

# Application and Enrolment Policy and Procedures

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**MITS Purpose:** Supporting Indigenous students to achieve their educational aspirations in Melbourne

**MITS Vision:** Empowered Indigenous students inspiring strong communities

**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, 11 boys and 11 girls join MITS in Year 7, schooling with MITS and living in MITS's Year 7 Boarding House. After two years in MITS's school program (in Year 7 and 8), each student progresses to a scholarship position at one of MITS's Pathways Schools in Melbourne.

From Year 9, MITS students are eligible to be considered for enrolment in a MITS Senior Boarding House while they attend one of MITS's Pathways Schools.

MITS operates boarding houses for male and female students:

- the Junior Fellas Boarding House at 16 The Vacluse Richmond accepts Year 7 and 8 male students;
- the Junior Girls Boarding House at 139 Richmond Terrace Richmond accepts Year 7 and 8 female students;
- the Senior Fellas Boarding House at 364 Church Street Richmond accepts male students, from Year 9 to Year 12;
- the Senior Girls Boarding House at 371 Church Street Richmond accepts female students from Year 9 to Year 12.

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.

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## 2 Purpose and scope

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to govern the process by which students are offered enrolment at MITS within its school program and boarding houses.

This policy also sets out the information that MITS records on its Enrolment Register and the procedures through which that register is maintained.

### 2.2 Scope

This policy applies to enrolment of students:

- in the MITS Year 7 and 8 School program; and
- in the MITS Senior Boarding program.

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## 3 Year 7 and 8 School and Boarding Enrolment

### 3.1 Enrolment offer

- (a) **(enrolment)** All students who are offered and accept a position at MITS in the Year 7 and Year 8 School and Boarding Program are offered a full scholarship to MITS. All Year 7 and 8 enrolment offers are for both schooling and boarding with MITS – it is not possible to enrol in only one of these programs. MITS's Year 7 and 8 School is a specialist school.
- (b) **(enrolment agreement)** A student is only deemed to be enrolled at MITS when they and their parents/guardians have completed, signed and returned to MITS the Year 7 and 8 Enrolment Agreement.
- (c) **(fees)** 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.
- (d) **(Pathways Schools)** MITS uses its best endeavours to identify full scholarship positions at its Pathways Schools for all students graduating from Year 8 (or, occasionally, from Year 7). 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.
- (e) **(values, policies and rules)** By signing an Application Form or Year 7 and 8 Enrolment Agreement, parents/guardians and students agree to be bound by the values, policies and rules of MITS.

### 3.2 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) **(geography)** live in Victoria or the Top End of the Northern Territory;
- (d) **(ability to access)** demonstrate that, without MITS, they would not be able to gain access to a mainstream school in a large Australian city;

- (e) **(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, for example, through participation in a school trip to a major Australian city);
  - (iii) strong family support for them to attend school away from home; and
  - (iv) an understanding of the MITS program;
- (f) **(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) understanding and living the school values of their home education community school;
  - (iii) outstanding written and anecdotal reports from staff at their community school in relation to their attitude, behaviour and effort at school; and
  - (iv) 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
- (g) **(confirmation)** have the above confirmed through MITS's consultations with the student's home principal, teachers, family members and community leaders;

Additionally, in making enrolment offers to students, MITS may also consider the number of applications received, the home location of all applicants across the cohort, gender of applicants, the representation of communities with which MITS has had long-term connection, existing family connections and the learning and wellbeing needs of the cohort.

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

### 3.3 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 Pathways 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 Pathways Schools tend to experience greater long-term wellbeing and 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 wellbeing and success in Melbourne;
- (c) **(community balance)** as a small school, MITS must ensure that it maintains a balance of students from across its Pathways communities, with no one community or region over-represented; and
- (d) **(Victorian/Koori students)** as a school located on Victorian country, MITS has a commitment to making positions available for Koori students.

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## 4 Year 7 and 8 School and Boarding Enrolment Procedures

### 4.1 Application and enrolment procedures

The procedures for application and enrolment in MITS's School Program are set out in Appendix 1.

### 4.2 Student Selection Committee

All enrolment offers to attend MITS are made by the CEO, acting with the advice of the **Student Selection Committee**. The Student Selection Committee is formed from time-to-time by the CEO, and its members may include (but are not limited to) the:

- CEO;
- Enrolments Administrator;
- Principal;
- Head of Boarding and Wellbeing;
- Head of Teaching and Learning; and
- Year 7 Boarding Manager.

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 CEO's decision to make an enrolment offer is final.

### 4.3 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 interviewed 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, MITS will seek to have as much consistency within interviewing groups as possible.
- (c) **(disruption to MITS program)** MITS must prioritise the staffing of its Year 7 and 8 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 CEO in consultation with the Student Selection Committee.

#### 4.4 Late Enrolment

In the event that a position becomes available in Year 7, MITS may make an enrolment offer another student during the year. This enrolment offer would be made following the same processes set out in section 4.2 and 4.3. These positions could be filled by a student who was interviewed and missed out on a position as part of MITS's original Year 7 enrolment, or by a student who has completed an Expression of Interest after interviews and offers were completed.

#### 4.5 Year 8 Enrolment

MITS may offer two additional students places to new students to commence in Year 8, as well as filling any vacant Year 7 positions that have become available. The beginning of Year 8 will be the last opportunity for a new student to commence with MITS, so as to maintain the integrity of the transition program and best equip the students for moving into their Pathways Schools in Year 9.

In addition to the criteria outlined in section 3.2 and 3.3, when selecting students to join MITS in Year 8 MITS will prioritise students who:

- (a) **(family or community connection)** have close family or community connections to MITS; or
- (b) **(shorter transition)** demonstrate that they have the potential to transition to a Pathways School within a shorter one-year program at MITS.

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### 5 Senior Boarding Enrolment

#### 5.1 Enrolment offer

- (a) **(enrolment)** All students who complete Year 7 and 8 with MITS are eligible and will be considered for an offer of continuing enrolment within MITS's Senior Boarding Houses – they do not need to apply. MITS does not have the ability to offer enrolment in the Senior Boarding Houses to all students who complete Year 7 and 8, and MITS is unable to guarantee that a student will be offered enrolment on completion of Year 8.
- (b) **(conditional on Pathways School enrolment)** Enrolment in the MITS Senior Boarding Houses is conditional on the student maintaining enrolment at MITS or in a MITS Pathways School. If a student's enrolment at MITS or in a MITS Pathways School concludes for any reason, MITS reserves the right to end the student's enrolment in the Senior Boarding House.
- (c) **(offer letter)** A student is only deemed to be enrolled at MITS when they have received and their parents/guardians have completed, signed and returned to MITS the Senior Boarding Enrolment Agreement.
- (d) **(fees)** No fees are payable by the parents or guardians of the student for the Senior Boarding Program. 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.
- (e) **(Pathways School fees)** MITS uses its best endeavours to secure full tuition scholarship positions at its Pathways Schools for all students graduating from Year 7 or 8. However, MITS cannot guarantee that those positions will be full scholarship positions.
- (f) **(houses)** An enrolment offer for MITS's Senior Boarding Houses is an offer for enrolment with MITS, and not in any one Senior Boarding House. While MITS will notify students and their parents/guardians of the house that a student will be living in, MITS may move a student from one Senior Boarding House to another for operational or behavioural reasons, or for any other reason in MITS's sole discretion.
- (g) **(values, policies and rules)** By accepting a position in a Senior Boarding House, parents/guardians and students agree to be bound by the values, policies and rules of MITS.

## 5.2 Selection criteria

When considering enrolment offers into MITS's Senior Boarding Houses, MITS will consider the following:

- (a) **(demonstrated values)** the extent to which a student has demonstrated commitment to living in accordance with MITS values and expectations (as set out in section 7.1);
- (b) **(other living options)** whether the student has other living options available to them, including in Pathways School boarding houses or host families;
- (c) **(potential to benefit)** the student's potential to benefit from the MITS Senior Boarding experience, as determined by MITS; and
- (d) **(other information)** any other information that MITS considers relevant to deciding whether to make an enrolment offer.

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

## 5.3 Pathways Schools

MITS's Pathways Schools may change from time to time at MITS's discretion.

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# 6 Senior Boarding Enrolment Procedures

## 6.1 Student Placement Committee

All enrolment offers to attend MITS are made by the CEO, acting with the advice of the Student Selection Committee.

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 CEO's decision to make an enrolment offer is final.

## 6.2 Process

The Student Selection Committee will meet as determined by the CEO to consider student placements into Pathways Schools and enrolment offers into the MITS Alumni Boarding Program.

Student interviews do not ordinarily form part of the Student Placement Committee's processes, however the Committee may choose to interview students if it deems it appropriate.

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# 7 Conditions of enrolment

## 7.1 Students

All MITS students across the Year 7 and 8 Program and Senior Boarding Program are required to:

- (a) uphold MITS'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 Executive 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.

## **7.2 Parents**

All MITS parents and guardians across the Year 7 and 8 Program and Senior Boarding Program are required to:

- (a) uphold MITS'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 Executive Team; and
- (d) notify MITS of any change of address or other particulars for a current or applicant student.

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## **8 End of enrolment**

The CEO may, in their absolute discretion and acting reasonably, end a student's enrolment at MITS:

- (a) in accordance with MITS's Suspension and Expulsion Policy;
- (b) as a result of a student's persistent or serious failure to act in accordance with MITS's values, expectations and rules;
- (c) where the student's academic progress and performance are such that, in the opinion of the CEO, the student is not benefiting from the programs provided by MITS;
- (d) where a student is enrolled in a Senior Boarding House, as a result of the student's failure to maintain enrolment at a MITS Pathways School; or
- (e) for any other reason, which in the opinion of the CEO, 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.

Where a student's enrolment in a MITS Senior Boarding House is ended, the relevant Pathways School may also choose to end the student's enrolment in that school.

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## **9 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.

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## **10 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.

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## 11 Register of Enrolments

### 11.1 Register

MITS maintains an electronic register of students enrolled in its Year 7 and 8 Program and Senior Boarding Program in its student management software (Sentral), including for each student:

- (a) their name, age, date of birth 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 MITS (where relevant);
- (e) medical, health and wellbeing information including information on disabilities, diabetes, asthma, anaphylaxis, allergies, or other health or wellbeing issues;
- (f) Centrelink, ABSTUDY and Tax File Number information necessary for the student's enrolment at MITS; and
- (g) all other information relevant to that student.

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

For students enrolled in MITS's Senior Boarding Houses, MITS will also maintain a record of the registered school at which the student is enrolled or attending.

### 11.2 Maintaining the register

The Operations Manager (or their 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 student and parent/guardian accepts an offer for enrolment into the Year 7 and 8 Program or Senior Boarding Program;
- (b) the names and contact details of parents/guardians will be kept up-to-date through regular reminders in school newsletters and other communications encouraging families to notify MITS of any change of details;
- (c) where a MITS 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 Operations Manager (or their delegate) and the Operations Manager (or their 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) in the Year 7 Program:
    - (A) when they complete Year 7 at MITS;
    - (B) when MITS is advised by the student's parent/guardian or another school principal that the student has commenced enrolment at another school or in another boarding house; or
    - (C) where the student has not attended for at least 4 school term weeks and, having spoken with the parent/guardian of the student, the CEO reasonably believes that the student will not return to MITS.



- (ii) in the Year 8 Program:
  - (A) when they complete Year 8 at MITS;
  - (B) when MITS is advised by the student's parent/guardian or another school principal that the student has commenced enrolment at another school or in another boarding house; or
  - (C) where the student has not attended for at least 4 school term weeks and, having spoken with the parent/guardian of the student, the CEO reasonably believes that the student will not return to MITS.
- (iii) in the Senior Boarding Program:
  - (A) when they complete schooling at their Pathways School or continue to be enrolled at their Pathways School but cease boarding in an Senior Boarding House;
  - (B) when MITS is advised by the student's parent/guardian or another school principal or boarding provider that the student has commenced enrolment at another school or in another boarding house; or
  - (C) where the student has not attended for at least 4 school term weeks and, having spoken with the parent/guardian of the student, the CEO reasonably believes that the student will not return to MITS.

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## 12 Privacy

MITS is bound by the *Privacy Act (1988)*.

MITS's Privacy Policy, which details MITS'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](http://www.mits.vic.edu.au). Alternatively, a hard copy of the statement may be provided on request.

## Appendix 1: Application and Enrolment Procedures (Year 7)

Step	Action	Responsible	Timing
<b>1.</b>	<b>Community Engagement</b>		
1.1.	<p>MITs undertakes extensive travel and ongoing engagement with remote Northern Territory and Victorian regional 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.</p>	Enrolments Administrator (EA)	All year
<b>2.</b>	<b>Application</b>		
2.1.	<p>The <b>Expression of Interest Form</b> is enabled on the MITs website (<a href="http://www.mits.vic.edu.au">www.mits.vic.edu.au</a>) and remote Northern Territory and Victorian regional families, schools, principals and community leaders are notified that the expression of interest period has commenced.</p>	EA	Term 1 and 2
2.2.	<p>Applicants complete the Expression of Interest Form, followed by the <b>Application Form</b> with supporting documents.</p> <p>For each application, a profile is automatically generated in MITs's EnrolHQ system including data from the Expression of Interest Form, Application Form and supporting documents</p> <p>The Enrolments Administrator reviews each application and all supporting documents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to confirm whether it is complete and whether all supporting documents have been provided; and</li> <li>to input key information from application forms into the <b>Student Selection Spreadsheet</b>.</li> </ul> <p>MITs will not consider incomplete applications.</p>	EA	Term 1 and 2
2.3.	Application period closes	EA	End Term 2
<b>3.</b>	<b>Shortlisting</b>		
3.1.	<p>The Enrolments Administrator finalises the Student Selection Spreadsheet and circulates it to the Student Selection Committee for review.</p> <p>For each application, the Enrolments Administrator will make a recommendation to Interview, Consider or Not Interview.</p>	EA	Week 1, Term 3

	For Year 8 positions, as a guide, approximately 2-5 students will be interviewed for a Year 8 commencement. This will depend on Year 7 positions vacant and the possibility of 24 students to start Year 8.		
3.2.	The Enrolments Administrator emails the local Principal of each short listed applicant requested that they complete the <b>Principal Survey</b> for the applicant.	EA	Week 1, Term 3
3.3.	All Principal Surveys are completed and the data is inputted into the Student Selection Spreadsheet.	EA	Week 1, Term 3
3.4.	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, approximately 40 students will be short listed for interview.	Student Selection Committee ( <b>SSC</b> )	Week 1, Term 3
3.5.	The Enrolments Administrator contacts each applicant (or, where appropriate, their local Principal) by email to confirm whether the applicant has been short listed for interview. Where students are short listed for interview, the Enrolments Administrator will note the week during which MITS intends to visit that student in their home community to interview them.	EA	Week 1, Term 3
<b>4.</b>	<b>Interview</b>		
4.1.	The Student Selection Committee finalises the <b>Student Interview Matrix</b> , 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.	EA	Week 2, Term 3
4.3.	MITS conducts interviews of all short-listed students in their communities or by videocall where the cost and time of travel to their community do not allow an in-person interview. Interviewers input interview notes into Student Selection Spreadsheet.	Interviewers	Weeks 3-6, Term 3
4.4.	Student Selection Committee meets with all interviewers to consider each applicant.	SSC	Week 7, Term 3
4.5.	Student Selection Committee meets to finalise offer list. CEO confirms all offers.	SSC	Week 8, Term 4
<b>5.</b>	<b>Offer</b>		
5.1.	MITS contacts each short-listed applicant to advise whether or not they have received an enrolment offer to attend MITS.	Executive Director & EA	No later than Week 1, Term 4
5.2.	Enrolments Administrator emails <b>Enrolment Form Link</b> to each student receiving an enrolment offer.	EA	
5.3.	Enrolments Administrator advises Transition Support Unit of whether or not each Northern Territory student has received an enrolment offer to attend MITS.	EA	

<b>6. Acceptance</b>			
6.1.	Each student receiving an enrolment offer completes and submits online their Enrolment Form with all supporting documentation by the acceptance date. For each enrolment pack: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Enrolment Form data is automatically saved to its EnrolHQ database; and</li> <li>MITs reviews the application to confirm whether it is complete and whether all supporting documents have been provided.</li> </ul>	EA	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.	EA	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 or Darwin with the student.	EA	Week 5, Term 4
6.5.	MITs sends Orientation travel itineraries to each student and their parent or guardian.	EA	Week 7, Term 4
6.6.	For Year 8 students, students and parents (parents return home after 2-3 days) travel to Melbourne for week 9 and 10 of Term 4 to complete an orientation program.	EA	Week 7, Term 4
<b>7. Commencement</b>			
7.1.	MITs runs an Orientation for NT students in Darwin, and an Orientation for Victorian students in Melbourne. Year 8 students do not need to complete an Orientation as they have already completed this in Term 4 of the year prior.	MITs staff	Week 1, Term 1 (the following year)