



Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy

1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Our College provides access to secondary education at the highest level for Ballarat and surrounding areas. The College is set in an attractive bush setting that boasts extensive facilities to deliver a comprehensive curriculum.

At Mount Clear College we are renowned for, and proud of our ability to maintain the friendly, caring approach of a small school, despite our student numbers being over 1000. We have teams in place that allow us to pay close attention to the individual, yet are large enough to offer a diverse range of pathways, programs and facilities. Our curriculum and teaching strategies are aimed at providing students with a positive, confident attitude to learning, to assist them in identifying choices available in achieving the pathway to their preferred future.

We have an extensive 'Student Well-being' structure throughout the school and our staff apply a restorative approach on a daily basis. This involves maintaining a focus on building positive relationships and establishing a supportive environment that is fair and consistent.

This enables us to effectively monitor and support students at all levels of the college in regard to their individual and collective welfare needs.

We endeavour to ensure that all students have a happy and successful time at Mount Clear College, whilst learning the value and reward of striving for individual excellence.

2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

The Mount Clear College Vision is to be widely recognised as providing outstanding opportunities and pathways that inspire individual excellence.

Our College Values affirm the values of society and in doing so we:

CARE: fostering relationships with our families, our community and globally.

Show **COMMITMENT** to learning and the pursuit of individual growth.

RESPECT ourselves, each other and our environment.

Take **RESPONSIBILITY** for the impact of our actions on ourselves and others.

Our vision is to develop the learning capacities of all students, enabling them to be:

- Motivated, confident learners, who are persistent in striving for individual growth.
- Resilient learners who will work with others to overcome challenges.
- Students who demonstrate respect, compassion, honesty, acceptance of others and who value diversity.
- Socially responsible students/citizens who contribute positively to the local and global community.
- Successful in their transition through schooling to their desired future.

Mount Clear College is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive, inclusive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student engagement and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

3. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Mount Clear College strives to promote student engagement and inclusion at school in line with the rights and responsibilities of all members of our College community (See Appendix), by providing a range of universal, targeted and individual strategies:

Inclusive Curriculum

The inclusive curriculum programs of the school recognize and respond to the diverse needs of the school's students by accommodating different learner profiles and rates of learning, as well as intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs. In particular, to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities, the following key strategies are in place:

- providing parents/carers with a learning program that best suits their child's needs
- involving students and parents in programming and planning decisions
- supporting students access to programs that let them pursue achievable pathways
- ensuring the expertise of teachers working in our school is maintained and developed

School Wide Positive Behaviours

Our school's whole-school positive behaviour approach is based upon pro-social values, social competencies, incentives and positive peer relationships to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement. The following prevention and early intervention strategies define and teach school-wide and classroom expectations:

- School Wide Positive Behaviours program-the modelling, explicitly teaching and promotion of a set of core school-wide values, rights and responsibilities, and shared expectations to the school community
- Acknowledging positive behaviours and celebrating effort and achievement
- A mentor program that provides targeted social support and resilience development for each year of schooling
- Respectful Relationships teaching and promotion throughout our school programs

- School policies and processes are in alignment with our Safe Schools Coalition membership
- A set of consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for problem behaviour
- School-wide and classroom processes for ongoing collection and use of data for decision-making
- Empowerment of student voice by providing multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- Provision of a safe, secure and inclusive learning environment
- School-wide and classroom processes for early identification and support of students experiencing academic and/ or behaviour difficulty
- Use of evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for those students who face difficulty with learning and/or behaviour
- Applying professional judgement to particular cases and incidents, and understanding individual students, their life circumstances and their particular learning and wellbeing needs
- 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 participating in a restorative meeting and catching up on missed work.
- Implementing effective and supportive transition programs and processes into and out of the school, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school

[Calmer Classrooms: A Guide to Working with Traumatized Children](#), developed by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, provides teachers and schools with effective relationship based classroom and school-wide strategies.

College Community Participation

Active student participation is encouraged as an avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating school change. Student participation ranges from involvement in student leadership and extra-curricular programs, students sharing their opinions and potential solutions through student council or in focus groups associated with school strategic planning, to collaborating with teachers regarding classroom planning to maximize successful learning outcomes.

Parents and carers are provided with the opportunity to participate in school life, both formally and informally, through school council, the Parent's Coffee Club, volunteering and staying up to date with news about what is happening in education via Compass communications and our newsletter. The school ensures that the unique experiences and skills of our students' families enrich the learning environment and the school community.

The school promotes and maintains high levels of student attendance and participation through:

- articulating high expectations to all members of the school community
- adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absences
- following up student absences promptly and consistently
- implementing data-driven attendance improvement strategies
- providing early identification of, and supportive intervention for, students at risk of non-attendance
- linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support
- providing a staged response

Identifying Students in Need of Extra Support

The school utilises coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. The school provides the following support structures:

- personal information gathered upon enrolment
- processes for monitoring of student absences and follow up with appropriate attendance support
- processes for monitoring student learning growth and behaviours and the development of targeted intervention plans for groups and individual students who require further support
- trauma management plans
- safety management plans
- protocol for mandatory reporting
- Student Support Group's for children in need

The school utilises relevant external student wellbeing support services in order to identify and address the barriers to learning that individual students may be facing. Such services to provide support for students and staff include:

- psychologist for psychological and academic assessment
- mentors – providing support for 'at risk' children
- Department of Human Services case managers and support workers
- social workers to provide services such as counselling, social skills and anger management programs
- youth agencies
- local parent support groups
- relevant DEECD support staff
- C.A.S.A. [Centre Against Sexual Assault]
- School Focused Youth Service (SFYS)

4. BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

As a school 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.

As a high priority, we have developed a core set of school values with the school community. We bring our school values to life through our behaviours and interactions with each other:

- Attending school on time and arriving promptly to each lesson
- Preparing properly for school and for each lesson
- Meeting appearance, dress and uniform standards
- Moving safely through the school 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 learning practices
- Demonstrating and monitoring our own learning progress
- Attempting learning tasks to the best of our ability
- Making appropriate choices, even without supervision

Appropriate Behaviour

The school acknowledges students who meet the shared expectations of this policy through recognition and reward. Examples of recognition and reward are:

- School Wide Positive Behaviour Rewards program
- Celebration assemblies
- Student of the Term afternoon teas
- Reports
- Newsletter articles
- Leadership opportunities
- Participation in inter-school teams
- Awards Evening

Inappropriate Behaviour

In applying consequences for unacceptable behaviour, both the individual circumstances and actions of the student and the needs and rights of school community members are considered at all times and a staged response implemented (see *Staged Response for Student Behaviour Issues – DET*). 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.

Consequences which may be used 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. When ongoing, parents or carers will be informed of such withdrawals.
- Detention: a student may be required to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or undertake other duties at a reasonable time and place, as requested 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 any after-school detention. In cases where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship, the appropriate Assistant Principal should be contacted to discuss concerns.

Suspensions

A student will only be excluded from school 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, parents will be contacted to explain the reasons for suspension, the days on which the suspension will occur and contact details for additional support services if appropriate. A Notice of Suspension will also be provided to them along with work for the student to complete in their absence. For suspensions of more than three days duration a Student Absence Learning Plan that outlines school work to be undertaken during the period of suspension will be developed, along with a Return to School Plan.

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. When a student is suspended it will be for the shortest time necessary. Following the suspension, it may be appropriate to convene a Student Support Group meeting to discuss the behaviour that led to the suspension and the range of strategies to address the concerns. A parent may also request a meeting at any time during the suspension process.

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

In the case of serious or ongoing suspensions, the principal may deem it necessary to conduct a Behavior Review Meeting for the student in concern. This may result in expulsion.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools and is NOT be used at Mount Clear College under any circumstances.

5. EVALUATION

Date Implemented	September 2012
Author	Nicole Quinney
Approved By	School Council
Approval Authority	Ratified at School Council Meeting 20.12.17
Date Reviewed	November 2017
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Next Review Date	December 2019
References	Victorian Government Schools Policy and Advisory Guide

LINKS AND APPENDICES

Links which are connected with this policy are:

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

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohc.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/respectfulsch.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/safety/studsuppguidelines.pdf>

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

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

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

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

ANNEXURE A: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Our students, their parents and our staff treat each other with respect and dignity at all times. All members of the school community have the right to feel safe in our school.

Equal Opportunity

The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected attributes (characteristics) including race, religion, disability, sex, age, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic) requires that we respect and promote 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 concomitant responsibility to respect the human rights of others.

Students with Disabilities

As detailed in the Disability Standards for Education 2005, we are 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 school, staff and other students.

Education and Training

In line with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), all students, irrespective of the education and training institution they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, shall have access to a high quality education that:

- i) realizes their learning potential and maximizes their education and training achievement'
- ii) promotes enthusiasm for lifelong learning;
- iii) allows parents to take an active part in their child's education and training.

Bullying and Harassment

See our separate Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Policy.

Rights and Responsibilities of the School Community

Our school 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. We are committed to building and maintaining a cooperative and supportive partnership between home and school to achieve positive outcomes for all students. The College has specific areas of rights and responsibilities:

- **Bullying and Harassment** – the College has an Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy that aims at educating students and dealing with harassment. The program is presented to students via their mentor teachers.
- **Cyber-bullying** – The College has a cyber-bullying policy stating that this form of harassment is unacceptable. The rights and responsibilities of all students are spelt out in the ‘Acceptable User Agreement for the Internet and Digital Technologies’. The College educates the school community about the consequences of cyber-bullying and possible criminal offences associated with this behavior. The school also educates students on safe ways to navigate cyber-space.

Procedures for dealing with bullying are clearly written and available for all staff.

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 school’s educational program • receive reasonable assistance to resolve school-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 school community • care for the school environment • attend school regularly and participate fully in learning programs • develop into independent learners who set and achieve learning goals and manage resources effectively.

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 school • show an active interest in their child’s schooling and progress • initiate and maintain regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child’s learning, engagement and wellbeing, including notifying the school of student absence as soon as reasonably possible • display and model positive behaviours and values

Mount Clear College Leaders and Staff:

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, Mount Clear Colleg Professional Code of Practice, Professional Standards, and uphold an active, professional and positive presence, including Professional Learning.• consistently and fairly implement the Code of Conduct• display, model and teach the school 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



ANNEXURE B: MOUNT CLEAR COLLEGE GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Introduction

Mount Clear College is committed to creating a school community where all staff and students are equally respected and valued and enjoy equity of both opportunity and outcomes.

Mount Clear College recognises that gender inequality has the potential to limit and impact negatively on the safety, education, employment, family lives and opportunities of staff and students, particularly women and girls, in the immediate and long term.

Under the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* all organisations have a *positive duty* to take proactive steps to prevent discriminatory practices.¹ Mount Clear College recognises the prevalence and impact of gender-based discrimination and harassment, and is committed to building a school culture that challenges the stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality.

Mount Clear College recognises that gender inequality is both structural and individual; this means it is not only the result of individual attitudes and actions, but also of biases in structures, systems, policies and processes throughout our community.

Girls and boys, women and men are subject to gendered stereotypes and expectations about how they should behave, think and act. These gendered stereotypes and expectations contribute to gender inequality by assigning unequal value, status and power to women and men. These expectations are reinforced by structures, systems, norms and cultures that often privilege the knowledge, rights, perspectives and skills of males over females.

Gender inequality can be both a cause and a consequence of direct and indirect discrimination. This discrimination is sometimes the result of unconscious bias which is when our behaviours, choices and practices are shaped by underlying assumptions and attitudes without us realising. Gender inequality is evident throughout our society, and research suggests it is one of the key factors driving the prevalence of gender-based violence.²

Mount Clear College recognises that schools are vital spaces in our community to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. Every policy, practice and activity has the potential to reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and gendered inequality.

On behalf of the whole school community, the principal, the School Council and the Student Representative Council support this policy.

¹ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2011) *Positive duty: Know your responsibilities*, <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/our-resources-and-publications/know-your-responsibilities-brochures/item/133-positive-duty-know-your-responsibilities-aug-2011>.

² Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne.



ANNEXURE C: SCHOOL PUBLIC COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Mount Clear College is committed to implementing a whole school approach to Respectful Relationships Education.

We recognise that our school is more than a space for young people to learn. Our school is a workplace where all staff deserve to feel respected, safe and valued. Schools, like ours, are also important hubs in the community and we have the opportunity to lead, influence and contribute to healthy community culture.

As part of this commitment:

- Our Principal will actively promote gender equality and speak out against gender-based violence.
- Our school will provide:
 - professional learning for leadership staff for the planning and implementation of the whole school approach to promote respectful relationships and gender equality
 - professional learning for teachers delivering Respectful Relationships curriculum in the classroom
 - professional learning for all school staff on gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence and Respectful Relationships Education.
- Our school will undertake a thorough assessment and planning process to identify gaps and limitations in existing culture, policies and practices in gender equality.
- Our school will create mechanisms for staff feedback on gender equality in the workplace.
- Our school will identify, resource and implement key actions to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence.
- Our school will engage with external experts for advice and support in promoting gender equality and respectful relationships among staff and students.
- Our school will build partnerships with expert family violence services to increase school capacity to respond to students and staff who experience, witness or perpetrate gender-based violence.
- Our school commits to continual improvement and evaluation of Respectful Relationships Education.

Signed:
(Principal)

Date:

20.12.2017