

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

PURPOSE:

- (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
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POLICY:

1. School Profile

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 2026, the school's enrolment was 1544, with students 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, 3 Assistant Principals, 7 Leading Teachers, 6 Learning Specialists, 166 Teachers, 30 Education Support staff, and a Business Manager.

At MGC, we have the capacity to offer 85 positions of enrolment to full fee- paying international students through DET's program and service.

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

Vision

Melbourne Girls' College empowers young women to strive for academic excellence, grow with resilience and self-belief, and lead courageously. We are driven by a commitment to shape socially conscious individuals who positively influence communities.

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 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/ carers
- Prioritising 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 working with them as partners in learning
- Embedding The Resilience Project across the school through Wellbeing and Homegroup programs.
- Building staff capacity with Youth Mental Health First Aid, Parent/Carer Mental Health First Aid and Teen Mental Health First Aid in Year 10.

- Analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as
 - attendance
 - Attitudes to School Survey
 - parent survey data
 - Resilience Project data
 - student management data
 - school level assessment data
- Delivering 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 career aspirations.
- Using 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.
- Adopting 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
- Incorporating the College's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promoting to students, staff and parents/carers so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community.
- Providing carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling.
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents/carers.
- Monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level.
- Providing opportunities for students 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, Homegroup Teachers, Year Level Teams, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Creating 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.
- Encouraging students to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team, First Aid, 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.
- Engaging in positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - The Wellbeing Program aligned with the Resilience Project
 - The Home Group Program
- Providing programs, incursions and excursions to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. cyber safety)
- Promotion of opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- Empowering 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 level is supported by two Year Level Leaders, a Student Engagement and Wellbeing Leader, an Assistant Principal, and an Attendance Officer. Together, this team is responsible for monitoring the health and wellbeing of students in their year level and acts as a key point of contact for students who may require additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education within a positive learning environment that recognises and values the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The College works in partnership with the local KESO and develops Individual Education Plans to support each student's learning and wellbeing.
- Our English as an Additional Language (EAL) students are supported through our EAL program, while all culturally and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school community. This is fostered through initiatives such as the Diversity Club, multicultural events, and access to a multi-faith prayer room.
- We support the learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds through targeted and inclusive practices.
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for 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 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 will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future.
- Year 9 students complete the Morrisby Profile and attend an individual appointment to unpack the results.
- Melbourne Girls' College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience
- Teen Mental health First Aid, study skills, careers preparation, sex education sessions are all run with different year levels at year level appropriate times.

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 students 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 to the student to:
 - The Student Wellbeing Team
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external support 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 in support including:
 - Responding sensitively to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing.
 - Collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the students and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student.
 - Monitoring individual student attendance and developing 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

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 to 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
- 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
Engagement	• 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.	All students will demonstrate: • preparedness to engage fully in the school's curriculum. • effort by striving for individual excellence. • teamwork by collaboratively working with others in a positive manner. • self-discipline by modelling school values and meeting expectations.	All families are encouraged to: • 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. • provide all relevant information about their child to the school. • attend Parent/Teacher/Student interviews.
Attendance	All staff will: • accurately record lateness & attendance for each student • identify and follow-up student absences/lateness to class.	All students will: • attend and be punctual for all timetabled classes. • provide a medical certificate/written note to tutorial teacher on return to school.	All families will: • ensure that the student attends and is punctual each school day. • notify the school (preferably in advance) if a student is to be absent. • provide written

	• monitor student absence rates. • communicate with parents/carers when appropriate. • liaise with relevant staff.	• discuss with each teacher procedures for catching up on any work missed through lateness or absence.	explanation to the school for each student absence. • contact the homegroup teacher or year level for assistance if a student is resistant to attending school.
Behaviour	All staff will: • document policies related to standards of behaviour. • outline expectations and reinforce high standards of student conduct. • monitor student behaviour. • provide access to counselling. • develop partnerships between parents/carers and teachers.	All students will: • demonstrate the school's values in their learning and behaviour. • have high expectations that they can learn. • support each other's learning. • understand and take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour.	All families will: • Read and understood the respectful behaviours policy of parents and carers • understand the school's behavioural expectations and encourage their children to exhibit those behaviours. • Support the schools behaviour implementation procedures such as detentions

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/carers 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 Leader
- restorative practices
- detentions: Lunchtime, Afterschool or Principals
- 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 and carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website.
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent/carer 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 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/carer 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 website
- Included in staff induction processes: MGC Intranet > Curriculum > School Documentation > Policies.
- Included in the Parent/Carer Handbook and on the website 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/carers 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 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
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POLICY REVIEW & APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2026
Consultation	Student and Staff focus groups June 2026 School Council 18 August 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2029