



MOUNT ERIN COLLEGE COLLEGE COMMUNITY CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE:

The Mount Erin College Community Code of Conduct sets clear standards of behaviour, which are expected of all members of the College Community.

The College Community is defined as the students attending the College and their immediate and extended families and friends of the College (including local residents, businesses, and organisations), the College Board and College staff and service providers, volunteers and past students.

Mount Erin College aims to achieve the best possible outcomes for all members of our school community. We acknowledge that parents and carers are valued members of our school community who want the best educational, social and emotional outcomes for their children.

Mount Erin College celebrates diversity and is an inclusive community that respects the rights, beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. Our Community Code of Conduct has been designed to promote tolerance and respect for all members of our College Community.

This Community Code of Conduct outlines the way in which the College requires parents, carers and other community members to conduct themselves when visiting the College, participating in College activities and communicating with students, members of our staff and the College Community generally.

It specifies the consequences for any member of the College Community who do not comply with those standards of behaviour.

POLICY

Mount Erin College's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on the values of:

- providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students
- building positive relationships between students, parents and staff and our College Community
- mutual respect and cooperation
- modelling the positive behaviours that we would want to see in our students
- working cooperatively to resolve any concerns
- providing a safe working environment for staff

This Community Code of Conduct sets out our behavioural expectations of all members in this school community, including the Principal, all College staff, parents/ carers, students, community members and visitors. It respects the diversity of individuals in our College community and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members in building safe and respectful school communities.

This Code of Conduct acknowledges that parents, carers and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child and that the best outcomes for students occur when schools and parents and carers cooperate and work in partnership for a common purpose.

Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as this is done respectfully.

RESPECTFUL CONDUCT AND COMMUNICATION:

When attending the College or any College related event, Parents, Carers and members of the College Community are expected to:

- act, and communicate, in a way that is calm and respectful and avoid language and behaviour that is threatening, abusive or offensive
- refrain from engaging in malicious, offensive or judgemental comments (either directly or online) and ensuring that anything they say about others is fair, truthful and respectful
- refrain from offensive, insulting or derogatory language or conduct. This includes wearing clothing with offensive words or logos
- not smoke on College grounds or within four metres of any entrance (Victorian Law)
- not use or possess alcohol on College grounds, unless the event has been approved by the School
- never use or possess illicit drugs on College grounds
- not attend College events if affected by alcohol or other intoxicants
- show proper care and regard for College property, the property of others and occupational health and safety matters

COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION WITH STAFF, OTHER PARENTS AND STUDENTS:

College Community members are encouraged to contact the College to express their concerns or complaints.

When communicating with, or while visiting the College, Community members are expected to:

- interact calmly and respectfully with staff, students and other parents or carers at all times
- work cooperatively with the College to seek a positive outcome on any issue of concern
- advise the College of areas of potential conflict, such as parenting and family court orders in accordance with relevant laws
- respect the privacy of other College Community members
- behave lawfully on College grounds and observe the terms of any Order, obligation or undertaking they may be subject to
- avoid intimidating, abusing, threatening, bullying or harassing a member of staff, other students or parents or College Community members
- speak to the Principal or relevant staff member if they have concerns about other students and not approach these students or their families directly

UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOURS:

Behaviours that are considered inappropriate on and adjacent to College grounds or in relation to College business and that do not uphold the principles of this Code of Conduct include when a person:

- is rude, aggressive or harasses others
- is physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close
- sends rude, confronting or threatening letters, Social Media messages, emails or text messages
- uses abusive or offensive language, raises their voice, or uses displays, aggressive or violent behaviour to anyone on College grounds or at any College related events
- attempts to abuse, threaten, make physical contact with, or raise their voice or get involved in verbal altercations under any circumstances
- is manipulative or threatening
- speaks in an aggressive tone or uses abusive or offensive language, either in person or over the telephone
- makes sexist, racist or derogatory comments
- takes a photo or video recording of another student or parent without their consent
- discloses the personal details of a student or parent to another person without their prior consent
- inappropriately uses Social Media as a forum to raise concerns/make complaints against the College
- posts abusive, offensive or threatening messages on Social Media

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Despite the range of positive uses of Social Media, College Community members should note that there are also a number of ethical and legal issues associated with its use, which can be directly or indirectly damaging to the College and others.

When using Social Media, all members of the College Community are expected to:

- make prior contact with the College to discuss any concern or complaints as a first step so that the College can attempt to arrange a positive resolution
- be respectful to staff, volunteers, other parents/ carers, and/or students
- not use Social Media to voice grievances or make negative or defamatory comments about the College or any member of the College Community
- make reasonable efforts to ensure that their children comply with the College's Technology and Social Media Policy
- not post photographs of students in school uniform representing the School and its students if they have the potential to bring negative connotations towards the School and its staff and students
- not post a photo or video recording of another student or parent on Social Media without obtaining consent from the student's parent/ carer beforehand
- avoid using Social Media to intimidate, abuse, threaten, bully or harass any member of the College Community
- never disclose any confidential information of any College Community member to third parties without the individual's express consent
- make contact with students (other than their own) with the intention of abusing, bullying or threatening them using any form of Social Media
- never post sexual or other inappropriate material that may damage the reputation of the College

PROCESS FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

Mount Erin College takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. If parents/ carers/ or other College Community members express their concerns to the College, they will be treated with courtesy and respect and that the College will make a genuine effort to resolve the matter.

The College will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours). In all cases, the College will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 10 school days. In situations where further time is required, the College will consult with the complainant and discuss any interim response to the dispute that can be put in place.

As a general guide, minor issues may be raised with the student's teacher. Cases of more serious inappropriate conduct or misconduct should be directed to the relevant Junior or Senior School Leader or Year Level Leader, an Assistant Principal or the Principal. Parents, Carers or College Community members should make an appointment to speak to the relevant member of staff so that they can discuss the concern or complaint.

Please be aware that members of the College staff may have prior commitments, timetabled classes or scheduled meetings that may result in them being unavailable if you attend the College without an appointment.

While the College will make every endeavour to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the parent, carer or other College Community member, schools are required to balance the interests of all individuals or groups concerned; follow Privacy requirements and follow Departmental Guidelines and Policies.

Should the complaint involve complex issues, the College might need to take advice from the Department's Regional or Head Office which may take more time. The College will tell the complainant the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays.

PREPARATION FOR RAISING A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT:

The College encourages members of the College Community who may wish to raise a concern or complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- consider how to raise your concern or complaint in a courteous and respectful manner
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the Policies and Guidelines set by Mount Erin College and the Department of Education
- note that the College will need to take the appropriate time to fully investigate your complaint or concern before deciding on the most appropriate course of action

WHEN RAISING A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHOULD:

- do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- act in good faith and raise and discuss issues in a calm and respectful manner
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved
- recognise that all parties, including the broader College Community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference
- recognise that the College and the Department are subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information

TIMELINES:

Mount Erin College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the College may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint and to decide on the most appropriate way to address the concern or complaint.

We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, the College will consult with you and discuss any interim response to the dispute that can be put in place.

COLLEGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY CODE OF CONDUCT BY:

- modelling respectful behaviour
- treating all school leaders, staff, students, and other members of the school community with respect
- ensuring our children attends school on time, every day the school is open for instruction
- reporting to the Main Office upon arrival at school
- taking an interest in our child's school and learning
- working in partnership with the school to achieve the best outcomes for our child
- communicating constructively with the school and use expected processes and protocols when raising concerns
- supporting school staff to maintain a safe learning environment for all students
- following the school's Complaints Processes if there are complaints

CONSEQUENCES FOR BREACHES OF THE COMMUNITY CODE OF CONDUCT:

The Principal is responsible for determining what constitutes reasonable and unreasonable behaviour.

Unreasonable behaviour and/or failure to uphold the principles of this Community Code of Conduct may lead to further investigation and the implementation of appropriate consequences.

If a parent, carer or other College Community member behaves in an aggressive, abusive or threatening manner or uses offensive language or conduct the staff member will choose which of the following responses are most appropriate:

- initially a parent/ carer/ or other College Community member will be given a reminder that the common aim is seeking the best possible outcomes for the student(s) and the College Community and that language or behaviour which is disrespectful, threatening or offensive needs to cease so that respectful communication can continue
- a warning that if the unacceptable language or behaviour continues that the conversation or meeting will be terminated
- inform them that the meeting will be temporarily be halted so that another College representative is able to be present
- terminate the meeting or conversation
- inform them that there will be another opportunity to discuss the concern or complaint when, and if, this can be done in a calm and respectful manner.

The above steps apply where the communication is in person or has been occurring, by phone, via email or other electronic media.

If the offer of another meeting to be conducted in a calm, respectful manner is not taken up and if the person continues to use offensive, threatening or abusive language or act in an aggressive manner then the College Principal will decide which of the following consequences to apply:

- utilising mediation and counselling services
- formal notice banning the relevant member of the College Community from being on the College grounds or from attending any College related events or activities
- directing that the relevant parent or carer or other College Community member may only communicate with members of staff through a nominated College representative
- informing the parent / carer or other College Community member that any further contact with the College will need to be in writing
- alternative communication strategies being applied
- an Intervention Order being sought
- informing the police which may result in a charge of trespass or assault being laid
- such other steps that the Principal determines are appropriate according to the nature of the breach

In the case of extreme or prolonged breach of this Code of Conduct by a parent/ carer/ or other College Community member the Principal or other College representative will contact the Department's Legal Branch for advice.

REVIEW CYCLE:

This Policy was approved by the College Board in June 2019 and is scheduled for Review in June 2021.