



WARAKIRRI COLLEGE

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

CONTENTS

1. Message from the Principal
2. Contextual information and characteristics of the student body
3. Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy tests
4. Granting of Records of School Achievement
5. Results of the Higher School Certificate
6. Senior Secondary Outcomes
7. Professional Development undertaken by Teachers
8. Workforce composition
9. Student attendance
10. Retention from Stage 5 to Stage 6
11. Post-secondary destinations
12. Enrolment policies
13. Summary of some other school policies
14. School determined improvement targets
15. Characteristics of the student body
16. Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility
17. Stakeholder satisfaction
18. Summary of financial information



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE



Warakirri College is an independent secondary school for Years 10 – 12, situated in Fairfield in South-West Sydney. The College is an initiative of MTC Australia (MTC) is a registered Charity and not-for-profit organisation that works in the pre-employment sector. MTC assists people to transition to employment assisted through a range of education and training programs and develops opportunities that encourages all levels of participation in community programs. The organisation is responsible for fostering relationships between stakeholders; the aim being to contribute to a holistic and progressive society, by breaking down misconceptions and stereotypes whilst encouraging social cohesion.

Warakirri College commenced operations in 2007 to assist young people aged 15 to 22 years old experiencing major difficulties in completing their studies. The College does not charge school fees. The first students to complete Year 12 graduated in 2013 and in 2014 there was a 100 % increase in the number of students graduating from Year 12.

The College's motto is to Stand and Grow, which refers to the learning environment that supports young individuals who go on to complete their education in the face of adversity. All of our students are experiencing at least one form of disadvantage in the form of difficulties socially, economically or culturally and are isolated from the mainstream.

As a Special Assistance School the College's philosophy is driven by the development of a supportive and real world context that includes developing adult learning approaches to education within an integrated curriculum.

The College's diverse student body is seen as a major advantage, as our students' ancestry includes countries located in the Pacific Islands, Middle East, North Africa and Asia. Our diversity also extends to students from Aboriginal communities and students of Anglo- Australian and European descent.

This past year the College has seen an increase in support from community organisations who are regularly referring students. Our enrolments come principally from NGOs, charities and from local high schools or Department of Education and Communities' Home School Liaison Officers.

Many community organisations support the College by presenting at the school's weekly assemblies. The school partners with a range of organisations regularly through excursions, courses and camps. In addition, students at the school receive support through counselling and via emergency housing. The extent and depth of support for our students from these community groups is a key factor in enriching and diversifying the Warakirri educational experience.

Together with staff of MTC and the many community organisations, agencies and government departments that support our school, the teachers of Warakirri College celebrate the success of each student completing Year 10 or the HSC in 2014.

We acknowledge the students' commitment and tenacity and we wish them every success in the future as they transition to further education or the workplace.

Carolyn Blanden
Principal
Warakirri College

Warakirri means
'Stand and
Grow'...

2

MTC AUSTRALIA

MTC Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that has been committed to assisting people to gain employment, skills training, work-experience and career planning for over 20 years. As an integrated service provider, MTC Australia offers support through a variety of training courses and services that include case management for young people and a range of community initiatives.

Operating from 25 locations, with close to 350 dedicated staff, we deliver quality services to anyone at risk of social and economic exclusion. With a focus on empowering and encouraging Australians, we assist over 35,000 people annually to complete accredited training, find meaningful work and become self-sufficient.

Being a social enterprise, we generate an annual surplus through federally funded programs. This surplus is invested in developing staff, our organisation, and to fund 'give back' programs for the community, such as Warakirri College.

WARAKIRRI COLLEGE

Warakirri College commenced operations in 2007 to assist young people experiencing major difficulties in completing their secondary studies. The College does not charge school fees and the students' age range is from 15 to 24 years old.

The College's Aboriginal name, Warakirri, means to Stand and Grow, reflecting a learning environment that supports young people to stand in the face of adversity and grow to maturity. Many of our students experience a range of difficulties that include social, economic, cultural, physical or emotional disadvantage as well as isolation from the mainstream educational pathways.

As a Special Assistance School the College's philosophy is reflected in the development of a supportive and real world context that includes developing adult learning approaches to education within an integrated curriculum.

The College's diverse student body is rich in history and culture with students representing communities from across the Pacific Islands, South America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia through to students of Aboriginal heritage.

In November 2013 the College closed the campus in Parramatta and moved all operations to the expanded Campus in Fairfield. The Fairfield Campus is located in the central business district of one of the largest and most ethnically diverse local government areas in Australia and attracts students from across the Sydney Metropolitan area.

3

STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING

The College only offers Years 10 and the HSC. Students do not participate in the NAPLAN program.

4

RECORDS OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT - YEAR 10

Subject	Number of Students	Bands A B & C	Bands D E & None
English	31	8	23
Mathematics	31	11	20
Science	31	13	18
Australian History	31	15	16
Aust. Geography	31	12	19
Photography and Digital Media	31	11	20

5

RESULTS OF THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

Subject	Number of students	Bands 1 – 3	Bands 4 – 5	School Moderated Mean	State Moderated Mean
Ancient History	8	8		41.5	71.7
Biology	9	8	1	47.0	71.7
Business Studies	12	7	5	62.6	74.0
English Standard	14	14		55.0	67.5
Geography	12	10	2	54.5	73.6
Mathematics General	14	14		48.2	68.9
Society & Culture	7	7		61.7	76.7

Statistical comparisons are difficult as our student numbers are very small and slight variations in the make-up of the candidature will affect the means result.

In 2013 the first students to complete Year 12 included 4 students that met the requirements to sit for the HSC. In 2014 the College had 8 students qualify to sit for the HSC.

6

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES

No students were found to have enrolled in VET (Vocational & Education Training) or AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework) courses in 2014.

7

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING UNDERTAKEN BY TEACHERS

During 2014 Teachers and other staff members undertook various types of Professional Development:

a) Teachers individually completed courses, with accredited providers, most commonly at the Association of Independent Schools, St John's Ambulance or the NSW Teachers Training Association (TTA). Some courses were delivered online or in the form of a Webinar. These courses were specific to the teacher's subject area or roles within the College. One teacher also participated in NAPLAN marker training.

b) Teachers and administration staff that received training as a group during staff development days and/or specific to their faculty include:

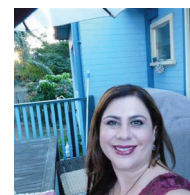
- External providers and on the use of the MAZE student management system;
- Dealing with Difficult Clients by a highly regarded and experienced educator;
- Multiple sessions held by experienced teachers and school leaders on differentiation within the classroom;
- Joint training with the staff at Cabramatta High School including DEC accredited courses. For example Using Current Brain Research to inform Teaching and Learning, Australian Curriculum in NSW and Designing High Quality Mathematics Tests; and
- Administration staff have also undertaken OH & S training that included fire safety, lockdown procedures and bomb threats.

8

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

In 2014 Warakirri College employed the following:

1. A Principal, a Registered Psychologist, a Receptionist and a Business Manager;
2. 5 full-time teachers and one part-time teacher with degrees and teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition guidelines;
3. 1 part-time teacher with a bachelor degree from a higher education institution in Australia but no formal teacher education qualifications (conditionally accredited with NSWIT) and
4. Over 70% of staff come from diverse ethnic backgrounds but none are identified as being of Australian Aboriginal background.



9

STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATES

No students were found to have enrolled in VET (Vocational & Education Training) or AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework) courses in 2014.

Year Group	Semester 1	Semester 2
HSC (Year 11 and 12)	58%	60 %
Year 10	48%	41%

A poor attendance rate continues to be a challenge for the College. In many cases, low attendance was the reason they were asked to leave their former school. These difficulties are compounded by other issues such as being young parents, experiencing mental health issues, having physical disabilities, carer responsibilities or the potential at any time, to be homeless. There are very few students with normal patterns of attendance.

The College continues to review its policies and practices including building strategies to address student non-attendance. A range of measures to reduce non-attendance have been implemented that include changes to teaching methods, systematic follow up for non-attenders and revised documentation collection procedures for recording the reasons for non-attendance.

10 RETENTION FROM STAGE 5 TO STAGE 6

The College experienced a noticeable increase in the percentage of students who completed Year 10 and went on to enrol in the HSC course. In 2014 this percentage increase was recorded at 45%.

11 ENROLMENT POLICIES

These are largely unchanged from previous years and in accordance with Warakirri College's Policies and Procedures. The Enrolment Policy for example reflects the mission of the school:

Warakirri College is a school specifically designed to re-engage disenfranchised and at risk young people. In 2014 enrolment interviews were conducted by a minimum of two staff including the Principal. In accordance with policies and procedures, the suitability of a student was determined according to the following assessment criteria:

- Assessing the student's capacity and preparedness to re-engage in education;
- Making note of any learning or behavioural difficulties and/or disabilities that would need support following enrolment;
- Ensuring that the student has achieved an academic level Year 9 or equivalent;
- Assessing the student's levels of social, cultural & economic disadvantage;
- Noting that applicants had a general proficiency in speaking, reading and writing English;
- Recording if the student is from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community background; and
- Recording if the student is experiencing a range of issues that include being marginalised or isolated as well as some level of mental health or physical impediment.

The school endeavours to liaise regularly with each student's families; caseworkers, youth-workers, Juvenile Justice workers and any number of health care professionals to ensure that the student's needs are being addressed holistically.

In order to maintain their enrolment, students must not engage in bullying, violent behaviour or conduct that harms other students, staff or school property. The most common reason for students' enrolment being terminated is persistent non-attendance.

The Enrolment Policy as updated September 2014 is included in Appendix 1.

12 SUMMARY OF SCHOOL POLICIES

The Student Welfare Policy (Pastoral Care Policy) outlines the College's commitment to addressing the holistic needs of the students who are acknowledged as having particularly difficult life circumstances and often results in challenging behaviours. This policy has been reviewed in 2014.

The Discipline Policy outlines the processes that are followed in the event of a breach of the disciplinary code. The Discipline Policy applies the principles of procedural fairness and involve parents or care-givers in these processes in the event of a suspension or expulsion. This policy was reviewed in 2014.

The Discipline Policy is read in conjunction with the Corporal Punishment Policy which states that "Corporal punishment of students at Warakirri College is prohibited and excluded as an unacceptable method of disciplining students. Warakirri College does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-college persons, including parents/carers to enforce discipline." This policy was reviewed in September 2014.

The Complaints and Grievances Policy outlines who can make a complaint or suggestion and includes the form in which that complaint or suggestion can be lodged and to whom including what processes are used in responding to the complaint or suggestion. This policy was reviewed in 2014, but has not substantially changed since 2012.

The Student Anti-bullying Policy and the Student Code of Conduct (Appendix 2) highlights the importance of respect, responsibility, honesty and describes the actions that staff or students should take to preclude the existence of any form of bullying or harassment including cyber bullying. This policy was updated in September 2014.



SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS.

In 2014 the College implemented a range of strategies designed to improve its operations to the following areas:

- The 100% increase in student numbers in 2014 has created efficiencies across all teaching areas including improvements to the school's administration;
- Student attendance levels have improved;
- As student enrolment numbers have increased staff numbers have increased commensurately;
- A new student Management System was purchased and teachers were trained in using this system for reports, marks collection and pastoral issues;
- A full time registered psychologist has been employed to assist students with their mental health and personal needs;
- A grant has been received for the construction / fit out of a science laboratory with a completion date of mid 2015;
- Discipline issues were attended to with greater frequency and in keeping with the Students' Code of Conduct; and
- Educational & financial reporting obligations were met in a timely manner.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

Warakirri College was established to serve students who have been disconnected from mainstream schools. This disconnection was identified as a result of social, mental, intellectual or physical disadvantages. Many of our students have been expelled from government schools for extended absences or serious misbehaviour and in most cases those challenges still persist.

Students range in age from 15 – 22 and some are early school-leavers who have been unable to find work and have decided to return to school to complete Year 10 or enrol in the HSC.

Nearly all Warakirri students are confronting one or more of the following:

- Homelessness, frequent changes of address or family breakdowns, parenthood, substance abuse, domestic-violence, high needs family members requiring care, trauma survival, mental health issues or learning difficulties; and
- Some of our students have left mainstream schools because they have suffered from bullying.

The majority of students are from families who access welfare payments and some are living independently or in refuges. The College does not ask for any financial contribution because we understand that this would place undue hardships and create another barrier to their education.

Many of our students were initially arriving without having money for food during the day, and in particular not eating breakfast. The College provides food for the students as an initiative to curtail the high number of students who were unable to engage in learning due to nutritional deficiency.

INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Teachers and Administration staff work diligently to promote a culture of respect and responsibility. This is found in the Student Code of Conduct (Appendix 2) and staff work tirelessly to implement processes to assist students with understanding the expectations and protocols of the College. For example workplace expectations in terms of dress, punctuality, and peer relations are often the subject of class discussions.

Staff frequently discuss strategies during weekly meetings and as part of regular Staff Development Days, triggering processes engineered around developing values and building a culture of respect. The College has always taken a strong position about the unacceptability of bullying. As already mentioned intolerance to bullying, makes the school a safe haven that many students have never experienced previously.

In 2014, the College engaged a full time psychologist who not only provided one on one counselling support for students but also conducted a range of assessments including literacy and numeracy tests. The School Psychologist attends Pastoral Care meetings and presents relevant information regarding mental health issues, learning difficulties and personal challenges.

Where relevant third party medical information is discussed with the aim of assisting teachers to gain a greater understanding of the particular needs of students. The School Psychologist under the supervision of the Principal, also conducts Life Skills for the students in Year 10 and the HSC groups. During the classes, students covered such areas as positive relationships, ethical communication and more practical topics such as budgeting, renting and goal setting.

Towards the end of 2014 the students and teachers committed to a community project which involved filling shoe boxes with Christmas gifts and items that would be useful for children living overseas in poverty. The students eagerly embraced this opportunity this initiative struck a chord with many students who enjoyed helping others less fortunate than themselves.



STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

Warakirri students are asked to complete a Student Satisfaction Survey, which is included with their final report at the end of the school year, and all students who leave the College are asked to complete an exit survey.

From those surveys and comments that students have made it is clear that:

- Teachers are widely considered to be caring, and accepting of student differences;
- The College is a place where students feel safe and allowed to be individuals and where they have a chance to achieve their goals, despite being excluded from or uncomfortable with mainstream educational pathways; and
- The students like the facilities provided by the College and acknowledge the value of the structure provided by the teachers and staff.

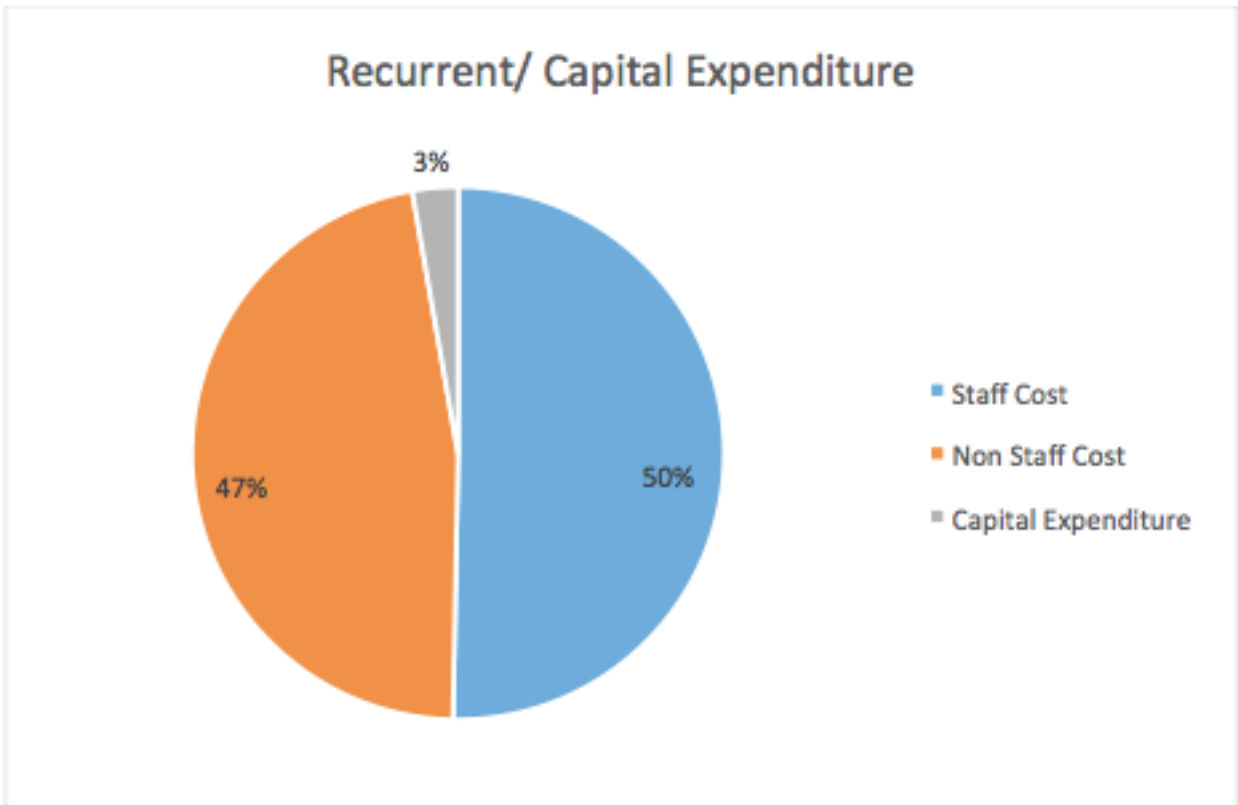
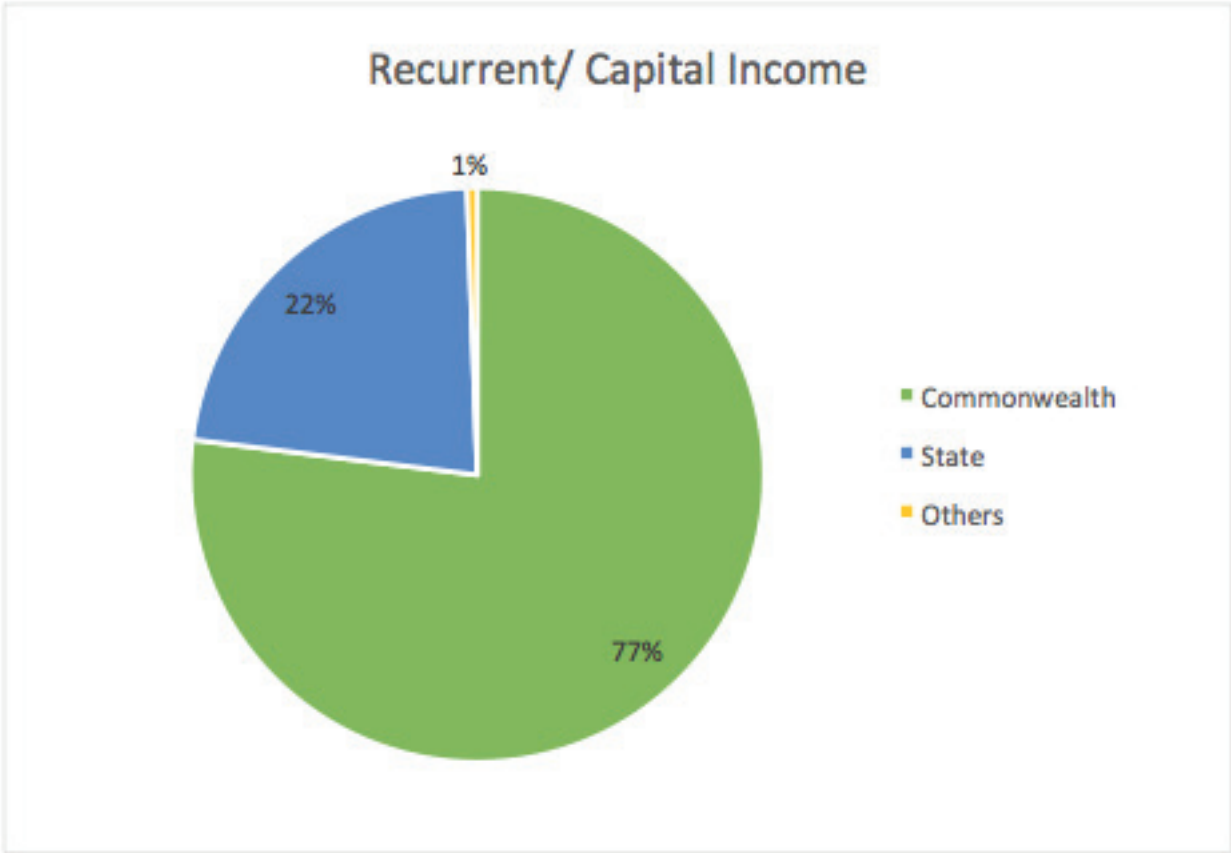
Very few of the students have parents who are involved with the school. While most students live with one parent, many live independently. There is no Parents and Friends Association and the College has very little contact with parents other than phone calls regarding absent students. About 35% of students are 18 or over. Therefore only small fragments of anecdotal evidence are available regarding parental satisfaction, which is generally stated as being very high. Most parents in fact are very grateful to the College for taking their children who are generally recognised as having had a range of challenges at their previous school and/or schools.

Most students are referred to the College by local community organisations like Salvation Army, Mission Australia, Marist Youth Care, Juvenile Justice, DEC Home School Liaison Officers, Woodville Community Centre, Community First Step, Lotus House and local high schools to name but a few.

Other community organisations support the school at assemblies or supporting the students to attend presentations on Keeping Safe Online, Controlling Gambling, Sexual Health and Contraception, Drug and Alcohol issues. The Cabramatta PCYC is the venue for the students' PE classes and the club has supported the students' membership and offered a most favourable rate for the school's use of their facilities. The PCYC also sends speakers to the College; in support of the values and goals of the College which are consistent with those of the club. The Fairfield Council Libraries support the College by regularly donating books and resources.

The staff turnover at the College is low. During 2014 one staff member resigned after being placed on a performance management program. There were no other staff resignations. Most teachers have been at the school for 5 years or more and the teaching staff is very stable.





APPENDIX 1

Policy 073 Enrolment Policy

“The School’s policies which are made from time to time are made pursuant to the requirements set out in section 47 of the Education Act and of the Board of Studies for registration of the school.”

1. PURPOSE

To guide staff in the selection of students for Warakirri College, acknowledging that the aim of the College is to assist young people to reconnect with education and complete their schooling.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Warakirri College and MTC staff involved in the process of enrolling new students.

3. DEFINITIONS

N/A

4. REFERENCES

N/A

5. POLICY

5.1. Selection

5.1.1. Warakirri College primarily seeks to support students suffering from social or financial disadvantage, medical or emotional challenges or who have become disconnected from education.

5.1.2. Warakirri College cannot cater for students who are functionally illiterate in English or who require intensive behaviour or health support. Case management is available to all students who are enrolled in the school, but the College is not in a position to manage students who cannot operate within the adult learning environment.

5.1.3. All students who apply to attend Warakirri College within the designated intake times will be required to attend an interview as part of the application process. If there is a Parent / Guardian / Caregiver they are required to attend to learn about the College and contribute to the information shared.

5.1.4. A student’s acceptance into the program is dependent on their presentation at interview and their demonstrated ability to work within the policies and philosophy of Warakirri College

5.1.5. All applicants must provide proof of age and evidence of Australian citizenship or permanent resident status. Photocopies of the supporting documents are placed in the students’ files.

5.2. Enrolment

5.2.1. Students enrolled at Warakirri College may be required to undergo a Literacy and Numeracy assessment or other cognitive testing, if the teaching staff deems it necessary. This assessment may be conducted prior to enrolment or post enrolment.

5.2.2. Prospective students are to provide evidence of prior learning and a copy of the most recent school report. If necessary, contact with a past school will be made, to confirm details of enrolment and reasons for leaving. Contact with other relevant organisations may also be made before a student’s enrolment application is accepted.

5.2.3. Students entering Year 10 enrolment are to have had significant participation in year nine studies, or equivalent as determined by the Principal.

APPENDIX 2 – WARAKIRRI COLLEGE STUDENT CONTRACT

As a student at Warakirri College, I know I have the right to:

1. Enjoy a safe and supportive learning environment free from discrimination or harassment;
2. Speak to Warakirri staff about any issues in my personal life or life at school that may adversely affect my education or welfare either at school or at home.

As a student at Warakirri College, I know I have the responsibility to follow the Student Code of Conduct and I understand that my position in the College will be at risk if I breach this code.

Warakirri College Student Code of Conduct

At Warakirri College students agree to:

1. Act in a manner that is respectful and supportive of staff and students;
2. Take responsibility for their actions;
3. Come to class on time, prepared for lessons with appropriate books, completed homework and necessary equipment;
4. Supply a note for all absences, including partial absences;
5. Participate in a conscientious and responsible manner in all College activities;
6. Be co-operative in class and support other students' learning;
7. Take responsibility for personal belongings and respect those of others;
8. Dress in a manner that is respectful of others and in keeping with workplace dress codes;
9. Turn off mobile phones and other devices during class time;
10. Not bring weapons or dangerous items of any kind to the College;
11. Not bring or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or non-prescribed medication;
12. Not graffiti or damage any item on College premises;
13. Not smoke less than 10m from any College premises;
14. Not commit or engage in any dishonest or unfair act in relation to an examination or other form of academic assessment;
15. Not engage in any offensive conduct or unlawful activity.

I have read and understand all items in this contract and I agree to comply with it to the best of my ability. I understand that if I do not honour any part of this contract I can expect to face disciplinary action and that my position at the College will be under review. I understand that I am able to discuss or get clarification on any item in this contract or related College policies and procedures at any time upon request.

Warakirri College – Level 1, 1-3 Hamilton Road, Fairfield NSW 2165 - phone: (02) 9914 3250

5.3.1. Successful applicants will receive a letter confirming their enrolment.

5.4. Withdrawal

5.4.1. Warakirri College recognises the commitment they ask of their students will not suit everyone's needs and respects the right of any potential student to withdraw their application for inclusion in Warakirri College.

5.4.2. If a student makes the choice to withdraw their application for enrolment this does not mean they cannot apply again at a later date.

5.4.3. Should a student terminate their enrolment at the College, following a period of attendance, the College will consider a request to re-enrol, at the discretion of the Principal.



www.mtcaustralia.com.au