



Mount Erin College

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Purpose

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

- our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Mount Erin 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, where student participation is encouraged and valued, 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.

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Policy

1. School profile

Mount Erin College is a high performing school located in Frankston South, on a beautiful 15-hectare bushland setting. Learning is our priority and the College is dedicated to the success of every child. Teaching staff are skilled and innovative professionals focused on teaching and learning. They work hard to support every student to reach their potential; and to build those critical personal attributes of motivation, confidence, self-belief and resilience. MEC prepares students for the challenges of a rapidly changing world building opportunities for collaborative work and problem solving while encouraging curiosity, independence and reflection.

MEC operates in a vertical House Structure where students (Year 7-12) and staff are allocated into one of the four houses where student engagement and wellbeing can be maximised so learning can be maximised. This structure fosters the development of strong relationships for the duration of a student's journey through the College. Involvement of parents in the learning journey and maintaining ongoing open lines of communication are priorities that the College encourages in order to provide the best support for our young people. SWPBS, based on the foundations of the Mount Erin College values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience, underpins the College's student engagement philosophy and staff set high expectations for student behaviour.

Mount Erin College offers a wide range of programs to cater for diverse student interests and passions, including a comprehensive Sport program for high achieving athletes, Arts programs for students who are passionate about the performing and visual arts, and a rich and comprehensive range of subjects and electives across the middle and senior years. The College boasts a wide-ranging senior program, offering both VCE and VM as well as VET. Our students continue to achieve excellent VCE results and are able to take advantage of the many well-established partnerships with Universities that enable access to many exciting tertiary pathways.

The College has stunning infrastructure that provide state of the art facilities across a wide range of specialist areas including, Science, IT, Art, Design and Technology. The wonderful auditorium supports a thriving Performing Arts program. The architectural design has been informed by the latest in educational research on best practice in

teaching and learning. Technology underpins the learning in all areas and the augmented sound system ensures our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students are well supported. A competition grade hockey field and new gymnasium with purpose-built classrooms providing exceptional facilities for our sporting precinct which supports the high-level sporting program in the College.

Mount Erin College provides individualised support for Deaf and hearing-impaired students in mainstream classes across all year levels. Staff in our Deaf Education Centre work closely with classroom teachers to provide an inclusive program for students across all year levels. We are the only government secondary school in the South Eastern region that provides support for these students by highly trained staff.

The College has established outstanding community links with the Village Baxter providing many enriching opportunities for our students in terms of community service and building pathways opportunities. The Student Agency and Leadership Team (SALT), our student leadership program, develops the leadership skills and builds the capacity of our young people to have a voice in their community. We value this highly as our vision of success for young people involves them being actively involved in understanding and shaping their communities.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Mount Erin College's *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, Responsibility and Resilience at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our *Statement of Values and School Philosophy* is available online at: www.mounterin.vic.edu.au

3. Wellbeing Engagement Strategies

Mount Erin College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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.

The following is a summary of the universal (whole school), targeted (year level or cohort specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our College 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- welcome all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning analyse and respond to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, Parent Opinion Data, Student Management Data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VM to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Mount Erin College use an instructional framework 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 Erin College school 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 College's *Statement of Values and School Philosophy* 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 house and year level
- foster a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive through our Respectful Relationships Program
- promote a positive Learning Culture via our Cooperative Classrooms and Restorative Practices approach
- 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 Level meetings and via Year Level Student Forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, House Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.

- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through School Productions, Sport Programs, Music Programs and SALT
- All students are welcome to self refer to the Student Wellbeing Team, School Nurse, House teams, 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
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - School Wide Positive Behaviours
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Cooperative Classrooms
 - Safe Schools
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviours (i.e. wellbeing, anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, SALT, the Student Diversity Group and lunchtime activities)
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted

- each students has a House leadership team who monitors 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 have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Regional Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Mount Erin College assists students to plan their Year 10 Work Experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through

- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQ Student Support
- all students in Out of Home Care will be supported in accordance with the Department's policy on Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care including being appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- the Student Wellbeing and Student Services Teams 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
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on Students with Disability, such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- 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

Individual

- 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
 - Alternative settings operated by the Department of Education and Training or other Agencies

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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Mount Erin 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mount Erin Collegewill utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing and Student Services Teams play a significant role
- in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing.
- Mount Erin 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
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 - 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
- referrals from staff members
- referrals from families or carers

5. 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 College's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to be:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, 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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our *Complaints Policy*.

6. Student Behavioural Expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and student code of conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

Mount Erin College's Respectful Relationships and Cooperative Classrooms Policies are designed to promote positive behaviours that help develop a Positive Learning Culture across the College. These Policies are available on the College website www.mounterin.vic.edu.au

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mount Erin College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our college considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

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 relevant House Leadership Team
- Restorative Practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

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

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Mount Erin College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

7. Engaging with families

Mount Erin 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 College Policies and Procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- 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
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Mount Erin 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 Attitudes to School data
- incidents data
- school reports
- Parent Opinion data
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOC

Mount Erin College will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed in staff meetings and official correspondence as required
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

Related Policies

Department of Education and Training policies and resources:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

MEC policies:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	October 2023
Consultation	Consultation with the School Council in November 2023. Consultation with SALT (Student Agency and Leadership Team) in October 2023 Consultation with school staff in August 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2025