



Our Lady of
Mercy College

Writing Style Guide

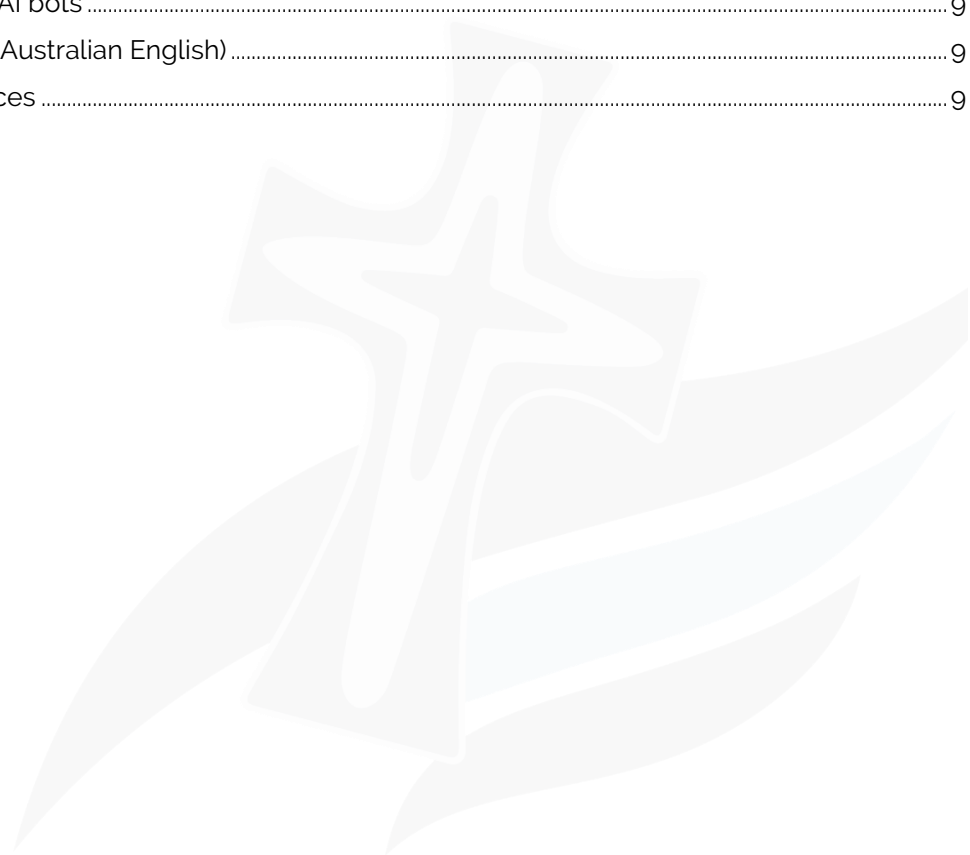
Writing Style Guide

This guide sets out conventions for word usage and style at Our Lady of Mercy College, including College-specific terminology and general language guidelines. At the end of the document, you will also find an overview of common errors that often appear when using AI applications such as Copilot or ChatGPT.

For enquiries and or additions, please contact the Marketing Department on (08) 9720 3300.

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Our Lady of Mercy College Specific Words and Phrases:

College:

- Capital 'C' used for College when referring to Our Lady of Mercy College. 'the College' instead of 'the school'.
- Our Lady of Mercy College and not OLMC (unless requested).
- 'Mercy' may be used on its own when referring to the Mercy family or related contexts.

College Buildings:

- Angela Costello Learning Centre (AC)
- Catherine McAuley Learning Centre (CM)
- Placida Hayes Science Centre (PH)
- Ursula Frayne Learning Centre (UF)
- Ursula Frayne Learning Commons
- Marcellin Champagnat T&E Centre (TE)
- Xavier Read Gymnasium (XR)
- Mercy 101
- The Uniform Shop
- College Café (Ctrl + ' (apostrophe), then type e)

College Captains

College Colours and Honours

- Academic Colours
- Community Colours
- Faith Colours
- College Honours

College Awards (Major)

- Academic Distinction
- Proxime Accessit
- Sporting Excellence
- Dux
- Marcellin Champagnat Shield
- Mercy Education Shield
- Ursula Frayne Shield
- O'Meara Shield
- 90s Club
- Marian Award

College Pillars: Embracing Life, Nurturing Faith, Inspiring Learning

College Values (See Mercy Values)

Class: Class of 2026

Christian Service-Learning program (CSL)

Dear Parents and Caregivers: This is preferred over parents and guardians.

Department: Do not capitilise in for example Dance department

Events:

Titles of College events are capitalised when written in full (e.g. Presentation Night, Year 12 Ball), but lowercase when shortened or used generically (e.g. the presentation, the ball).

Fun Friday**Houses:**

There are six Houses at the College:

- **Champagnat:** Tenacity, Integrity & Loyalty
- **Costello:** Guide, Inspire & Uphold
- **Frayne:** Leadership, Faith, & Friendship
- **Hayes:** Honesty, Hope & Humility
- **McAuley:** Courage, Compassion & Commitment
- **Read:** Dream, Believe & Achieve

House House is to be capitalised when referring to any of the six Houses.

House Patrons:

- **St Marcellin Champagnat**
- **Sr Angela Costello**
- **Sr Ursula Frayne**
- **Sr Placida Hayes**
- **Sr Catherine McAuley**
- **Sr Xavier Read**

House spirit**Mercy values****Compassion, Courage, Hospitality, Justice, Respect, Service**

Mercy values should always be capitalised (e.g. Compassion, Courage, Hospitality, Justice, Respect, Service). When used in sentences, capitalise the value if it refers directly to the named College value (e.g. George showed Courage when he...).

The terms, Middle School and Senior School, are new. These terms will allow for an additional Junior/Primary option should we go K-12 in the future.

Middle School: Years 7–9

Senior School: Years 10–12

Names:

- **Student name** and class: Mary Brown, Year 11,
On social media: no surname
- **Staff names:** Judy Smith, not Ms Judy Smith
- **Other names:** e.g. P&F Chair: Judy Smith

Pastoral Care Group or PCG for short

Phone Numbers: (08) 9720 3300, include the area code

Program/programs, not programmes

Retreats: Year 7 Retreat

The Mercy Way

Teams:

Career Services Team
College Executive (No team)

Terms/ Weeks/ Semesters:

- Term 1, not Term One, use capitals for Term 1
- Semester 1, not Semester One, use capitals
- Week 1, not Week One, use capitals

Senior School: Years 10–12, Middle School: Years 7–9

Year levels:

- Year 7, not Year seven
- Years 7 and 8, not Year 7 and 8
- Years 10–12 (use n-dash (ctrl minus), not hyphen)

Year 12 Council of Student Leaders

South West (region). south-west when general.

Wellbeing (no hyphen)

Western Australia (not West Australia)

General Words/Phrases/Terms:

&: Write as and in titles.

1st, 2nd always when referring to the sports teams: (example 1st Soccer), but first, second, third, etc when relating to anything else in a paragraph format, but 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th in list format.

800 metres (rather than 800m)

Anzac or ANZAC: Always Anzac when referring to Anzac Day / Anzac assembly, but ANZAC when referring to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

Calendar dates: *Monday 5 January 2026* (no punctuation, no "st/nd/th").

Time: 8:30 am, 8:00 am–12.00 pm (en dash for ranges). Do not use 8am.

Decades: *1990s, 2000s* (no apostrophe).

Father's Day

Learning Area

Mother's Day

R U OK? Day

Subjects: Capitalise when subject name (*Drama*), lowercase otherwise (*drama production*).

Church Words

- act of God
- Ash Wednesday
- Baptism
- bishop; Bishop (when used as a title)
- Catholic (when referring to the religion); catholic (when referring to the term 'universal')
- charism
- Christian, Christianity
- communion
- Easter, Easter Day
- eulogy
- Eucharist
- God bless
- Good Friday
- Gospel, Gospel values
- Holy Spirit
- Jesus Christ
- Jesus Christ (the); the Lord Jesus; the Lord
- Lent
- liturgy, liturgical celebrations
- Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist
- Lord's Supper (the)
- Mass (pl Masses): Nuptial Mass, Requiem Mass
- parish priest; Parish Priest (when used as a title)
- Pope (the), Bishop of Rome, head of the Roman Catholic Church
- Pope (the), Vicar of Jesus Christ, Vicar of Christ
- prayer
- priest
- religious order
- Roman Catholic Church; the Catholic Church; the Church
- rosary
- Sacrament
- Sacraments, Blessed Sacraments
- Sacraments of Healing (Reconciliation)
- Sacraments of Initiation (Eucharist and Confirmation)

Comma in Lists

Use the Australian style, which does not include the Oxford comma.

Do this: We brought apples, bananas and pears.

Not this: We brought apples, bananas, and pears.

Dot Points & Bullet Points:

When using dot-points:

1. Full Sentences

Each point begins with a capital letter.

Each point ends with a full stop.

Example:

- The Board came to two important conclusions.
- Staff from the department should investigate the feasibility of developing legislated guidelines for future investigations.
- Research should be funded in the three priority areas.

2. Sentence Fragments or Short Lists

Each point begins with a lowercase letter (unless a proper noun).

Only the last point ends with a full stop.

Example:

The four types of assistance available are:

- monetary assistance
- equipment or environmental modifications
- resources
- advisory services

First Nations

Elder

First Nations, not Aboriginal

First Nations Education Assistant

Noongar nation, consists of a number of language groups. For Our Lady of Mercy College, the following language groups are relevant: Wardandi, Binjarup, Willman and Kaneang

Acknowledgement of Country: We acknowledge the Bindjareb People of the Noongar Nation, the traditional custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.

We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations Peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Welcome to Country: Only ever to be presented by an Elder.

Six Seasons: the Noongar people follow a six-season calendar: Birak, Bunuru, Djeran, Makuru, Djilba, and Kambarang.

Kaya: Welcome

Boodja: Country

On Country: Being 'on Country' implies residency within a tract of landscape involving cultural origins and responsibilities, whereas being 'off Country' implies residency external to this home land.

Hyphens and Dashes

1. Hyphen (-)

Looks like: the shortest line

Keyboard: - key

Spacing: No spaces either side

Main uses in Australian English:

A. Compound words

Joins two (or more) words that work together as one. Examples:

- **before a noun:** *high-speed train, state-of-the-art design*
- **sometimes after a noun:** less common, but used if needed for clarity (*the train is high-speed*).

B. Numbers and fractions

- *twenty-four, three-quarters*

2. En dash (–)

Looks like: medium length dash (wider than a hyphen, shorter than an em dash)

Keyboard: CTRL + minus

Spacing in Australian English: **No spaces** for ranges, **spaces** for parenthetical use (see below).

A. Showing a range

Joins numbers, dates, times, or scores to mean "to" or "through".

2019–2022, pages 15–20, the Fremantle Dockers won 8–6

No spaces around the en dash in this use.

B. Connecting related terms

Shows a link or relationship between words:

Sydney–Melbourne flight

There is one exception to this rule. When an adverb ending in 'ly' precedes a compound adjective (e.g. "regarded person"), it functions as a modifier and no hyphen is needed. For example, you would write "a highly regarded person," not "a highly-regarded person" OR a mildly cool summer.

C. Dash used instead of parentheses (brackets)

Can be used instead of commas or brackets to add a side note.

In Australian English, the en dash is often used **with spaces** on either side for this purpose:

The committee – after much debate – approved the proposal.

3. Em dash (—)

Use sparingly. Try to avoid.

'ise' or 'ize'?

People are often confused as to whether to use 'ise' or 'ize' in certain words. The Australian version is to use 'ise', example: modernise; organise; realise; recognise.

Job Titles

Capital letters are often used for job titles. However, this varies according to 'hierarchy': plumber but Chairperson; electrician but Judge. Initial capital letters should not be used for words that describe occupations or professions: Mary Jones is a judge, her mother Olive an electrician and their brother Will is a lawyer.

Plurals

The pluralising S is not preceded by an apostrophe: 20 students, 1890s, Year 12s.

Spaces After a Full Stop

One space after a full stop. It was once the practice to insert two spaces after the full stop terminating a sentence, but the practice now is to insert one space after the full stop terminating a sentence. This is largely due to the clarity of print provided by word processing technology and to avoid 'gullies' of space 'meandering' through a page of text.

Sport:

runner-up / runners-up or Runner-up / Runners-up in a heading format

Sports names: Capitalise the sports names only when they refer to a name of a team but use lower case when referring to the sport as a subject by itself: It has been a good year for basketball at Our Lady of Mercy College.

Inter-school (uppercase) if referring to a name of a carnival, but inter-school (lower case) when referring to general inter-school events or if referring to multiple competitions.

tug-o-war

Titles

In line with Australian English conventions, titles such as Mr, Mrs, Ms, and Dr should be written without full stops. For example: Mr Smith, Mrs Jones, Ms Taylor and Dr Nguyen.

Common Errors Due to using AI bots

Spelling Differences (US vs Australian English)

- ize vs -ise → organize ❌ → organise ✔️
- or vs -our → color, honor ❌ → colour, honour ✔️
- er vs -re → center, meter ❌ → centre, metre ✔️
- og vs -ogue → catalog, dialog ❌ → catalogue, dialogue ✔️
- eled vs -elled → canceled, traveled ❌ → cancelled, travelled ✔️
- ense vs -ence → defense, license (noun) ❌ → defence, licence (noun) ✔️
- (not enroll, enrollment ❌) -l vs -ll → enrol, enrolment ✔️

Grammar & Usage Differences

Dates

- AI often gives US format: January 5, 2010 ❌
- Australian style: 5 January 2010 ✔️

Oxford Comma

- AI usually inserts Oxford commas: apples, bananas, and pears ❌
- Standard Australian style: apples, bananas and pears ✔️

Hyphens/Dashes

- AI defaults to em dashes (—, US style). ❌
- Australian usage prefers en dash with spaces: She was going to say something – then stopped. ✔️

Titles & Honorifics

- US style uses full stops: Mr., Dr., Ms. ❌
- Australian style: Mr, Dr, Ms ✔️