



*Educated for Excellence,
Prepared for life.*

HAPPY
SMART
PREPARED

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

“Mount Eliza Secondary College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making.”

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school’s policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Mount Eliza Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school’s values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

POLICY

School profile, values, philosophy and vision

At Mount Eliza Secondary College, a collaborative and personalised approach supports students and staff as active learners. We work to empower students to be their best by questioning their experiences, expressing themselves with confidence and participating in local, national and global communities. As an International Baccalaureate Candidate School our program at years 7 - 9 focuses on the building of capabilities that are cross curricula and transferable.

We are committed to safety and wellbeing for all young people and this is the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Our motto is ‘Educated for excellence, Prepared for life’ and this is reflected in the setting of high expectations for students, staff and our community. As a smaller secondary school setting, we use our knowledge of, and close relationships with our students to focus on a learning experience that is both challenging and supportive. The same approach is applied to all members of staff whose work environment reflects an expectation for life-long learning.

In preparing students for their future, opportunities to make improvements in the way in which they go about their learning and interact with others is specifically taught, reflected upon and further developed.

Our driving values are Happy, Smart, Prepared.

Because we believe that no student can learn unless wellbeing needs are met, and that being 'smart' can be demonstrated in many ways, our programs are broad and inclusive and allow for recognition and success beyond the traditional areas of study. We are also committed to the future of every student after school, and provide genuine learning opportunities for the broadest range of skills and attitudes required to support this commitment.

Mount Eliza Secondary College *Statement of Values and School Philosophy* is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

1. Engagement strategies

Mount Eliza Secondary College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Mount Eliza Secondary College use an *Explicit Instructional Model E5* to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Mount Eliza Secondary College adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Student Wellbeing Leaders, Sub School Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school camps, plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Student Wellbeing Leaders, Sub School Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

- peer support programs

Targeted

Each year group has an Educational Leader and Student Wellbeing Leader, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support

- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Mount Eliza Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- Access to Doctors in Schools program
- Navigator
- Lookout
- Outreach
- Hands on Learning

Mount Eliza Secondary College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:

- with a disability
- in Out of Home Care
- and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

2. Identifying students in need of support

Mount Eliza Secondary College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mount Eliza Secondary College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

3. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

4. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mount Eliza Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

5. Engaging with families

Mount Eliza Secondary College values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

6. Evaluation

Mount Eliza Secondary College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs. Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21

REVIEW CYCLE

This Policy was endorsed/approved by the Mount Eliza Secondary College Council on ___/___/2019 for review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than December 2021.

Principal Signature

School Council President Signature