in extreme cases, the awarding of Year 10 or ACT Senior Secondary Certificates.

As indicated in the Assessment Outlines, all absences (without prior advice) on the day that assessment is due must be, in the case of Seniors, notified to the subject teacher or Studies Coordinator and covered by a parental note or doctor's certificate. In the case of Juniors, absences are to be covered by a note from the parent to the teacher concerned indicating that the parent/guardian knows that assessment was due on the day of absence.

All absences for Senior students must be explained within seven days of the return to school. Failure to do this may lead to the student voiding the unit (in line with BSSS policy) and possibly placing their academic package in jeopardy. Parents of Senior students are sent regular reports showing the total of Explained and Unexplained absences. Students are not entitled to have holidays during term time.

As the College is legally responsible for students during school hours, parents must provide written permission for Junior students to leave during the day, and the Sign Out processes must be completed. Junior students are expected to show their note explaining the reason, time of departure and mode of transport to their Pastoral Care teacher at the beginning of the day and have it signed by the teacher.

All Senior students are required to be at school from 8.45am. Senior students may sign out during the day, when they do not have scheduled classes, by signing out at the Student Services. A parent's note is not required for Seniors in non-scheduled class time but they must sign in and out. A Senior student may not sign out until after recess to ensure that they maximise their non-scheduled class time studying.

We would ask that family holidays be scheduled during the allocated breaks. Requests for extended leave must be made in writing to the Head of Junior School (Years 7–9) and Head of Senior School (Years 10–12).

## **FIRST AID**

The First Aid room is situated adjacent to the Student Services Office and supervised by a member of staff with current Senior First Aid Qualifications. If a student becomes ill, a teacher will refer her to Student Services.

If a student is too ill to remain at school her parent/guardian will be contacted to make necessary transport arrangements. Students are not permitted to make their own arrangements with parents to leave school when ill.

In an emergency, the College will make every effort to contact parents, but if they cannot be reached and/or the situation is urgent, the College may make the decision to call an ambulance. There is no charge made for the ambulance from the College to hospital, but parents are responsible for any other costs.

In keeping with ACT Schools Authority policy, it is not possible to dispense analgesics (such as paracetamol) to students.

If your child is unwell it is strongly advised you do not send her to school. We cannot provide space for students to spend lengthy periods of time lying down.

## **BUSES**

The College is serviced by the three bus companies: Transport Canberra (ACTION) for ACT students and Deanes and Transborder for NSW students. This means that students from all areas of Canberra and outlying districts are generally able to access dedicated school bus transport to and from Merici. For students from the south side of Canberra, dedicated services to Merici are provided from the Woden Interchange and route buses are available to link with these services. Up to date information on bus routes and timetables is available from the following websites:

- [Transborder Express](#)
- [Deanes Buslines \(QCity Transit\)](#)
- [ACTION](#)

### South Canberra to Merici Direct Bus Information

Merici College offers a direct bus service for our south-side families. For more information, please follow the link <https://www.merici.act.edu.au/my-merici/resources/bus-timetables>.

### CANTEEN AND WASTE-FREE LUNCHESES

The emphasis in our canteen is on providing healthy and nutritious snacks, meals and drinks. Canteen facilities are available to staff and students before school, from 8.00am until 8.45am, and at recess and lunch times. Junior students are not permitted to purchase from the canteen during class time. Senior students may purchase from the Canteen throughout the day.

Students complete their purchases by swiping their Charge Card. The Charge Card can be loaded with cash before school and at recess Monday to Friday, and lunchtimes Monday and Thursday.

In an effort to support sustainability and reduce unnecessary waste we request that students bring waste-free lunches to school. Students are encouraged to take home all wrappings and non-recyclable items.

### UNIFORM AND PERSONAL PRESENTATION

The College is currently preparing a new uniform storyboard which will be made available to families after it is finalized.

### COLLEGE FEES

System-based tuition fees and Diocesan building fund contribution are set by the Catholic Education Commission (CE) with the approval of the Archbishop and are revised annually.

The tuition fee for 2020 along with any local fee adjustment (fees set by Merici College) will be communicated to parents in November 2019.

A one-off non-refundable enrolment fee of \$50 is payable when a place is offered and accepted at Merici College.

In addition to the tuition fee, catholic secondary colleges set their own local fees to cover various other costs. For Merici College, these fees consist of a **general fee, a parent levy and a resource fee** (book hire). The Year 7 Camp, Year 9 Urban Challenge, Year 11 Conference and Year 12 Retreat costs are set by external providers and are also included in fees for these year groups.

The **general fee** covers costs associated with facilities such as information technology support, iCentre (library) books, journals and online resources and the Merici Hub. The general fee also covers transportation to school carnivals and **all excursions up to the value of \$25**, as well as sustainability initiatives, digital training programs, fitness centre upkeep, counselling services, and to support some of the costs associated with the College's ongoing building maintenance and renovation program. The college also utilises money raised through the general fee to help subsidise healthy eating to keep the price of healthy meals to students low. See our website for further breakdown of fees.

**Total fees in 2019 including Building Fund Contribution were:**

Year 7	\$8392 including Year 7 Camp
Year 8	\$7,957
Year 9	\$8,754 including Year 9 Urban Challenge
Year 10	\$8,124
Year 11	\$9,703 including Year 11 Conference
Year 12	\$9,703 including Year 12 Retreat

## Family Discounts

Family discounts apply automatically if you have more than one daughter at Merici College. Family Discounts also apply if you have other students at St. Francis Xavier College, St. Clare's College, St. Mary MacKillop College or St. John Paul II College, provided that Merici College is informed. Family discount only applies to the tuition fee.

## Fee Concessions

A student will not be refused enrolment, excluded or disadvantaged in catholic education because of an inability to pay college fees (as opposed to an unwillingness). In this instance parents are encouraged to apply for a fees concession to reduce their fees. A reduction in fees may be determined where parents are able to demonstrate circumstances causing financial disadvantage or hardship. Forms are available from the Finance Office and the Fees Liaison Officer can assist in filling them out. Applications are processed by the College and independently assessed by the Fees Review Committee of the College Board using the same financial model employed by other secondary college in CG diocese. Confidentiality in the process is assured. The policy considers that families who have chosen a Catholic education consider it important and that fee payments will be prioritised over other non-essential life-style choices. Accordingly, a family would not be considered for fee relief where for example they hold investments in property, shares or engage in non-essential local or overseas travel and the like. Arrangements should ideally be completed before the student begins the school year.

## Excursion Costs

All camps and retreats are included on our fees schedule and charged on school fee statements. Along with all excursions under \$25 they are also included in direct debits calculations. Excursions that cost more than \$25, plus extra-curricular activities, are charged separately to parents of students who specifically attend.

## Accounts

Accounts are sent out each term and must be paid by the due date. Any queries should be directed to the Fees Liaison Officer. **Direct crediting/payment is the preferred method of payment.** Electronic, B-Pay and credit card facilities are also available. Fees may be paid in instalments. The Fees Liaison Officer can assist you with the forms and with calculating the periodic payment amount.

If parents encounter any difficulties with the payment of fees or if payment is held over until the following term because of a temporary circumstance causing financial difficulty, please inform the Business Manager or Fees Liaison Officer immediately. In these cases, it is essential that families maintain communication with the College to make arrangements that are mutually agreeable to both parties and manageable for parents. If accounts reach an unacceptable level and there is no communication with the College or agreed arrangements are not honoured, the account is referred to the Fees Review Committee to decide the next action, which may include the services of a mercantile collection agency.

## Students who leave the school during the term

Persons responsible for paying school fees will be liable for school fees for the entire term. Should payment in full not be possible at the time of leaving, please contact the Fees Liaison Officer as an arrangement for payment will need to be approved by the Business Manager.

## Students who are absent for part of or complete terms

Persons responsible for paying school fees will be liable for school fees for the whole term(s) while a student is officially enrolled. Fees must be paid by the due date. Should payment in full not be possible by a due date, please contact the Fees Liaison Officer.

### **Students who are in Year 12 and who leave at the end of Semester 1**

Year 12 full-year fees are charged over three terms as the annual fees relate to the entire Year 12 package. Year 12 fees are to be paid by 30 September each year. We strongly encourage all our Year 12 students to complete the year with us to gain maximum benefit from their education package and the overall Year 12 experience. If a student elects to leave before the end of the school year, persons responsible for paying school fees are liable for the full annual fee.

### **Parent Levy**

The Parent Association decided some years ago that instead of involving parents in fund-raising activities such as school fetes, a levy per family per term would be added to fees. The amount is set by the School Board each year after consultation with parents. The parent levy goes towards special projects or asset acquisitions e.g. College Bus, garden seating.

### **Building Fund Contribution**

A Building Fund contribution (\$173 per term in 2019) is charged by the Catholic Education Commission for the maintenance and refurbishment of existing schools and the establishment of new schools. It is a family contribution paid at the school attended by the oldest child. It is a voluntary contribution. Requests to opt out of the contribution must be made in writing.

### **Useful Forms**

Please refer to the College website <https://www.merici.act.edu.au/enrolments/school-fees> under Enrolments for current information on fees and copies of useful forms including:

- Direct Debit (DDR) Request
- Credit Card (BPOINT) Authorisation Form
- School Fee Concession Application
- Split Billing Form
- Details of Older Siblings at other CEO Secondary Schools