

Student Welfare and Discipline Policy

1. Background

Melton Secondary College aims to continually improve as a learning community, with positive management and engagement strategies that facilitate improved student learning outcomes. The College strives to build a positive and orderly learning environment with clear student routines and high expectations for behaviour, punctuality, equipment and uniform. The College strives to build positive and professional staff-student relationships and to communicate clear expectations about attendance, participation and positive social behaviours. The College also works to maintain effective partnerships with key agencies and student support services.

2. Purpose

- To build a College environment based on positive behaviour, mutual respect and cooperation.
- To manage poor behaviour in a positive and professional manner. ***Corporal punishment of any kind is not part of the College ethos and will not be used in the College.***
- To establish well understood and logical consequences for inappropriate student behaviour.

3. Guiding Principles

- Every member of the College community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.
- Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.
- All students who meet the eligibility criteria have the right to enrol at the College.

Equal Opportunity

The College recognises and accepts the equality of men and women and people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age. Under the Equal Opportunity Act, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their age, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, impairments, marital status, parental status, physical features, political beliefs, pregnancy, race, religious beliefs or personal associations.

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

The College respects and promotes the following four basic principles of human rights and responsibilities: freedom, respect, equality and dignity. When making decisions, we act compatibly with human rights and consider each of the following: the right not to be discriminated against; the right to privacy and reputation; the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; and cultural rights. Staff, students and parents understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect the human rights of others.

Students with Disabilities

As detailed in the Disability Standards for Education, the College is committed to making reasonable adjustments to accommodate a student with a disability, balancing the interests of all parties affected including those of the student with the disability, the College, staff and other students.

4. Implementation

Definitions:

- **Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person. Harassment includes things such as offensive staring, leering or name calling; unwanted and provocative comments, questions or jokes about physical appearance, race, sexual preference, private life or family; displays of sexually graphic material; unwanted physical contact; and grabbing, hitting, kicking, pinching and shoving.
- **Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group. Bullying includes things such as publicly excluding a person from a group; taking or breaking a person's property (and knocking belongings out of their hands or off their desk); teasing; aggressive staring; grabbing, hitting, kicking, pinching and shoving.
- **Cyberbullying** is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images. Cyberbullying includes things such as teasing, spreading rumours online, sending unwanted messages and defamation.

Expectations

- The College is committed to providing a safe and friendly environment for students, staff and parents and we encourage courtesy, care and respect for others at College, at home, in the community at large and online.
- We expect students who observe another person being harassed or bullied to tell that person to report the issue to a teacher or another suitable member of staff. We expect students who see a friend harassing or bullying another person to let them know their behaviour is unacceptable. Bystanders who do nothing to stop harassment or bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.
- We expect students who are being harassed or bullied to tell the person to stop what they are saying or doing and to report the matter to a student leader, teacher or another suitable member of staff. Student concerns about harassment, bullying and cyberbullying will be taken seriously and all reports and complaints will be treated confidentially.

Rights and Responsibilities of the College Community

Our College rules, values, rights and responsibilities are prescribed so that students can enjoy a safe learning environment and actively pursue high levels of academic achievement and social and emotional development, with a view to becoming well-adjusted life-long learners. The College Code of Conduct outlines our staged response in managing student behaviour and encouraging positive behaviours. We consider the teaching and modelling of social skills to be a key component in effective interpersonal development and behaviour management. We are committed to building and maintaining a cooperative and supportive partnership between home and College to achieve positive outcomes for all students.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn in a safe and secure environment where they can fully develop their knowledge and skills without intimidation, harassment, bullying or cyberbullying.• Participate fully in the College's educational program.• Receive reasonable assistance to resolve College-related problems• Receive ongoing communication and feedback about their progress.	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow the Code of Conduct, staff instructions and uniform requirements.• Take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.• Display positive behaviours, including courtesy, care and respect for the rights of peers, teachers and all members of the College community.• Care for the College environment.• Attend College regularly and participate fully in learning programs.• Develop into independent learners who set and

achieve learning goals and manage resources effectively.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Parents and carers have a right to expect that their child will be educated in a safe and secure environment where courtesy, care and respect for the rights of others are promoted.</p>	<p>Parents and carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their child’s prompt arrival and regular attendance at the College. • Show an active interest in their child’s schooling and progress. • Initiate and maintain regular and constructive communication with College staff regarding their child’s learning, engagement and wellbeing, including notifying the College of student absence as soon as reasonably possible. • Display and model positive behaviours and values.

Rights and Responsibilities of Staff (Teachers and College Leadership Team)

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Staff have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach in an orderly and collaborative environment. • Be informed about matters relating to students, within privacy restrictions, that may affect the teaching and learning program for students. 	<p>Staff have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the VIT Teacher Code of Conduct and meet Professional Standards, and uphold an active, professional and positive presence • consistently and fairly implement the Code of Conduct. • Display, model and teach the College values and positive social behaviours. • Acknowledge student efforts and results in both curriculum and behaviour. • Set the scene at lesson commencement and clearly communicate expectations. • Implement effective teaching strategies and use assessment data to drive teaching and learning. • Create and maintain safe and stimulating learning environments. • Initiate and maintain regular and constructive communication with students and parents about learning, engagement and wellbeing • organise connections for students with appropriate student services.

Shared Expectations

As a College community, we have a shared commitment to creating and maintaining a safe, stimulating and orderly learning environment that ensures all students can engage effectively in their education. We are committed to the following College values:

- Success
- Teamwork
- Ambition
- Responsibility
- Respect

We bring our College values to life through our behaviours and interactions with each other. We display and model our College values through behaviours such as the following:

- Attending College on time and arriving promptly to each lesson.
- Preparing properly for College and for each lesson.
- Meeting appearance, dress and uniform standards.
- Moving safely through the College environment.
- Participating fully in learning activities.
- Attentively following instructions.
- Listening to each other.
- Treating each other with respect, courtesy and fairness.
- Valuing the particular individual strengths and differences of others.
- Inclusive teaching and learning practices.
- Demonstrating and monitoring our own learning progress.
- Attempting learning tasks to the best of our ability.
- Making appropriate choices, even without supervision.

College Actions and Consequences

We encourage and support high levels of student attendance, engagement, learning and positive behaviours through a consistent set of whole-College practices, including the following actions:

- Establishing a safe, secure and inclusive learning environment.
- Modelling, teaching and encouraging the College-wide values, rights and responsibilities and shared expectations, as outlined above.
- Teaching social skills such as listening to others, asking for help, taking turns and sharing resources.
- Acknowledging positive behaviours and celebrating effort and achievement through verbal encouragement, certificates and stickers, special responsibilities or assignments, positive phone calls to parents or carers, displays of student work, class celebrations and Principal awards etc.
- Discouraging inappropriate behaviours.
- Empowering students to be involved in College decision-making and leadership activities.
- Applying professional judgement to particular cases and incidents, and understanding individual students, their life circumstances and their particular learning and wellbeing needs.
- Identifying students at risk of disengagement from learning, in a timely manner.
- Monitoring, measuring and communicating progress with students and parents, in a timely manner.
- Rigorously monitoring, recording and following up student absence in a timely and rigorous manner.
- Implementing evidence-based early intervention processes and programs and regularly reviewing their effectiveness to ensure continued relevance.
- Using out-of-class support strategies and Student Support Groups for students with at risk behaviours, to repair relationships and to develop agreed goals and plans around learning and behaviour. In convening Student Support Groups, key stakeholders will be involved as needed, including parents, teachers, principal, welfare coordinator, counsellors, psychologists, youth workers, managed individual pathways coordinator and careers coordinator etc.
- Connecting to external student support services, as appropriate.
- Ensuring that students who have displayed unacceptable behaviours towards others can repair the relationship, for example by apologising, completing a reflection form, catching up on missed work etc.
- Implementing effective and supportive transition programs and processes into and out of the College, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the College.

Specific to the Classroom

- There is a core set of consistent rules, flexible enough to allow faculties or teachers to incorporate their individual requirements that are known and understood by all students.
- Teachers provide positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour.
- There are specific consequences for inappropriate behaviour which are known and understood by all students.

- There is a hierarchy of consequences for misbehaviour which increase in severity; in most cases the final step is removal of student from class to a withdrawal room.
- Consequences are always presented to students as a choice to encourage them to accept responsibility for their own actions.
- There is a known procedure for severe misbehaviour to remove a student from the classroom.
- All discipline procedures must be applied consistently.

Discipline procedures – Initial consequences, Suspension and Expulsion

In applying consequences for unacceptable behaviour, both the individual circumstances and actions of the student and the needs and rights of College community members will be considered at all times. Consequences are applied to provide the opportunity for all students to learn, to ensure the safety of staff and students, and to assist students with accepting responsibility for their actions.

Initial Consequences include:

- Withdrawal of privileges.
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class. Where appropriate, parents or carers will be informed of such withdrawals.
- Detention: a student may be required to finish College work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or undertake other duties at a reasonable time and place, as instructed by their teacher. No more than half the time allocated for any recess will be used for this work, and in the case of an after-school detention, students will be detained for no more than 45 minutes. Students will be fully supervised during detentions. Parents or carers will be informed at least the day before the after-school detention and where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship, we will endeavour to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents or carers.

Suspensions – guiding principles

We will only exclude a student from the College in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

When the Principal determines that a suspension is justified, a Student Support Group meeting will be convened to provide a Notice of Suspension, explain the reasons for suspension, detail the school days on which the suspension will occur and where the suspensions will occur, provide contact details for additional support services, and develop a Student Absence Learning Plan that outlines school work to be undertaken during the period of suspension.

In the case of a student putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, staff or other students at significant risk, the Principal may suspend a student immediately, scheduling a Student Support Group meeting within 48 hours of the student being suspended. When a student is suspended it will be for the shortest time necessary. If the suspension is for five days, a post-suspension Student Support Group meeting will also be scheduled.

In determining whether to implement an in-College suspension or an out-of-College suspension, we will consider the educational, social and emotional impacts on the student and the College community.

Expulsions – guiding principles

The principal may expel a student if, while attending College or travelling to or from the College or engaged in any College activity away from the College (including travel to and from that activity), the student does anything for which they could be suspended and their misbehaviour is of such magnitude that, having regard to the need of the student to receive an education compared to the need to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of other staff and students at the College and the need to maintain the effectiveness of the College's educational programs, an expulsion is the only available mechanism.

A Student Support Group meeting will be convened to explain the expulsion and provide the student and parents or carers with a Notice of Expulsion. Transition arrangements will then be implemented for the continuing education, training or employment of the expelled student.

5. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed in **four years** or as necessitated by changes/developments which may occur through requests by College Council, Parents, Students or Staff within the timeframe stated above.

6. References

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/healthwellbeingserv.aspx>
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/sss.aspx>
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/welfareofficers.aspx>
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