



# Inclusion and Diversity Policy

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is explain Mount Erin College's commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity. Mount Erin College strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for all students and members of our school community.

## POLICY

### Definitions

*Personal attribute:* a feature of a person's background or personal characteristics that is protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. For example: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion etc.

### Inclusion and Diversity

Inclusive Education means that all students feel welcome, accepted and engaged so that they can fully participate, achieve and thrive in the school life.

Mount Erin College is committed to creating a school community where all members of our school community are welcomed, accepted and treated equitably and with respect regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes such as race, language, religious beliefs, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve and thrive at school.

Mount Erin College acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community and we will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others.

Mount Erin College actively strives to provide the opportunity for each student to participate to their fullest capacity in the broad range of College Programs, core curriculum, electives, social and sporting activities.

Mount Erin College will:

- ensure that all students and members of our school community are treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that students are not discriminated against and where necessary, are accommodated to participate in education and all school activities, for example schools sports, concerts, choir, instrumental music, Productions etc on the same basis as their peers

- acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students
- encourage empathy and fairness towards others
- challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices
- contribute to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students.

Mount Erin College encourages all students to consistently demonstrate our **ASPIRE** values which are:

- show your **Adaptability**
- be **Socially Aware**
- aim to do your **Personal Best**
- act with **Integrity** and **Responsibility**
- seek **Excellence** in all you do.

Mount Erin College encourages staff to demonstrate and model inclusive and respectful relationships. Mount Erin College promotes Social Awareness as a means of encouraging acceptance of all students and as a way of celebrating individual difference. A school community that acts with Integrity and Responsibility values all students equally irrespective of their personal characteristics and beliefs. Our College believes that all students can achieve their Personal Best and acknowledges that there are a multitude of ways in which students can demonstrate this quality.

Mount Erin College introduced our ASPIRE Program as a way of proactively educating students on the acceptance and valuing of individual differences. The ASPIRE program is designed as a positive tool for developing and consolidating responsible social behaviours.

Our Inclusion, diversity and Integration Program is designed to provide pathways and support for students to be fully integrated in the life of their class, year level and the broader College so that they can strive to achieve their Personal Best.

Mount Erin College hosts the Victorian Department of Education's designated secondary Deaf Education Centre for South Eastern Victoria. This centre for hard of hearing and deaf students provides targeted intervention, specialist assistance, individual and classroom support for students identified under the departmental category for student's with a significant hearing loss. The support provided is flexible so that the needs of each student are met specifically irrespective of their communication style or preference including but not limited to, spoken language Auslan, Sign Supported English, augmented communication or any other combination of styles of communication. e. This support provides these students with the opportunity to achieve their Personal Best.

Our College also actively supports inclusion through the weekly meetings of the Diversity Group, active participation in the annual Wear It Purple Day, celebration of IdaHobbit day and other events organised by MESEM that promotes acceptance of gender diversity and the adoption of the Safe Schools Program.

Mount Erin College's Respectful Relationships Policy promotes and reinforces a College Culture based on Inclusion and values Diversity.

Mount Erin College has a great well-being team, student counsellors and a strong Wellbeing Program that supports students to effectively manage difficult emotional, personal, mental health, social or family situations.

Bullying, harassment and other forms of inappropriate behaviour targeting individuals because of their personal attributes will not be tolerated in our school community.

Students who may have experienced or witnessed this type of behaviour are encouraged to speak up and to let their teachers, parents or carers know about those behaviours to ensure that inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.

Mount Erin College will take appropriate measures, consistent with its *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Bullying Prevention Policies* to respond to discriminatory behaviour or harassment at our school.

Our College utilises a Restorative Practices approach as it promotes social responsibility and encourages students to understand the impact that their behaviour has had on others. . This policy works on a constructive, mutual and empathetic approach to resolving differences.

The benefit is that students better appreciate the consequences of their actions and are less likely to repeat that behaviour. Students benefit from the opportunity to engage directly with staff in a mutually respectful way to find positive solutions. This practice allows staff to demonstrate and model positive relationship skills

Mount Erin College also understands that it has a special obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities.

A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist all students to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities through our Student Support Group processes in consultation with the student, their parents or carers, their teachers and if appropriate, their treating practitioners. Details of the teacher adjustments, student goals, differentiation and accommodations provided for students are specified on their Individual Learning Plans. Additional plans can be used in conjunction with the ILP such as attendance or behaviour plans.

For more information about support available for students with disabilities, please refer to our school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* or contact the College on 5971 6000 for further information so that you can be referred to the most appropriate person to respond to your query.

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Copies of all Policies are available via the College website [www.mounterin.vic.edu.au](http://www.mounterin.vic.edu.au)

Some of the relevant Policies include:

- *Student Wellbeing and Engagement*
- *Bullying Prevention*
- *Respectful Relationships and School Values*

## REVIEW PERIOD

This Policy was last updated in August 2018 and is scheduled for review in August 2020.