



## MELBOURNE GIRLS' COLLEGE – Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

### STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

#### RATIONALE:

This Policy articulates the school community's shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, support, attendance, inclusion, diversity and behaviour. The policy supports the rights and articulates the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment.

The Policy supports the College's capacity to respond to individual student circumstances, when a student begins to disengage from their learning, regular attendance is not consistent, positive behaviours are not demonstrated or safety or wellbeing is compromised, by outlining a series of processes, actions and consequences.

#### 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.

Melbourne Girls' 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



## MELBOURNE GIRLS' COLLEGE – Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

Melbourne Girls' College was established in 1994 on the Birrarung (banks of the Yarra River) in Richmond, Victoria, and is a leader in innovative education. It provides enrolment opportunities for local, wider-Melbourne and international students to study inquiry and trans-disciplinary units in Years 7-9, followed by many Year 10, VCE, and VET subjects in the senior years.

In 2022, the school's enrolment was 1410 with representing diverse backgrounds including over 60 nationalities and a cohort of international students. Melbourne Girls' College has a low Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE) indicating a low level of social disadvantage for the student population. The staffing profile of Melbourne Girls' College is made up of a College Principal, 2 Assistant Principals, 7 Leading Teachers, 6 Learning Specialists, 82.47 Teachers, 23.91 Education Support staff, and a Business Manager. There are no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the College in 2022.

The pandemic and its impact on international border closures, remote learning and our International Student Program has been significant. At MGC, we have the capacity to offer 65 positions of enrolment to full fee-paying international students through DET's program and service. In 2022, six full fee-paying international students were enrolled at MGC. In the second half of 2022 significant time and energy was devoted to recreating our platform internationally and rebuilding opportunities and partnerships for 2023 and beyond.

The academic achievements of Melbourne Girls' College are strong and many of our students participate in the Student Excellence Program and the MGC Learning Extension and Advancement Program (LEAP). The curriculum at Melbourne Girls' College is designed to equip students with depth and breadth of knowledge, skills, and capabilities needed for success. Students are encouraged and challenged to strive for personal excellence, and we explicitly teach strategies, habits and dispositions that are deeply connected to a growth mindset. The school community takes pride in teaching students the transferable skills required to be global citizens and to challenge stereotypes, particularly in women's leadership, intercultural and ethical understandings, sustainability, and philanthropy.

While our academic achievements are a publicly recognised strength of Melbourne Girls' College, we are equally committed to the personal, social, and emotional wellbeing of our students. We recognise the intrinsic link between wellbeing and effective learning and have adopted a whole-school approach to wellbeing.

The College prioritises and celebrates success and growth in the whole person and MGC has a strong focus on co-curricular endeavours, particularly in rowing, aerobics, dance, and other school sporting programs. The College invests in creative, and artistic endeavours and experiences for students, particularly in the performing and visual arts. In addition, MGC has a thriving Australian Airforce Cadets program. The sustainability collective and environment projects are well known in the local and wider community.

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

Melbourne Girls' College is a leader in innovative education, providing opportunities for students who are taught and nurtured by staff, peers and families. Our vision is to focus on the development of:

- Personal, social and emotional wellbeing
- Creating global citizens, who are ethical leaders with a sense of stewardship for the future
- Academic growth, including in the areas of Science Technology Engineering Art and Mathematics (STEAM)
- Sporting endeavours, particularly in rowing and aerobics
- Artistic endeavours, particularly in performance, visual arts and music
- Social endeavours, particularly in the promotion of diversity, sustainability and philanthropy



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The Melbourne Girls' College values provide the foundations of our strong community and guide students to "Lead and Achieve". We value:

- Excellence - In our achievements and aspirations while always striving to give and be our best.
- Teamwork - Together, we know we can achieve so much more. We strongly believe that effective communication and the celebration of individuality within the team are crucial elements to developing an effective team-based and collaborative environment.
- Diversity - We are a richer community when we consider all perspectives and recognise and celebrate our differences. We challenge our students to think critically about their own beliefs and examine the world in fresh ways to promote creativity and innovation in an authentic, inclusive environment. We are proud of our commitment to inclusiveness and work to ensure all our policies, practices and programs are united.

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Melbourne Girls' 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. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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 and VCE to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Melbourne Girls' College use the LEARN instructional model (Learning Intention, Engage, Apply, Review and Reflect, Next?) 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 Melbourne Girls' 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 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



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- 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 the Student Executive, Student Representative Council on School Council and other forums including year group meetings and clubs. 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 the school production, aerobics, rowing, dance, STEAM, athletics, music programs and many other clubs such as Philanthropy and Diversity.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team, School Nurse, Careers, Student Engagement and Wellbeing Leaders, Year Level 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 positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - The Wellbeing Program
  - The Home Group Program
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. cyber safety)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- 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 Level Leader, Student Engagement and Wellbeing Leader and an Assistant Principal and an Attendance Officer 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
- 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
- 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 Diversity Club, multicultural events and the multi-faith prayer room
- *we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background, 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](#)*
- *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*



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*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*
- *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*
- *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*
- *Melbourne Girls' College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan*
- *Multimodal Approach of Preventing Suicide in School (MAPSS), study skills, careers preparation, sex education sessions.*

### Individual

Melbourne Girls' 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 Safety Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up or modifying timetables
- referring the student to:
  - the Student Wellbeing Team
  - 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



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- in Out of Home Care
- with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Helpful DET Links:

- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

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

Melbourne Girls' 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. Melbourne Girls' 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
- communication with families
- 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
- Student survey information
- MAPSS survey information (Year 10 only)
- Writing pieces – GAT, NAPLAN, student journals, English etc...

#### 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.

Melbourne Girls' College seeks to foster a positive, harmonious and productive environment where:

- every member of the College community is treated with respect and consideration



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- every student has the right to learn and every teacher has the right to teach.

Each member of the College community has the responsibility to actively ensure these rights are protected.

The College Council acknowledges its obligations under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*, the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Ministerial Order 625* and accepts responsibility to communicate these obligations to all members of the school 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.

Shared Expectations

	Principals, teachers, staff	Students	Parents/Carers
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school will comply with its duty of care obligations to each student and deliver teaching and learning with flexible pedagogical styles to respond to student needs and engage different learning styles.</li> </ul>	<p>All students will demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preparedness to engage fully in the school's curriculum.</li> <li>• effort by striving for individual excellence.</li> <li>• teamwork by collaboratively working with others in a positive manner</li> <li>• self-discipline by modelling school values and meeting expectations.</li> </ul>	<p>All families are encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the school's efforts to educate young people to live in a diverse world by promoting an understanding and appreciation of diversity in the home.</li> <li>• provide all relevant information about their child to the school.</li> <li>• attend Parent/Teacher/Student interviews.</li> </ul>





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<b>Attendance</b>	<p>All staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accurately record lateness &amp; attendance for each student</li> <li>identify and follow-up student absences/lateness to class.</li> <li>monitor student absence rates.</li> <li>communicate with parents when appropriate.</li> <li>liaise with relevant staff.</li> </ul>	<p>All students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attend and be punctual for all timetabled classes.</li> <li>provide a medical certificate/written note to tutorial teacher on return to school.</li> <li>discuss with each teacher procedures for catching up on any work missed through lateness or absence.</li> </ul>	<p>All families will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that the student attends and is punctual each school day.</li> <li>notify the school (preferably in advance) if a student is to be absent.</li> <li>provide written explanation to the school for each student absence.</li> <li>contact the tutorial teacher or year level Dean for assistance if a student is resistant to attending school.</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviour</b>	<p>All staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>document policies related to standards of behaviour.</li> <li>outline expectations and reinforce high standards of student conduct.</li> <li>monitor student behaviour.</li> <li>provide access to counselling.</li> <li>develop partnerships between parents and teachers.</li> </ul>	<p>All students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate the school's values in their learning and behaviour.</li> <li>have high expectations that they can learn.</li> <li>support each other's learning.</li> <li>understand and take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour.</li> </ul>	<p>All families will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand the school's behavioural expectations and encourage their children to exhibit those behaviours.</li> </ul>

### 6. Student behavioural expectations and management

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, Melbourne Girls' 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.





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Our school considers, explores and implement 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>

The Principal of Melbourne Girls' 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**

Melbourne Girls' 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 through Compass
- involving families in school decision making



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

### 8. Evaluation

Melbourne Girls' 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
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Melbourne Girls' 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: MGC Intranet > Curriculum > School Documentation > Policies
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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](#)

### Help for non-English speakers:

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact: 9428 8955

### FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

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

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)



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- [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 & APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Edited July 2023
Consultation	
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2026