

## Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



### HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Mill Park Secondary College on 03 9407 9700 or [mill.park.sc@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:mill.park.sc@education.vic.gov.au).

### 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 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.

Mill Park 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.

### CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

### POLICY

#### 1. School profile

Mill Park Secondary College's vision is to work in partnership with students, families and the community to maximise academic, social and emotional growth. Achievement and growth are supported through excellence in teaching and learning and building positive relationships. The school community works within an agreed set of school values: Respect, Responsibility, Achievement, and Enjoyment.

The school is a large, multi-campus secondary college with campuses located in Mill Park and Epping. With an enrolment of approximately 1100 students and approximately 120 teachers, almost one in four students at the school are born outside Australia and more than a third of the School's students have a language other than English nominated as the main language spoken by the family at home. Enrolments include a significant number of refugees, and approximately 3% of the school's students are Koorie and Torres Strait Islander. The school has a well-established program for International Students and can accommodate up to 100 students at any point in time. It maintains an English Language Centre on site.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Mill Park Secondary College's values are Achievement, Respect, Responsibility and Enjoyment:

### **Achievement**

In valuing achievement, students and staff work collaboratively to improve learning growth and to strive for their own personal best in the pursuit of excellence. We have high expectations, create rigorous learning goals and implement plans to achieve our best. With our community, we work hard, respond to feedback, raise aspirations and celebrate success.

### **Respect**

We value the diversity of our community and build positive and respectful relationships to support social and emotional growth. Unconditional positive regard is shown to all members of the community. Student agency is considered essential in respecting students as active partners in the success of the school.

### **Responsibility:**

Students, staff, parents, and community members are accountable for their own actions. They resolve conflicts in peaceful ways, contribute to our school and society and take care of the environment. We take responsibility for making decisions and setting. We work together to help all community members build their capacity through a positive lens of taking responsibility.

### **Enjoyment**

We foster enjoyment through engaging and effective teaching and learning that promotes curiosity. We provide a broad range of co-curricular opportunities that enhance college-wide connectedness and enjoyment.

*Our Statement of Values is available online at: <https://www.millparksc.vic.edu.au/our-college/policies/>*

## 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

*Mill Park Secondary 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.*

*Central to our support for all students are the Student Engagement and Teaching and Learning models (SEM & TLM). These models, underpinned by the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) provide a comprehensive and evidenced based, consistent framework for supporting student learning and wellbeing across the college.*

*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**

- *Mill Park Secondary College has high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *teachers at Mill Park Secondary College use the school's Student Engagement Model to guide their practice to build engagement, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing and learning.*
- *teachers at Mill Park Secondary College use the Teaching and Learning Model, as 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*
- *Mill Park Secondary College is committed to creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued*
- *our school is welcoming to all parents/carers and aims to be responsive to them as partners in learning*
- *our school'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*
- *students are empowered to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups.*

*Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*

- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *Student Wellbeing Ambassadors across the school provide leadership and awareness raising around wellbeing issues from students’ perspective*
- *all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Year Group Leaders, 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:*
  - *Respectful Relationships*
  - *ManCave and Flourish Girl*
  - *Safe Schools*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *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 year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, 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*
- *the school uses case management teams to review available data and provide cohort and individualised planning to improve student engagement and learning. Targeted case management is also used for priority cohorts in the school including Koorie students, students with a disability and overseas students.*
- *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— a support for Koorie students group is established on each campus to provide peer support and foster leadership and engagement. This group meets regularly with key school leaders as well as the Koorie Education Support Officers.*
- *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 [insert any specific strategies you have in place to support CALD students]*
- *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 \[insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students\]](#)*
- *all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *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*
- *staff are trained in trauma informed practice through the Berry Street Education model and will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*
- *students enrolled under the Department’s international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)*
- *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*
- *Mill Park Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan*

## **Individual**

Mill Park Secondary College uses case management teams to review available data to support individualised planning for students to improve student engagement and learning. These teams are a collaboration between school leadership, teachers, families, external supports and students. The school also provides an Outreach and Engagement Year Level Coordinator who work to re-engage students with significantly low attendance, and who may be at risk from further disengagement from education.

Processes that flow from the case-management approach 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
- engaging the student with the school's Hands On Learning program at the Middle Years campus.
- 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

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.

DE policy to support the case-management approach includes:

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

## **4. Identifying students in need of support**

Mill Park Secondary 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mill Park 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
- 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

## 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 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 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/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.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mill Park 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:

- 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 Year Level Coordinator
- 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 Mill Park 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.

## 7. Engaging with families

Mill Park 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, 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
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

## 8. Evaluation

Mill Park Secondary 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 survey data
- incidents data available through Compass
- school reports
- parent opinion survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Mill Park Secondary 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

- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- 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 and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Policy last reviewed	June 2023
Consultation	Ongoing Consultation – available via school website
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before June 2025