



# STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

## 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.

Mortlake 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 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. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Mortlake College prides itself on having a warm and inviting atmosphere at all year levels.

Every child who attends Mortlake College will experience the individual attention that a small school can provide and also a wide range of educational opportunities.

Subjects offered cover the full range of curriculum choices from Prep through to Year 12, and reflect our mission statement that ‘we are committed to maximising the potential of ALL students’.

We combine the best of a traditional approach to teaching with innovative and exciting programs at all levels of the school. We pride ourselves on providing excellent Information and Communication Technology facilities and opportunities across the whole school.

We have programs which focus on student wellbeing and the development of the whole child. At the Primary level, the positive classroom education program aims to develop positive attitudes and emotional capabilities in all students, whilst at the secondary level students work closely with house mentors who provide support and pathways planning.

Students at Mortlake College can be certain that excellence can be achieved. Staff are professional in their approach, caring in their relationships with students and experienced in helping students to develop work habits, which will carry through into later life.

The environment is secure and conducive to students producing the highest possible standard of work. We create opportunities for students to develop their full potential in all aspects of their growth as a person.

We are fortunate to have the active involvement of many of our parents in the school. Parent helpers in the P-5 area are a great support and the ‘Parents’ Association & School Council work tirelessly for the benefit of the school as a whole.

Mortlake College has an enviable reputation across the region for our excellence in the Performing Arts. Each year we have a major school production which involves around seventy students from Years 5 – 12; a P – 4 concert; a school choir and music education. We also have a thriving Kids in the Kitchen and Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program where our Years 2, 3 & 4 students grow vegetables in the kitchen garden and use them to create healthy meals.

We are very proud of our academic record which shows clearly that with the benefit of our smaller class numbers, Mortlake College can prepare students for a wide selection of courses and to the highest level. Recent graduates are studying medicine and law while others have experienced success through the VET/VCAL stream and are now involved in apprenticeships, traineeships and full employment.

As a P-12 school, transition is seamless for our students but we ensure that students from other feeder schools are assimilated quickly into their peer group. We work with families to create and maintain an harmonious environment that makes for happy students and enriched learning. We develop close and harmonious relationships with students for their entire primary and secondary education. Whilst we have distinct sub-schools which reflect the different stages of learning, we do have a whole school approach to teaching and learning.

In each of the sub-schools, teachers work together in a team-oriented approach to student welfare and to all aspects of the teaching program

## **2. School values, philosophy and vision**

Mortlake 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, integrity and kindness 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 is available online at: [<http://mortlakep12.vic.edu.au/mission-statement.html>].

### 3. Engagement strategies

Mortlake College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour 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 data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Mortlake College use an Explicit Teaching 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 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 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 level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through leadership roles and other forums including house group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, House Mentors, Sub School Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through our vertical curriculum, performing arts, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Officer, School Nurse, School Chaplain, House Mentors, 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
  - Safe Schools

- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs
- alternative program for trauma students

### Targeted

- each class & house group has a teacher mentor, 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
- 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
- We work with students to plan their Year 10 & Year 11 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 and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to Child First, Headspace

Mortlake 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
- 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 Child First

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
  - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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

Mortlake 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. Mortlake 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 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.

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

The rights and responsibilities in this policy are set out in accordance with the Equal Opportunity Act 1995, The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and The Disability Standards for Education 2005. Details of these acts can be found in the appendix.

#### **Bullying and harassment**

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment free from bullying and harassment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others.

All members of the school community have an obligation to report instances of bullying and harassment.

All complaints will be taken seriously and confidentially.

Definitions of bullying and harassment can be found in the appendix.

Incidents of bullying and harassment will be dealt with in line with the school's staged response to behaviour management.

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.

### **Rights and Responsibilities of Students**

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be treated fairly and given equal opportunity and access to all school activities.</li> <li>• Learn at the highest level and be encouraged to achieve their highest potential.</li> <li>• Feel safe at school</li> <li>• Have access to a range of extra curricula activities</li> <li>• Have access to up to date facilities and equipment</li> <li>• Be able to create positive relationships with teachers and other students across all year levels.</li> <li>• Express an opinion and be listened to, even if that opinion differs from others.</li> <li>• Expect that every effort will be taken to give them access to a wide range of subjects.</li> </ul>	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be an appropriate role model for other students and to represent the school in a positive light at all times.</li> <li>• Come to school every day.</li> <li>• Take advantage of the opportunities this school offers.</li> <li>• Have all the materials necessary for getting the work done.</li> <li>• Wear school uniform.</li> <li>• Complete all required work.</li> <li>• Use the school crossing.</li> <li>• Look after the school, the facilities and equipment.</li> <li>• Treat others with respect.</li> <li>• Listen and value other people's opinions.</li> <li>• Use common sense and obey the school rule</li> <li>• Allow other students to work without distraction.</li> </ul>

### **Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<p>Parents/carers have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged.</li> <li>• Be kept informed about their child's progress at school.</li> <li>• Participate in their child's education and learning.</li> </ul>	<p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by modelling positive behaviours and supporting the school's curriculum, homework and uniform policies.</li> <li>• Support their child to be fully prepared for the demands of the school day.</li> <li>• Ensure their child's regular attendance</li> <li>• Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning by reading the school newsletter and school reports,</li> </ul>

	<p>attending parent teacher interviews and information sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students by supporting the school's code of conduct and encouraging their children to be ethical and responsible citizens.</li> <li>• Are aware of the ways they can support the school; regular payment of fees, parents club, school council, working bees, classroom helpers, school sports, performing arts, etc.</li> <li>• To inform the school, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to their child that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student</li> </ul>
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### Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities & Expectations
<p>Teachers have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment</li> <li>• Be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student</li> <li>• Use discretion in the application of rules and consequences</li> <li>• Receive respect and support from the school community</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy.</li> <li>• Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.</li> <li>• Know the content they teach. Be confident and familiar with all Victorian curriculum documents.</li> <li>• Know their students and develop positive relationships with a sense of mutual respect and partnership.</li> <li>• Give regular and timely feedback and plan and assess for effective learning.</li> <li>• Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.</li> <li>• Strive to keep abreast of best practice and use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.</li> <li>• Follow restorative practice when dealing with student behaviour and provide a consistent approach to student management.</li> <li>• Communicate with others in a professional, friendly manner, valuing confidentiality, trust and honesty.</li> <li>• Respect school property and resources.</li> <li>• Acknowledge individuality and expect 'personal best'.</li> <li>• Ensure that all students progress.</li> </ul>



## 6. Student behavioural expectations

*Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and the roles and responsibilities of students, staff and parents.*

Mortlake College is a Restorative Practice school and the strategies of Restorative Practice will be used in the first instance for all student management issues.

### *A Restorative approach...*

- *encourages students to appreciate the consequences of their actions for others*
- *enables students to make amends where their actions have harmed others*
- *requires students to be accountable for their actions*
- *encourages respect for all concerned*
- *develops empathy*

In the event that a student needs to be dealt with differently, Mortlake College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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*
- *restorative practices*
- *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 House Mentor/ Leadership Team*
- *detentions*
- *behaviour reviews*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

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

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

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

## 7. Engaging with families

Mortlake 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

Mortlake 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
- Sentral incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Mortlake College Engagement Policy is supported by a variety of school based policies including:

- Strategic Plan
- Annual Implementation Plan
- Statements of Values
- School Philosophy
- Child Safe Standards
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Sunsmart Policy
- Responsible use of Electronic Device Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Acceptable use of Internet Policy
- Restorative Practice Guidelines
- Work Safe Policy
- Uniform Policy

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's **ANNUAL** review cycle or earlier if required.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

**OCTOBER 2020**

Danny Forrest  
Principal

Bruce Goddard  
School Council President