



# **PERSONAL INFORMATION PRIVACY POLICY FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

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## **OUR LADY OF MERCY SCHOOL PERSONAL INFORMATION PRIVACY POLICY FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

### **The School's Commitment to You**

Safeguarding your confidentiality and protecting your personal information is a fundamental concern of Our Lady of Mercy School. The school is committed to meeting or exceeding the privacy standards established by the BC *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*

This personal information privacy policy is intended to explain to you the current legislation which is designed to protect your privacy, to regulate the use and collection of information, and to state the steps the school has taken to ensure your personal and financial information is handled appropriately and securely.

### **Privacy Protection in British Columbia**

The Act requires an organization to obtain informed consent from an individual before collecting personal information about that individual, with certain exemptions. The organization must state why it is collecting the information, and how it will use the information collected. The Act also requires the organization to keep the information it has collected in a secure and safe manner, protecting the individual's right to have his or her information protected. The Act also describes with whom the personal information may be shared.

**Note:** Our Lady of Mercy School does not fall under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)*, which applies only to provincial government and its bodies; neither does it fall under the *Protection of Personal Information and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)*, a federal statute.

### **Ten Privacy Principles**

As part of Our Lady of Mercy School's commitment, the following *Ten Privacy Principles* govern the actions of the school as they relate to the use of personal information. These principles have been built upon the values set by the Canadian Standards Association's *Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information* and British Columbia's *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*.

#### ***Principle 1 – Accountability***

Our Lady of Mercy School is responsible for maintaining and protecting the personal information under its control. In fulfilling this mandate, the school designates an individual(s) who is(are) accountable for the school's compliance with the *Ten Privacy Principles*. This individual is the *Privacy Officer* of the school.

#### ***Principle 2 – Identifying Purposes***

Our Lady of Mercy School will identify the purposes for which personal information is collected before or at the time the information is collected.

#### ***Principle 3 – Consent***

Our Lady of Mercy School will obtain consent of the individual for the collection, use or disclosure of personal information except where the law states exemptions, grants permission, or creates a requirement for collection, use, or disclosure of personal information.

#### ***Principle 4 – Limiting Collection***

Our Lady of Mercy School will limit the personal information collected to those details necessary for the purposes identified by the school.

***Principle 5 – Use, Disclosure and Retention***

Our Lady of Mercy School will only use, disclose and retain personal information for the purpose for which it was collected unless the individual has otherwise consented, or when its use, disclosure or retention is required or permitted by law. Personal information will only be retained for the period of time required to fulfill the purpose for which it was collected.

***Principle 6 – Accuracy***

Our Lady of Mercy School will maintain personal information as accurate, complete and up-to-date form as is necessary to fulfill the purposes for which it is to be used.

***Principle 7 – Safeguarding Personal Information***

Our Lady of Mercy School will protect personal information by security safeguards that are appropriate to the sensitivity level of the information.

***Principle 8 – Openness***

Our Lady of Mercy School will make information available to individuals concerning the policies and practices that apply to the management of their information.

***Principle 9 – Individual Access***

Our Lady of Mercy School will inform an individual, upon the individual's request, of the existence, use and disclosure of the individual's information, and shall give the individual access to it in accordance with the law. Individuals may verify the accuracy and completeness of their information and may request that it be amended, if appropriate.

***Principle 10 – Complaint Process***

Individuals may direct any questions or enquiries with respect to the school's privacy policies or practices to the Privacy Officer of Our Lady of Mercy School.

## **What Information is Collected?**

Our Lady of Mercy School gathers and uses personal information to provide your child with the best possible educational services enunciated by the Mission statement of the school. Most of the information the school collects comes to the school directly from you, and only with your consent. When you apply to register your child the school will ask you to provide the information that enables it to complete the registration process. This also includes information on academic, health, and personal matters needed by the school to provide the best possible education and co-curricular programs.

## **How is Information Used ?**

Our Lady of Mercy School, uses

- personal information to communicate with you, process applications and ultimately to provide you and your child with the educational services and co-curricular programs you expect.
- personal information to enable the school to operate its administrative function, including payment of school fees and maintenance of non-educational school programs including parent and volunteer participation and fundraising.
- anonymous/personal information to constantly improve our school, e.g., surveys.
- health, psychological, or legal information to provide certain specialized services in those areas or as adjunct information in delivering educational services.

If for any reason personal information is required to fulfill a different purpose, the school will notify you and ask you for your consent before the school proceeds.

## **When May Information be Disclosed ?**

Our Lady of Mercy School, keeps personal information strictly confidential and treats it with care and respect. However, some of an individual's personal information may be shared with others as noted below.

### ***When Authorized by You***

- Other educational institutions routinely contact the school for personal information about students. For example, if your child moves to another school, college or university, student records are requested by the enrolling institution. Your permission to pass on these records is usually obtained when you register your child and authorize the school to disclose such information to other appropriate educational institutions for the ongoing education of your child.
- Contact information may be used to enable the school to provide the para-educational and administrative services usually operated by the school. These services include phoning committees, participation groups, parent meetings, fundraising, events, annual general meetings, etc.

In some cases, when communication is over the telephone, your consent to the use and/or disclosure of your information will be obtained verbally. In other cases such as when you communicate through e-mail, your consent will be obtained electronically.

### ***When Required by Law***

The type of information the school is legally required to disclose most often relates to family court issues, legal proceedings, court orders and government tax reporting requirements. Student information as per Form 1701 is annually filed with the Ministry of Education.

Only the information specifically requested is disclosed and the school takes precautions to satisfy itself that the authorities making the request have legitimate grounds to do so.

### ***When Permitted by Law***

The school is legally permitted to disclose some personal information in situations such as an investigation of illegal activities, reasonable methods to collect overdue accounts, a medical emergency or suspicion of illegal activities etc. Only pertinent information is disclosed.

The school does not sell, lease or trade information about you to other parties.

### ***The School's Employees***

In the course of daily operations, access to personal information is restricted to authorized employees who have a legitimate reason for accessing it. For example, teachers will have access to personal information about your child but not your account with the school.

All employees of Our Lady of Mercy School are required to abide by the privacy standards governed under PIPA. They are also required to work within the principles of ethical behavior as set out in employment contracts and must follow all applicable laws and regulations. Employees are well informed about the importance of privacy and they are required to sign either a code of conduct or a confidentiality agreement that prohibits the disclosure of any personal information to unauthorized individuals or parties. To reinforce their understanding and commitment to upholding client privacy and confidentiality, employees periodically receive up-to-date literature about our privacy policy, principles and standards.

### ***Outside Service Suppliers***

At Our Lady of Mercy School, the school sometimes contacts outside organizations to perform specialized services such as printing, student assessments, market research or data processing. For example, the school gives its yearbook publisher the information required to produce the annual yearbook. Suppliers of specialized services are given only the information necessary to perform those services.

### ***Restricting Sharing Information***

If you choose to limit the sharing of your personal information, please contact the school office and submit a written letter specifying which items of personal information you wish to limit, and to whom you wish these items to be restricted. Please remember that certain agencies, by law, have access to certain types of personal information.

## **How Does The School Safeguard Information ?**

Our Lady of Mercy School, maintains current security standards to ensure that your personal and financial information is protected against unauthorized access, disclosure, inappropriate alteration or misuse.

### ***Student Files***

Student files are stored in secured filing cabinets. Access is restricted to only those employees (teachers, teacher-aides, counselors, secretaries, etc.) who, by nature of their work, are required to see them.

### ***Electronic Security***

The school manages electronic files appropriately with passwords and security measures that limit access by unauthorized personnel. The school's security practices are reviewed periodically to ensure that the privacy of your information is not compromised.

### ***Record Management***

Personal information is destroyed one year after the school no longer needs the information or one year after legal minimum retention requirements have been met.

## **Accessing and Amending Information**

Our Lady of Mercy School, makes decisions based on the information it has. The school makes every effort to ensure information is accurate and complete.

### ***Accessing Your Information***

You may access and verify any of your personal information with appropriate notice so that the office is able to supply you with the information you require. Most of this information is available in the registration forms and other forms that you filled out.

### ***Accessing Student Information***

You may access and verify school records of your children, with appropriate notice during normal school hours. In situations of family breakdown, the school will grant access to records of children as determined by judicial review. (High schools may wish to develop policy on access by students to their own records.)

### ***Amending Your Information***

To help the school keep your personal information up-to-date, the school encourages you to request the school to amend inaccuracies and make corrections. Where appropriate, the school will communicate these changes to other parties who may have unintentionally received incorrect information from the school.

## **Questions, Concerns and Complaints**

The school may add, modify or remove portions of this policy when it is considered appropriate to do so. You may ask for the most recent update of this policy at the school office.

Questions, concerns, and complaints about privacy, confidentiality and information handling of the school may be addressed to the school's Privacy Officer by calling the school office. If necessary, you will be referred to use the school's complaint procedure and appeals policies.