STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Mount Eliza Secondary College is committed to safe and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be our 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, inclusive 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, 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.

POLICY

1. **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 accredited International Baccalaureate School

our program at years 7 - 9 focuses on building capabilities that are cross curricula and transferable. As a Respectful Relationships school, we are committed to embedding a culture of respect and equality across the entire school community.

Our Senior Pathways program focuses upon preparing students mentally, emotionally and socially for their next steps beyond school.

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. 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.

WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Mount Eliza Secondary College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour, inclusion 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 and wellbeing data and school level assessment data
- Deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCE Vocational Major 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 the E5 Instructional Model 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 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 Student Leadership and other forums including year group meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Coordinators, Sub school managers, members of our Wellbeing Team, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- Create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school production, whole school sporting events such as athletics, music programs and wellbeing programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing team, Year level Coordinators, Sub school managers, Assistant Principals and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We also have a formal referral process for staff to refer students for wellbeing support. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning and wellbeing
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour and wellbeing needs
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

TARGETED

Each year group has a Year Level Coordinator, 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. Sub school managers oversee this work, and support with cohort events and activities (eg. Assemblies, camps) and support mid-tier behaviour and wellbeing issues.

- 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 Year 10/11/12 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, Behaviour Support Plan, Safety plan and Ready to Learn Plans
- Program for Students with Disabilities/Disability Inclusions Funding Support
- referral to Student Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services
- Navigator
- Lookout
- Orange Door
- Hands on Learning
- Wellbeing programs and 1-1 support
- Other external support providers
- Alternate educational programs

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 and/or Ready to Learn Plan, and/or safety plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
    - o school-based wellbeing supports
    - o Student Support Services
    - o Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Orange Door
    - o Re-engagement programs such as Navigator, and external educational engagement programs

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.

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 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
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, toilet pass, uniform, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families

- self-referrals or referrals from peers/staff/families
- Wellbeing data

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, 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 staff adult or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

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.

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 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 school 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:

- restorative practices
- 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
- Removal from classroom
- withdrawal of privileges
- Behaviour contracts
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- detentions and/or community service on site
- 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 Eliza Secondary 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.

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.
- Parents information sessions

EVALUATION

Mount Eliza Secondary College will collect data each term and 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
- Referral data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Mount Eliza Secondary College will also regularly monitor available Compass data 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
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter and social media
- 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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- 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

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2026