



Sacred Heart  
College  
GEELONG

# MERCY JUSTICE ADVOCACY POLICY

## Rationale

*“Catholic schools were founded to proclaim Jesus’ message of God’s love for all. Our Catholic faith calls us to embrace the contemporary world with a Catholic imagination, and a particular hope-filled view of the human person and all of creation.” (Horizons of Hope, CEM)*

Sacred Heart College is a Catholic, learning community in the Mercy tradition that has at its centre Gospel values and the celebration of the innate dignity of each person. We hear the Cry of Earth and the Cry of the Poor and are compelled to be outwardly focused and committed to justice and mercy.

Central to our Vision and Mission and in accordance with our Mercy Education values, is the encouragement and inspiration for our school community to expand awareness of social issues in our local and global communities, and to actively participate in the pursuit of justice.

Catherine McAuley worked to address the injustices present in her time and we are privileged to walk in her footsteps.

## Definitions

**Advocacy:** Is the act of supporting, defending or speaking on behalf of a particular cause or policy issue.

**Catholic Social Teaching:** Principles of Catholic doctrine providing a moral framework for viewing society which ensures that the good of the individual, the common good of humanity, and our common home are integrated as one.

**Cry of Earth:** The ardent need of God’s creation for sustainable care and stewardship.

**Cry of the Poor:** The ardent need of those who are disadvantaged, excluded or marginalised in a way that limits their innate dignity.

**Injustice:** Any treatment of people, animals or the environment that lacks fairness, leads to inequity, disenfranchisement or violation of rights.

**Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach (MJAA):** Is a framework used by the global Mercy community to guide advocacy efforts. The approach is grounded in the values of the Sisters of Mercy, which include compassion,



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justice, and respect for the inherent dignity of people and Earth. It is an informed, deconstructionist approach, underpinned by Mercy values and tradition, human rights, critical feminism, Catholic social teaching, reflection and prayer, and active participation.

**Merciful Justice Initiatives:** Activities that deepen our community's compassion and empathy, and look to celebrate and empower the innate dignity of creation. These include works of advocacy, solidarity, and intervention; including justice projects, outreach and the collection of funds and goods.

**Social Justice:** A response that deepens the values of compassion, empathy and the intrinsic worth of every individual so that all are empowered in partnership, to care for creation and to make a positive difference in the world.

## Policy Statement

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching guide the contemporary mission and vision of the Catholic Church, leading discernment, and in turn, informing our College's justice commitment. Sacred Heart College's Merciful Justice Initiatives intend on upholding our justice commitment:

- To create a school community that treats all people justly, fairly and with compassion; that is welcoming and inclusive of every person.
- To inspire every person to make an active and personal commitment and contribution to justice ministry - socially and environmentally.
- To participate in and initiate social and environmental justice actions and to work in collaboration with others in advocating for and seeking social change and justice.
- To plant the seeds for a lifelong commitment to social and environmental justice.
- To understand how a commitment to justice relates to our Christian tradition.
- To pursue knowledge and understanding of the causes of social and environmental injustice.

### Program Objectives

As a Mercy community, Sacred Heart College is called to develop practical ways for community members to be agents for positive change and impact within our local, national and global community. This is achieved by:

- Use of the Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach across the College.
- Empowering members of our College community to become informed regarding issues that are the focus of Merciful Justice Initiatives.
- Providing opportunity for members of our College to positively and purposefully respond in a manner consistent with the need intended to be addressed (e.g. fundraising should not display a lack of solidarity with the community intended to be served).
- Respecting the responsibility of being an advocate.
- Ensuring Merciful Justice Initiatives celebrate, authentically represent and/or stand in solidarity with those whom we serve.
- Promoting our community's respect and compassion toward the innate dignity of others.
- Pursuing ongoing or sustained commitment to initiatives where possible (eg ongoing support of College Mercy Works or community immersion partners).
- Encouraging participation in Merciful Justice Initiatives without the promise of personal gain or reward.



## Purpose of Fundraising

The College raises funds for two distinct purposes:

- To support needs within the College (e.g. fundraising for College initiatives such as building programs, College-run Merciful Justice Initiatives, scholarship funds, College family fund, etc).
- To support needs beyond the College community (e.g. ISMAPNG Mercy Works, Catholic charitable organisations, community immersion partners, College Mercy Works, etc).

It is believed that the majority of College fundraising efforts should be focused beyond Sacred Heart College. This document is largely concerned with fundraising for the wider community (local, national and global).

The College also reserves the right to respond to emergency appeals as they arise. Initiatives under special circumstances can be approved by the principal.

## Implementation

Merciful Justice Initiatives at Sacred Heart College are overseen by the Mission and Ministry Team, led by the Catholic Identity Integration Leader. Consultation with the Mission and Ministry Team is expected for all new initiatives undertaken within the College.

The Mission and Ministry Team will work in close communication with the College Leadership Team, Development, Marketing and Communication Office, House Leaders and any staff member undertaking Merciful Justice Initiatives to ensure that activities across the College community remain consistent with these guidelines.

## Initiative Priorities

College Merciful Justice Initiatives (including fundraising) should:

- Be considerate of the Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach and in line with Mercy values.
- Seek to support Catholic/Mercy organisations as a priority (e.g. ISMAPNG Mercy Works, Caritas Project Compassion Lenten Appeal, Catholic Care, St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Mission).
- Seek to support the College's current Mercy Works where possible.
- Seek to strengthen relationships with community partners that have Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the College where possible (e.g. Mercy Works, Immersion Community Partnerships).
- Consider local, national and global needs.

*Note: Any new Merciful Justice Initiative (including those seeking to raise funds) should seek approval from the Mission and Ministry Team.*

"It is not sufficient that Jesus Christ be formed in us – he must be recognized in our conduct." (Catherine McAuley).

## Related Documents

- Mercy Justice Advocacy Procedure
- Merciful Justice Initiative - Application for Approval
- Merciful Justice Initiative Ideas



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## Document Control

Date Approved: 28 March 2024

Name: Anna Negro, Principal

Signature: 

Sponsor: Catholic Identity Integration Leader

Date presented at Advisory Council Meeting: 27 March 2024

Reviewed by:

- School Committee: Mission and Ministry Team
- Sub Committee of the College Council: N/A
- Student Leadership House Focus Team: N/A

Person responsible for implementation: Catholic Identity Integration Leader

Location checklist:

Staff Handbook  Student Space  Parent Portal  Website

### VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date approved	Next review
1.0	Sep 2017 (creation)	2020
2.0	Aug 2020 (update)	2023
3.0	Apr 2024 (update)	2026



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