



Curriculum Handbook

YEAR 8 2027





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Introduction

From our Principal - Lila McInerney

At Mercy College, we continue to cultivate a culture that promotes deep and purposeful learning. Guided by the Vision for Instruction from Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools, we believe that “Every student is inspired and enabled to flourish and enrich the world”. This vision reflects our commitment to nurturing students who are curious, capable, and confident in their pursuit of knowledge and personal growth.



Dear Parents/ Guardians and Students,

Year 8 is a time of growth, discovery, and increasing independence. It offers students the opportunity to expand their horizons, embrace new challenges, and deepen their understanding of themselves and the world around them. At Mercy College, we recognise that each student is unique, with individual strengths, talents, and values. Our Year 8 program is designed to nurture these qualities and support students in their journey of learning and personal development.

Having settled into the rhythms of secondary education, Year 8 students are ready to engage with a comprehensive and balanced curriculum that encourages academic excellence and personal growth. Our subject offerings, based on the Victorian Curriculum, are thoughtfully designed to provide both breadth and depth - challenging students to explore big ideas, ask meaningful questions, and develop the skills needed to contribute positively to society.

Our classrooms are dynamic learning environments - innovative, student-focused, creative, and rich in technology. They foster collaboration, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue. Curriculum design at Mercy College is purposeful and responsive, interpreting formal curricula in ways that are relevant to our learners and their local context. We encourage students to engage critically with tradition and the world, helping them make sense of their lives and empowering them to shape their future.

The Year 8 learning experience is enriched by our wellbeing programs, co-curricular activities, and whole-school cultural, sporting, and religious celebrations. These elements contribute to a vibrant and holistic education that supports academic achievement and personal wellbeing.

We believe wholeheartedly in the importance of collaborative relationships to enhance College life. The partnership between home and school is vital to the academic and wellbeing growth of every student.

We look forward to working together with you as we support our students to realise their potential and take confident steps toward their future.

Lila McInerney
College Principal

Subjects

Students undertake a range of compulsory subjects. Compulsory subjects are either for a full year (two semesters) or semester length (two terms).

At Mercy College, Year 8 students undertake six compulsory year-long subjects and eight semester length compulsory subjects.

In 2027, all Year 8 students will study the following:

Full Year Subjects

Religious Education
English
Health and Physical Education
Humanities
Mathematics
Science
Wellbeing Program

Semester Length Subjects

Languages: Indonesian
Languages: Italian
Art
Drama
Food Studies
Music
Product Design

Assessments and Reporting

Student assessment seeks to promote a positive attitude towards learning and to encourage the pursuit of personal excellence. It gives students advice on what they have done well and suggests strategies for further improvement. As such, assessment practices at Mercy College focus upon the positive aspects of student learning and provide the basis for further learning. Subject teachers, Learning and Wellbeing Leaders and Learning Area Leaders, continually monitor student performance and progress within the classroom.

A variety of assessment practices are embedded into the Year 8 curriculum, which are highlighted on each subject page. All the assessment practices, plus observations, provide the basis on which teachers report student progress.

Learner Expectation Reports

Learner Expectation Reports are designed to provide feedback on a range of areas related to a student's learning, study habits and overall progress. These reports are made available to families during Terms One and Three, prior to Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences.

Semester Reports

Semester reports are designed to provide feedback on a range of areas related to a student's learning across all subjects studied during the semester. These reports also provide an overview of the College's Wellbeing Program and feedback related to each students' overall approach to learning and their involvement in College events and co-curricular activities.

Full Year Subjects

Religious Education

The Year 8 Religious Education program at Mercy College is based on “To Know, Worship and Love” and the Religious Education Framework published by the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Religious Education in Year 8 focuses on students’ ability to develop their interpretive skills. Students investigate what life was like for Jesus at the time he lived in Palestine. They identify the components of Parables and trace the development of the Christian community from its foundation until today.

Through investigating the literary structures of scripture passages and the impact of settings, styles and viewpoints of authors, students begin to understand how readers of both Old and New Testaments have interpreted the meaning and message of Scripture passages over time.

They deepen their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and its application to personal and global issues. Students develop critical thinking and explore respectful relationships.

Duration of study:

- Full year

Topics Studied:

- Background to the Gospels and Holy Land
- Parables
- Jesus and The First Christians
- The Sacraments of Initiation in Judaism and Christianity
- Living the Christian Life
- Right Relationships

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Group projects and presentations
- Inquiry Learning
- Class Test
- Journal writing

English

The Year 8 English course is built around the three interrelated strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. Together the strands focus on developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills in listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating.

Students engage with a variety of texts. They listen, read, view, interpret, evaluate and perform a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts designed to inform and persuade.

Students develop their understanding of how texts are influenced by context, purpose and audience. Students create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts.

Duration of study:

- Full year

Topics Studied in Semester One:

- Creative Writing
- Viewing and Creating: Film study
- Analysing and Presenting Argument

Topics Studied in Semester Two:

- Novel study
- Genre writing unit

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Writer's Notebook Personal Response
- Analytical Text Response Essay
- Point of view Oral
- Letter to the Editor
- Fiction short stories
- Wide Reading

Health and Physical Education

The Year 8 Physical Education course aims to encourage the benefits and importance of being physically active. Students will develop and refine a range of movement and manipulative skills through participation in a variety of team and individual games, while exploring the relationship between physical activity, fitness and health.

Learning is enhanced through the analysis of personal and team performance, enabling students to develop strategic thinking and tactical understanding across games such as Netball, Basketball, Soccer and Softball.

In Year 8 Health, students investigate various topics relating to Healthy and Active living, specifically looking at areas of promoting of physical fitness, healthy body weight, psychological wellbeing, cognitive capabilities and learning. In addition students will investigate the transition of adolescence focusing on puberty, cyber safety and independence.

Duration of study:

- Full year

Topics Studied:

- Benefits and Importance of being physically active
- Game Sense and Skill Development
- What is Health
- Factors affecting health
- Growing Up
- Managing Yourself and Supporting Others

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Participation and observation of skills/technique
- Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of rules, tactics and strategies associated with each sport
- Evidence of teamwork and group cooperation
- Problem solving within practical activities
- Game sense and tactical thinking
- Annotated visual display
- Presentations
- Oral presentations

Humanities

The Year 8 Humanities course delves into a range of subjects aimed at developing students' understanding of society, culture and the world around them. These include History, Civics and Citizenship, Geography, Business and Economics.

Students study significant historical societies, such as Medieval Europe and Polynesian expansion across the Pacific, to gain insights into the social, cultural and political changes that shapes today's societies. They study the interconnections between people, places and environmental processes. Students consider responses and strategies to address geographical phenomenon; such as global warming - referring to environmental, economic or social factors.

Building on their civic knowledge, students explore the role and composition of political parties and representatives in Australia's democracy. Students also examine the way in which citizens are informed of, and participate in Australia's democracy in a diverse and multicultural society.

Students explore the world of work, the reasons people work, and the changing nature of work, including consumer and financial literacy, taxation and financial planning.

Duration of study:

- Full year

Topics Studied in Semester One:

- Geography
 - Landscapes and Landforms
 - Changing Nations - Migration and Urbanisation
- Civics and Citizenship
 - The Australian Constitution
 - Structure of Parliament
 - Active Citizenship - voting, lobbying, protest

Topics Studied in Semester Two:

- Business and Economics
 - Future of Work
 - Income and Taxation System
 - Financial Skills - budgeting, saving
 - Consumer Rights
- History
 - Medieval Europe and the Black Death
 - Renaissance Italy
 - Polynesian Expansion

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Research Tasks
- Data Analysis
- Mock Referendums
- Letter to a local MP
- Budgeting Tasks
- Source Analysis

Mathematics

The Year 8 Mathematics course is made up of six content strands: Number, Algebra, Measurement, Space, Statistics and Probability.

Each of these is further enhanced by the proficiency strands of Understanding, Fluency, Problem Solving and Reasoning. Students continue to work with the scientific calculator.

Duration of study:

- Full year

Topics Studied:

- Computations with Integers
- Angle Relationships and Properties of Geometrical Figures
- Fractions, Decimals and Percentages
- Measurement and Pythagoras' Theorem
- Algebraic Techniques and Index Laws
- Ratios and Rates
- Equations and Inequalities
- Linear Relationships
- Probability and Statistics
- Transformations and Congruence

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Tests
- Summary notes
- Modelling tasks
- Problem solving tasks
- Investigations
- Calculator skills
- Technology and computational thinking

Science

The Year 8 Science course teaches students to identify the relationship between the characteristics of different rock types and the geological processes that form them. Students learn to explain the properties of solids, liquids and gases in terms of the movement and arrangement of particles. They then define the composition of these particles as elements, compounds and mixtures.

They also explore the concepts of energy, explaining energy conservation and transformation into natural and constructed systems. Students explore cells and the chemical reactions that occur within the human body and in the world around them. They link form and function at cellular level and conceptualise the organisation of body systems in terms of flow and matter between interdependent organs.

Students use experimentation to isolate relationships between components in living systems and explain these relationships through increasingly complex representations.

Duration of study:

- Full year

Topics Studied:

- States of Matter
- Cells
- Energy
- Chemical and Physical Changes
- Rocks

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Unit tests
- Practical investigations
- Inquiry investigations

Wellbeing Program

The Wellbeing Program at Mercy College supports students to develop positive wellbeing, enabling each individual to thrive and reach their full potential.

This starts with our C.L.E.A.R Wellbeing Program which is facilitated through our daily wellbeing period. The pillars of this program are Community, Learning, Emotional Intelligence, Agency, and Relationships.

The program aims to foster a:

- CLEAR sense of wellbeing
- CLEAR understanding of how to support wellbeing
- CLEAR ability to use these skills now and in the future

Duration of study:

- Full year

Topics Studied:

- Emotional literacy
- Personal strengths
- Positive coping
- Problem solving
- Stress management
- Help seeking
- Gender and identity
- Positive gender relations

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- No assessment tasks

Semester Length Subjects

Languages

Indonesian

In the Year 8 Indonesian course, students continue to develop their cultural knowledge and language skills through a storytelling approach. Students listen, read, write and speak in the language on topics related to family, hobbies and telling the time.

Students compare and contrast family structure in Indonesia with that of their own culture. They are also introduced to both traditional and contemporary pastimes of Indonesian teenagers.

Duration of study:

- One Semester

Topics Studied:

- Family and pets
- Hobbies and pastimes
- Telling the time

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking

Italian

The Year 8 Italian course develops students' understanding and control of language through the various macro skills.

Students gain further insight into Italian culture and lifestyles. Grammar structures are consolidated and students embark on their understanding of direct object pronouns, irregular verbs in the present and prepositions.

Activities include exchanging personal information, creating presentations and reading a variety of texts.

Duration of study:

- One Semester

Topics Studied:

- Friends and celebrities
- Sport
- Pastimes
- Food and origins

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking

Art

The Year 8 Art course explores both the classical and digital art worlds. Students learn drawing methods and how to apply these techniques to a variety of art making practices. Students have the opportunity to experience a practical approach to art making, and digital communication.

Duration of study:

- One Semester

Topics Studied:

- Art Design Elements and Principles
- Observational and Technical Drawing
- Art Making and Visual Communication processes

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Observational still-life drawing task
- Single perspective drawing task
- Analysis of art movements and design influences

Drama

This Year 8 Drama course introduces students to a variety of dramatic styles and techniques, building confidence and creativity through practical exploration. Students learn to create meaning through tableaux, using still images to show relationships. They also develop strong physical communication skills through mime. Students explore the exaggerated characters and emotions of melodrama, before contrasting this with naturalism, where performances focus on realism and believable characters.

Students also investigate influential theatre practitioners, such as Stanislavski, and apply these ideas to their own work, strengthening their understanding of how different styles communicate meaning and engage audiences.

The accompanying drama workbook supports this learning with structured activities and reflection tasks. The workbook provides space for self-assessment and goal setting, encouraging students to track their progress while developing their performance skills and understanding of drama.

Duration of study:

- One Semester

Topics Studied:

- Mime
- Melodrama

Food Studies

The Year 8 Food Studies course incorporates the ongoing development of both food preparation skills and the principles used within the design process.

Students will develop an understanding of the changes that occur during food processing and cooking, and the functional properties and characteristics of ingredients.

They will also develop an awareness of how food can foster and maintain good health through the principles applied, using the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

Duration of study:

- One Semester

Topics Studied:

- Food for Life
- From Paddock to Plate
- Food Science

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Analysis and evaluation of products made
- Design Tasks
- Written activities including analysis and evaluations
- Production activities

Music

The Year 8 Music course expands on basic music skills including: music literacy, performance, listening skills, composition and analysis.

After investigating the historical and cultural context of the Blues, students compose, annotate and perform a '12 Bar Blues' piece in a group.

Students explore the musical elements of beat, lyrics, instrumentation, structure and style. They discuss these elements in presentation on a pop song of their choice.

Students demonstrate their understanding of chords and harmony by arranging, rehearsing and performing a pop song of their choice, containing a few different cords.

Duration of study:

- One Semester

Topics Studied:

- Class Choir
- Music from other Cultures
- The Twelve Bar Blues
- The Elements of Music
- The harmonic structure of pop music

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- 12 Bar Blues composition
- Music is BLISS task
- Pop song arrangement

Product Design STEM

The Year 8 Product Design course introduces students to the processes of design through the study of garment construction.

Students develop an understanding of the elements and principles of design and apply these to a number of hand sewing tasks. They explore the properties and characteristics of fibres and fabrics. Students work through the stages of the design process to produce a simple garment using a commercial pattern.

Students will also learn how to safely and correctly set up and use the sewing machine and other equipment.

Duration of study:

- One Semester

Topics Studied:

- Textile Basics
- Applying the Textile Basics

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Production tasks
- Workbook tasks

In Year 8 STEM, students explore the properties of light and the electromagnetic spectrum. They apply principles such as Snell's Law to understand how light bends when passing through different materials, and investigate how lens shape and surface curvature affect image formation and magnification.

Students also develop an understanding of electricity, examining how electric current flows through circuits, and exploring the roles of voltage, resistance, and circuit components in both series and parallel circuits.

Duration of study:

- One Semester

Topics Studied:

- Waves - Electromagnetic spectrum and waves
- Electricity and electrical circuits

Examples of Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

- Enquiry based assessments and designs

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



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