

Application and Enrolment Policy and Procedures

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MITS Mission: The successful and confident transition of Indigenous students from home communities to Melbourne schools

MITS Vision: To create pathways to greater opportunity for Indigenous students

MITS Values: Respect Courage Culture Care

1 Introduction

The Melbourne Indigenous Transition School (MITS) is an independent residential transition school in Richmond, Victoria, for Indigenous students from remote and regional communities in Australia.

Each year, 22 boys and girls around Year 7 age learn and live at MITS, transitioning into life in Melbourne. At the end of their MITS year, each student progresses to a scholarship position at one of MITS's Partner Schools in Melbourne.

As a school offering all of its students full scholarships, and as a school which experiences demand from prospective families and communities far outweighing the positions available, it is vital that MITS's selection and enrolment procedures are considered, transparent and robust.

2 Policy

2.1 Full scholarship school

All students who are offered and accept a position at MITS are offered a full scholarship to MITS. No fees are payable by the parents or guardians of the student. Parents may be asked to pay a refundable deposit, which can be used by MITS to cover the cost of travel expenses not reimbursed by ABSTUDY, or to cover the cost of any property damage caused by the student while at MITS.

MITS uses its best endeavours to identify full scholarship positions at its Partner Schools for all graduating students. However, MITS cannot guarantee that positions will be available for all students, and cannot guarantee that where positions are available they will be full scholarship positions.

By signing an Application Form, parents, guardians and students agree to be bound by the values, policies and rules of MITS.

2.2 Selection criteria

The selection of students will be based on the following criteria. A student must:

- (a) **(Indigenous Australian)** identify as an Indigenous Australian;
- (b) **(school attainment)** have completed Year 6 or Year 7 immediately prior to commencing at MITS;
- (c) **(ability to access)** demonstrate that, without MITS, they would not be able to gain access to a mainstream school in a large Australian city;
- (d) **(demonstrated desire)** demonstrate, together with their family:
 - (i) a strong desire to pursue their education in Melbourne;
 - (ii) the resilience to pursue schooling away from home (demonstrated, by example, through participation in a school trip to a major Australian city); and
 - (iii) strong family support for them to attend school away from home;
- (e) **(demonstrated potential)** have the demonstrated potential and desire to benefit from the MITS experience. Students may demonstrate this in a range of ways, including:
 - (i) a strong prior school attendance record;
 - (ii) outstanding written and anecdotal reports from staff at their community school in relation to their attitude, behaviour and effort at school; and
 - (iii) an academic record which suggests that they are at an academic level which will enable them to transition into a mainstream Melbourne school at the end of their MITS year; and
- (f) **(confirmation)** have the above confirmed through MITS's consultations with the student's home principal, teachers, family members and community leaders.

The Executive Director is responsible for making all enrolment offers to MITS. The decision of the Executive Director in relation to any enrolment offer is final.

2.3 Factors supporting the selection criteria

The following factors will be considered in addition to the selection criteria:

- (a) **(community preference)** while no two students are the same, where MITS must decide between two students with similar profiles, MITS will preference a student from a community with which MITS or one of its Partner Schools has a long-term relationship. MITS does this as, in its experience, students who come from communities with long-term connections to MITS or its Partner Schools tend to experience greater long-term success in Melbourne;
- (b) **(pairing preference)** while no two students are the same, where MITS must decide between two students with similar profiles, MITS will preference a student who forms a pair from their community. MITS does this as, in its experience, students who come from their communities in pairs tend to experience greater long-term success in Melbourne;
- (c) **(community balance)** as a small school, MITS must ensure that it maintains a sound balance of students from across its partner communities, with no one community or region over-represented. For example, MITS will not enrol more than 5 students from the Tiwi Islands in any one commencing cohort; and
- (d) **(Victorian/Koori students)** as a school located on Victorian country, MITS has a commitment to making positions available for Koori students.

3 Procedures

3.1 Application and enrolment procedures

The procedures for application and enrolment at MITS are set out in Appendix 1.

3.2 Student Selection Committee

All enrolment offers to attend MITS are made by the Executive Director, acting with the advice of the **Student Selection Committee**. The Student Selection Committee comprises of the:

- Executive Director;
- Community Engagement Manager;
- Head of Education; and
- Head of Boarding.

The Student Selection Committee may call on other people to contribute to their deliberations, including MITS school staff, boarding staff, pathways staff or directors who have participated in interviews or who have prior knowledge of applicant students.

The Executive Director's decision to make an enrolment offer is final.

3.3 Interviewers

MITS recognises the value and importance of interviewing students and their families in their communities. The following factors will be applied in determining which staff will participate in student interviews. It may not be possible to ensure each factor is applied, depending on the profile of available staff at the time of interviews:

- (a) **(two interviewers)** Each shortlisted applicant will be visited by two interviewers. This enables MITS interviewers to gather as much information on an applicant as possible, from the applicant themselves, as well as their family, teachers and peers.
- (b) **(consistency of interviewers)** To ensure that the interview process is as objective as possible, every interview pair will include one of the Community Engagement Manager or the Head of Education. The second person in each interview pair may vary.
- (c) **(disruption to MITS program)** MITS must prioritise the staffing of its Year 7 program. Teachers and boarding coordinators will only participate in student interviews where their absence from normal duties does not adversely impact on the delivery of MITS's program.
- (d) **(gender balance)** Where possible, each interviewing pair will comprise a male and a female.
- (e) **(diversity of perspective)** Where possible, each interview pair will comprise staff from two separate parts of MITS (school, boarding or administration/community engagement). This ensures that the interviewers bring a diversity of experiences and perspectives, while maintaining necessary consistency in accordance with item (b) above.

Interviewers will be determined by the Executive Director in consultation with the Student Selection Committee.

4 Conditions of enrolment

4.1 Students

All MITS students are required to:

- (a) uphold the School's values of Respect, Courage, Culture and Care;
- (b) be active and participating members of the MITS community;
- (c) conduct themselves in a way which is consistent with MITS rules as set by the Leadership Team;
- (d) contribute to an environment which is culturally safe and celebratory, promotes wellbeing, and respects diversity; and
- (e) participate in all school and boarding activities.

4.2 Parents

All MITS parents and guardians are required to:

- (a) uphold the School's values of Respect, Courage, Culture and Care;
- (b) be active and participating members of the MITS community;
- (c) while at MITS or while engaging with MITS staff, volunteers or other students, conduct themselves in a way which is consistent with MITS rules as set by the Leadership Team; and
- (d) notify MITS of any change of address or other particulars for a current or applicant student.

5 End of enrolment

The Executive Director may, in his or her absolute discretion, end a student's enrolment at MITS:

- (a) in accordance with MITS's Behaviour Management Policy, as a result of a student's persistent or serious failure to act in accordance with the school rules;
- (b) where the student's progress and performance are such that, in the opinion of the Executive Director, the student is not benefiting from the programs provided by the School; or
- (c) for any other reason, which in the opinion of the Executive Director, necessitates the end of the student's enrolment at MITS.

Due process and the right of reply will be provided to all students prior to end of enrolment decisions being made under this policy. Where a student's enrolment at MITS ends, MITS will use its best endeavours to assist the student and their family to find their next educational opportunity.

6 Religion

MITS is not affiliated with any church and accepts students of all faiths.

Students will be provided with opportunities to practise their personal faith if they wish.

7 Authorisations

Where any authorisation or approval is required by MITS in relation to a student, MITS may act on an authorisation where it receives it orally, from only one parent or guardian, or both.

8 Register of Enrolments

8.1 Register

MIT S maintains an electronic register of students in Sentral, including for each student:

- (a) their name, age and home address;
- (b) name and contact details of parents/guardians, and an emergency contact;
- (c) the date of enrolment;
- (d) the date the student ceased to be enrolled at MIT S;
- (e) Medical and wellbeing information;
- (f) Centrelink and ABSTUDY information; and
- (g) all other information relevant to that student.

Parents/guardians must inform MIT S of changes to a student's information as soon as practicable. MIT S will update the Sentral register on receipt of this changed information.

8.2 Maintaining the register

The Executive Director (or his or her delegate) will ensure that the register of enrolments is kept up to date in accordance with the following procedures:

- (a) all relevant student details will be recorded on Sentral as soon as practicable when a parent/guardian accepts an offer for their child to attend MIT S;
- (b) the names and contact details of parents/guardians will be kept up-to-date through regular reminders in school newsletters and other communication to notify MIT S of any change of details;
- (c) where a MIT S staff member identifies that parent/guardian contact details are out-of-date and a parent/guardian is unable to be contacted using those details, they must notify the Executive Director (or his or her delegate) and the Executive Director (or his or her delegate) will undertake to update the information by contacting the back-up contact; and
- (d) a student will be noted as being ceased to be enrolled:
 - (i) when they complete their transitional year at MIT S;
 - (ii) when the Executive Director is advised by the student's parent/guardian or another school principal that the student has commenced enrolment at another school; or
 - (iii) where the student has not attended MIT S for at least 4 school term weeks and, having spoken with the parent/guardian of the student, the Executive Director reasonably believes that the student will not return to MIT S.

9 Privacy

MIT S is bound by the *Privacy Act (1988)*.

A Privacy Statement detailing MIT S's practices and procedures for the use and management of the personal and sensitive information it collects and records can be accessed on the its website at www.mits.vic.edu.au. Alternatively, a hard copy of the statement may be provided on request.

Appendix 1: Application and Enrolment Procedures

Step	Action	Responsible	Timing
1.	Community Engagement		
1.1.	MITS undertakes extensive travel and ongoing engagement with remote Northern Territory and Victorian regional Indigenous Families, schools, Principals and community leaders to communicate MITS's purpose, the educational opportunities MITS offers, and the profile of a student who is well placed to benefit from the MITS experience.	Community Engagement Manager (CEM)	Term 1 and Term 2
2.	Application		
2.1.	The Application Form is uploaded onto the MITS website (www.mits.vic.edu.au) and remote Northern Territory and Victorian regional Indigenous Families, schools, Principals and community leaders are notified that the application period has commenced.	CEM	Week 1, Term 2
2.2.	Applicants complete all application documentation and submit it by email only to patrick.bowden@mits.vic.edu.au . For each application, MITS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> saves the application and all supporting documents to its database Little Green Light; reviews the application to confirm whether it is complete and whether all supporting documents have been provided; and inputs key information from application forms into the Student Selection Spreadsheet. 	CEM	Term 2
2.3.	Submitted applications are reviewed and an email response is provided noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the application is complete, that it has been accepted by MITS for review and the date by which MITS will notify the applicant whether they have been shortlisted for interview; or where the application is incomplete, which information or supporting documents are missing, and the date by which they must be provided. MITS will not consider incomplete applications.	CEM	Term 2
2.4.	Application period closes	CEM	End Term 2

3.	Shortlisting		
3.1.	The Community Engagement Manager finalises the Student Selection Spreadsheet and circulates it to the Student Selection Committee for review. For each application, the Community Engagement Manager will make a recommendation to Interview, Consider or Not Interview.	CEM	Week 1, Term 3
3.2.	The Student Selection Committee meets to review all applications and confirm, for each, whether MITS will interview or not interview the applicant. As a guide, a maximum of 40 students will be short listed for interview.	Student Selection Committee (SSC)	Week 2, Term 3
3.3.	The Community Engagement Manager contacts each applicant (or, where appropriate, their local Principal) by email to confirm whether the applicant has been short listed for interview, or not short listed for interview. Where students are short listed for interview, the Community Engagement Manager will note the week during which MITS intends to visit that student in their home community to interview them.	CEM	Week 2, Term 3
3.4.	The Community Engagement Manager emails the local Principal of each short listed applicant requested that they complete the Principal Survey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MITS2020) for the applicant.	CEM	Week 3, Term 3
3.5.	All Principal Surveys are completed and the data is inputted into the Student Selection Spreadsheet.	CEM	Week 4, Term 3
4.	Interview		
4.1.	The Student Selection Committee finalises the Student Interview Matrix , agreeing the criteria against which each short-listed applicant should be assessed. The Student Selection Committee may provide this matrix to other staff for their comments before finalisation.	SSC	Week 2, Term 3
4.2.	MITS finalises its travel itinerary for student interviews and notifies all relevant staff, short-listed applicant families and Principals.	CEM	Week 2, Term 3
4.3.	MITS conducts interviews of all short-listed students in their communities. Interviewers input interview notes into Student Selection Spreadsheet.	Interviewers	Weeks 5-8, Term 3
4.4.	Student Selection Committee meets with all interviewers to consider each applicant.	SSC	Week 10, Term 3
4.5.	Student Selection Committee meets to finalise offer list. Executive Director confirms all offers.	SSC	Week 1, Term 4
5.	Offer		
5.1.	MITS contacts each short-listed applicant to advise whether or not they have received an enrolment offer to attend MITS.	Executive Director & CEM	Week 2, Term 4

5.2.	Community Engagement Manager emails confirmation letter to each short-listed applicant, and Enrolment Pack to each student receiving an enrolment offer.	CEM	
5.3.	Community Engagement Manager advises Transition Support Unit of whether or not each Northern Territory student has received an enrolment offer to attend MITS.	CEM	
6.	Acceptance		
6.1.	Each student receiving an enrolment offer returns their completed Enrolment Pack to MITS by the acceptance date via email only to patrick.bowden@mits.vic.edu.au . For each enrolment pack, MITS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> saves the pack and all supporting documents to its database Little Green Light; and reviews the application to confirm whether it is complete and whether all supporting documents have been provided. 	CEM	Week 3, Term 4
6.2.	MITS inputs all Enrolment Pack information into its student management system Sentral.	Office Manager	Week 3, Term 4
6.3.	MITS notifies ABSTUDY of all students who have received and accepted an enrolment offer.	CEM	Week 3, Term 4
6.4.	MITS sends Orientation Information Pack to all students and families and requests families to confirm the details of the parent or guardian who will travel to Melbourne with the student.	CEM	Week 5, Term 4
6.5.	MITS sends Orientation travel itineraries to each student and their parent or guardian.	CEM	Week 7, Term 4
7.	Commencement		
7.1.	MITS Staff travel to Darwin to meet NT parents and students and accompany them to Melbourne for Orientation.	3 MITS staff	Week 1, Term 1 (the following year)
7.2.	Parents and students travel to Melbourne for Orientation	Students, parents and MITS staff	Week 1, Term 1 (the following year)
7.3.	Parents return home following Orientation	Parents	Week 1, Term 1 (the following year)