

Frequently Asked Questions about MAC

“Without the facts you’re not getting the whole picture about MAC”

What makes MAC different?

Education at MAC reflects the changing needs of today through vertical classrooms, individual learning plans, and strong student voice. All students are treated as individuals at MAC. Every student has an independent learning plan, as ‘one size does not fit all’. Students are empowered with learning as it is done with students rather than to them. We don’t use bells in an aim to develop student’s independent skills.

What are the skills that MAC aims for students to develop?

We are committed to preparing students for the 21st century by building skills such as creativity, critical thinking, independence and entrepreneurship, by empowering students with learning.

What is Student Empowered Learning?

Students take control of their own learning by choosing subjects based on passion and point of need. The students, through counselling with parents and staff, select from over 100 subjects. There are many student-led electives in the subject choices and in these subjects, students have input into their learning and can negotiate projects with the teacher. Many of our classes are multi-aged with students grouped according to their passion, ability and need rather than based on their age. Just like in the wider world, age does not necessarily determine the ability of a person. While some students are accelerated, no one is held back. Students requiring extra help are supported by being in classes that match their learning needs. This ensures that no one is left behind.

How do students know that it is time for a class without bells?

Although we have a structured timetable, we have no bells and rarely use the PA system. Our students are provided with a more adult-like learning environment just like at university, TAFE or work. We communicate to students face-to-face, or through technology like email, Compass, Google Docs or digital screens throughout the school.

I have heard that you have students of different nationalities attending MAC. Does everyone get along?

We are a culturally diverse with over 40 different nationalities, which is truly representative of multicultural Melbourne. MAC is a small school so it is easy to get to know everyone. Mixed-aged classes also enable diverse friendships to be established.

How do you support learning with students from such diverse backgrounds?

We have gifted and talented students, students at standard and students with additional learning needs. By allowing students to select subjects based on their passion and point of need, we are better able to support the individual needs of our students. No student is held back and no one is left behind.

I have heard that a student that would be in Year 8 can undertake a VCE subject if they wish. Is this true?

Yes, that is possible. The glass ceiling that students often face has been removed. We undertake course counselling with all students. If a student requests to study a VCE subject

even though they are at Year 8 level we find out why and then determine if they would be able to cope with the demands of higher-level learning. Although no student is held back, we also want to ensure students are successful, so careful course counselling is required. Read more about our curriculum.

I have heard that your default is 'Yes'. What does this mean?

In too many schools, students sometimes do not suggest ideas in fear of being told no. At MAC, we encourage students to be creative through suggesting new programs and ideas. We say *yes* to students as long as:

- the proposal does not have a negative impact on someone else
- the proposal doesn't take up too much time
- the proposal doesn't cost too much.

As such, many things are possible at MAC that may not be in other schools.

What is the gender balance at MAC?

Like most public co-educational schools we have a ratio of 60 percent boys to 40 percent girls. This imbalance in genders is common as there are more girls schools in the independent, catholic and government sectors.

How important is the student wellbeing at MAC?

Student wellbeing is critical as no child can reach their academic potential if they are not in the ideal headspace. Student wellbeing is the foundation on which academic is built. All students belong to a school house that is overseen by a House Leader, and belong to a mentor group within that. Students meet daily with their Mentor Teacher who checks on their progress and wellbeing. We have a comprehensive Student Wellbeing Team that is coordinated by our Leading Teaching Student Engagement who has a Masters in Student Counselling. Read more about our wellbeing team.

How are students supported during their transition into MAC?

Student leaders are trained in our buddy program to assist with welcoming and supporting students who transition into our school. The Heads of House also support and monitor all students including newcomers. Students see their Mentor Teacher daily; these teachers monitor each student's social, emotional wellbeing and academic progress.

Are there any special transition programs for Year 7 students?

A smooth transition into secondary school is vital. Our Year 7 students generally remain together*. They engage in an extensive Induction Program to help them to connect with their peers. During this time, students have the opportunity to have a taste of elective subjects prior to selecting subjects for the semester.

*There are some exceptions to this when a Year 7 student is grouped with Above Entry students in order to meet their learning needs.

Is it possible for students to study more than one art, music or science subject?

As long as it is okay with the parents, it is fine with us for students to study more than one art, music or science subject. We take course counselling very seriously and insist on parental sign off. At MAC, we aim to empower all students in their learning.

Do you have compulsory subjects?

At MAC, we tailor learning for every student. Although we do not have compulsory subjects, all students participate in course counselling with their parents and all students undertake studies in English and Maths. We also encourage a breadth of study. All students have their own Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Read more about our curriculum.

What types of co-curricular activities do you offer?

We offer a large variety of co-curricular activities such as: camps, clubs, music, performing arts, sport, Melbourne City Football Club and international programs. Every week students participate in a club or society of their choice such as anime, bookclub, computer gaming, debating and philosophy, dice and dragons, girls group and much more. Read more about our clubs.

There are plenty of activities that run before and after school and at lunchtime. Some of these are debating, chess, school bands, choir, homework, social sport.

We have lots of sporting opportunities for school both House and interschool. Read more about our co-curricular activities.

Do you have international tours?

In 2016 we ran an international tour to China and have proposed a 2017 tour to Italy. We plan to continue to alternate these tours. These tours are open to all students; they serve as a language and cultural immersion. Over the past ten years, MAC sent some Year 11 students to walk the Kokoda Trek in Papua New Guinea. We will continue to participate in this as long as the program runs. We are also investigating future community development focussed international tours.

What are the student leadership opportunities at MAC?

Mount Alexander College has a range of leadership opportunities for students to have an active voice and enhance their leadership capabilities within the school community and beyond. The opportunities include leadership roles, scholarships and student engagement programs. Students also have the opportunity to be trained as representatives on Teacher Selection Panels. Students are at the centre of everything that happens at the school, including in leadership.

How easy is it to get to MAC?

We are located in Flemington, which is just 4 km from the CBD. We are well serviced by public transport. It is a short walk from the Newmarket station on the Craigieburn line and the Flemington Bridge station on the Upfield line. There is a tram stop in front of our school on Mt Alexander Rd, and it is a short walk from the Racecourse Rd tram.