



MATER DEI
INCLUSION FOR ALL

Mater Dei: Client Rights
National Standard 1 - Rights

201409006	CLIENT RIGHTS
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Applies to: Children, Students, Young People and Service Users
Specific responsibility: All Staff, Management, Volunteers, Contractors, Sub-Contractors

Version: 001
Date approved: 09/14
Next review date: 09/15

Policy context: This Policy relates to	
Standards or other external requirements	NSW Disability Services Standards 1993
Legislation or other requirements	Community Services Complaints and Appeals Monitoring Act (NSW) 1993 Disability Services Act (NSW) 1993 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act (Commonwealth) 1986 Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) 1992 Anti-Discrimination Act (NSW) 1977 Disability Inclusion Act 2014
Contractual obligations	Family & Community Services (FaCS) National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Disability Care Australia (DCA)

POLICY STATEMENT

Mater Dei recognises that each person with a disability is unique and has the right to receive a service that is designed and provided in a way that supports them to meet their individual needs and goals, to maximise their opportunities to make decisions and choices the same as other members of the community allowing for privacy, dignity and confidentiality.

Mater Dei values and respects cultural diversity and incorporates an individual's cultural identity and requirements into the development and achievement of individual goals.

Mater Dei will ensure staff, management and the broader community respect the choices, preferences and participation of people with a disability across all aspects of community life by maximising their social and cultural opportunities, inclusion and independence.

Mater Dei understands and supports the principles of fairness and human rights in all aspects of service delivery.

Mater Dei will ensure that services are provided in an environment free from discrimination, financial, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation.



Mater Dei will

- provide easily understood and accessible information to all clients at service commencement about what the Organisation does, how clients can contact the Organisation, clients' rights, the service standards clients can expect and opportunities to provide feedback or make a complaint
- ensure clients have access to a fair and transparent system for making complaints and for reporting any breach of their rights
- support clients to exercise choice and participate in service delivery and direction
- involve clients in the development and review of Policies and Procedures that impact on their service, and
- promote processes and strategies for equality and the upholding and respect of human rights.

Mater Dei Client Service Charter outlines these rights and responsibilities in a way that is accessible and easily understood by clients.

The Charter

The Charter outlines:

Mater Dei provides a range of services and programs to children, students, young people and stakeholders who have a disability.

The Mater Dei School is for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 who have been assessed with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities as their primary disability. Mater Dei School is a co-educational Catholic Congregational School located in the Wollongong Diocese under the auspices of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan whose ethos is based on the Rule of St Benedict. Our culture is one of peace, prayer, service, social justice, hospitality and stewardship. Our Mission is to offer an individual and holistic education in a safe, non-threatening environment.

The Mater Dei Early Intervention Program (MDEIP) is located at the Mater Dei School in Camden. MDEIP offers centre-based and outreach programs for babies, toddlers and children from birth to eight years of age who have developmental delay and/or a diagnosed disability such as a specific syndrome and/or a medical condition.

The Mater Dei Living Skills Program (MDLSP) has four locations within the Macarthur local communities of Camden, Narellan, Elderslie and Leumeah. MDLSP provides a living skills program within residential settings for young people from 12 to 18 years of age who are enrolled in the Mater Dei School.

Participants may contact The Director of Services on 4654 8726 for further information on these or other Mater Dei programs and services.

Principles

Individual Planning

Mater Dei's individual planning process supports every person with a disability receiving a service to attain their individual goals in the least restrictive manner, within available resources, while meeting all



legislative requirements.

Our commitment includes

- assisting all people with a disability receiving a service to participate in the individual planning process, to identify and prioritise personal needs, goals and aspirations
- developing a written plan that is current and responsive
- developing a written plan annually and reviewing the progress towards achieving needs and goals with the person every 3 months
- modifying or changing the written plan if the person's needs and goals are met or have changed
- assisting the person to fully utilise community services, resources and facilities in the pursuit of achieving their goals and developing independence
- providing the necessary supports and guidance by trained staff with appropriate levels of skills, experience and expertise
- ensuring the goals of each person are realistic and achievable within the realms of strengths, abilities, ambitions and funding parameters, and
- considering the cultural needs of the person and their family and/or significant others while respecting language differences, religious requirements and social structures.

Lifelong Learning

Mater Dei provides a range of programs and the provision of specialist staff to support the participation and achievement of a positive outcome by children, students, young people and service users from early years prior to entering School, through to Post School preparation for adulthood and the workforce to lifelong learning.

All children, students, young people and service users have the right to access a broad and balanced education that will prepare them for participation in society. They have the right to an education that meets their individual spiritual, cultural, social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs as lifelong learners.

Advocacy

Mater Dei is committed to the provision of individual and systemic advocacy to respond to and on behalf of children, students, young people and service users and the broader Mater Dei Community.

Mater Dei will

- promote the independence, social and economic participation of people with a disability
- promote choice and control in the pursuit of a person's goals, planning and delivery of supports, and
- maximise the independent lifestyles of people with a disability and their full inclusion in mainstream communities.



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Decision Making and Choice

Mater Dei is committed to providing children, students, young people and service users with the skills, support and opportunities necessary to make informed decisions and to exercise choice in all aspects of their daily lives.

Mater Dei will ensure each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of their daily life in relation to the services they receive.

Mater Dei actively supports the involvement of families, significant others and/or advocates in the decision-making process about the service the child, student, young person or service user is to receive.

Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality

Mater Dei recognises that all people with a disability have the right to expect that they will be treated courteously, with dignity and respect; that their personal information will be protected by complying with National Privacy Principles regarding the collection, use and disclosure of their private information and that their personal information will be kept confidential.

Mater Dei will ensure information relating to children, students, young people and service users will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be disclosed or divulged unless specifically authorised by the person or subpoenaed for legal purposes.

All children's, students', young people's and service users' files will be stored in locked storage or filing cabinets and will only be accessed by staff or management of Mater Dei School, Early Intervention Program or Living Skills Program to enter or update information pertaining directly to the child, student, young person or service user.

Mater Dei has a process for the back-up of electronic data and maintains a hard copy of files should electronic data become corrupted. Passwords to access electronic data are protected and changed on a regular basis.

Exchange of Information

Mater Dei will obtain the consent of children, students, young people or service users or their parent, carer or nominated advocate before any information about them is sought or released. *Exchange of Information* forms will be maintained in each person's file.

Safety

All children, students, young people and service users have the right to feel safe at Mater Dei. All programs are staffed by trained professionals who have all undertaken and obtained a Working with Children Check and a Police Criminal Clearance.

All sites have emergency procedures including but not limited to evacuation, behaviour, threat, natural disaster and first aid response.



All staff, children, students, young people and service users have a responsibility to ensure that Mater Dei is a safe place by behaving in ways that are not abusive, intimidating or threatening to others nor to behave in a manner that endangers the safety or well-being of others.

Protection of Human Rights and Freedom from Abuse

Mater Dei has strict Policies and Procedures for the *Protection of Human Rights and Freedom from Abuse*.

Where there is any suspicion of abuse or neglect Mater Dei will respond promptly and sensitively to protect our children, students, young people and service users, staff and management from further harm.

Complaints & Feedback

Mater Dei encourages feedback, both positive and negative.

Mater Dei has a *Complaints and Feedback* process. Complaints and feedback can be made in a number of ways including by letter, email, phone, in person or by using the *Complaint and Grievance Form* or *Feedback Form*.

Staff at Mater Dei will help you if you need assistance in making a complaint. For example, we can organise an interpreter if you need one. You may wish to have an advocate or someone to act on your behalf to help you make a complaint.

There are a number of Advocacy Services that also provide this kind of help or may be able to give you advice or assist you in making a complaint including the NSW Ombudsman and the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Toll Free Call) 1800 451 524.

Service Management

Mater Dei has a *Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Strategy* that encourages your comments when we review our service management systems, procedures and processes.

Each year Mater Dei will distribute Satisfaction Surveys and we will ask for your comments on what we do, if it meets your needs or how we do it better.

As a child, student, young person or service user you have the right to comment on the service you receive. Your comments are important to us so we can provide the best service possible.



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DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this Policy	
Related Policies	Protection of Human Rights & Freedom from Abuse Service Access Complaints Decision Making & Choice Privacy & Dignity Confidentiality Service Management Storage of Files Collection / Exchange of Information Quality Assurance / Continuous Improvement
Forms, record keeping or other Organisational documents	Complaints Feedback

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Annually	Director of Services	Board of Directors

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1			
2			
3			