

MELBOURNE HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school on 98260711 or at mhs@mhs.vic.edu.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.

Melbourne High School 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.

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2. School values, philosophy, and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Melbourne High School is located in Forrest Hill, South Yarra near the corner of Chapel Street and Alexandra Avenue. It is within the City of Stonnington.

Melbourne High School traces its history back to 1854 and the establishment of the National Model School. In 1905, the school became the Continuation School, the first State secondary school in Victoria. It is a state-wide provider of broad, academic education for boys in Years 9 to 12. It is an academic, select entry school. Admission to the School is by examination with a small discretionary factor.

The school grounds include four main buildings. The Twenties building includes classrooms, staff rooms and a multi-purpose hall. The Nineties building includes the school gym, pool, music department and classrooms. The Round building comprises of classrooms, staff offices and the Facilities Manager's office and storage of school supplies. The Arts Building consists of specialty arts studios, including a darkroom and theatre performance space.

Additionally, the school has sporting grounds including an oval, basketball court, two netball/tennis courts, a hockey field (with attached stands and kiosk)

MHS also has an outdoor education facility located in Millgrove that includes a dormitory, kitchen, ropes course and ovals.

In 2022, The School had 1372 students, with approximately 340 students in each year level. Students are drawn from a wide cultural and socio-economic background and from across the greater metropolitan and inner country areas. The Student Family Occupation (SFO) category was 0.1732

The staffing profile MHS includes a Principal, three Assistant Principals, eight Leading Teachers and five Learning Specialists, 107 Teaching Staff (EFP) and 16.6 Educational Support Staff.

Melbourne High School provides a broad, stimulating, diverse and challenging educational experience to enhance the varied talents of its selective-entry students, preparing them for academic, vocational, professional and civic leadership, while also encouraging individual development and happiness.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Melbourne High School is an academic secondary college aiming to provide an environment conducive to learning and the pursuit of excellence, and in which students develop self-discipline and learn to take responsibility for their own actions. It recognises that, in the pursuit of excellence, all students are individuals, entitled to equal opportunity, a positive learning environment and on-going support to enable them to realise their fullest potential – intellectual, personal, physical, creative, social and vocational. Such an environment can be developed when based on the values of mutual respect, shared responsibility and co-operation between staff, students and parents.

The School will nurture in our students the capabilities required to lead successful and socially responsible lives in the twenty-first century. Fostering these capabilities is the collective responsibility of the student, their family, the school and the community.

Successful learners:

- Study a curriculum that embraces all learning areas and balances breadth and depth of focus
- Have the ability to think critically and deeply within and across learning areas
- Are creative and innovative in their thinking and application of learning
- Take responsibility for their learning and are motivated to reach their full potential
- Are able to work independently and collaborate in teams and effectively communicate ideas

- Are lifelong learners with the agility to adapt to changing circumstances

Confident and creative individuals:

- Able to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing
- Have the ability to establish and maintain healthy and satisfying lives
- Are enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities
- Develop personal capabilities such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others
- Relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships
- Are well-prepared for life roles in their family, community and the workforce
- Are optimistic, make rational decisions and accept responsibility for their actions

Active and informed citizens:

- Are responsible and active global and local citizens
- Appreciate and respect individual, cultural, social and religious diversity
- Able to relate to and communicate across diverse cultures
- Demonstrate a commitment to the values of democracy, equity and justice
- Develop a personal ethical understanding and act with integrity
- Are able to exercise civic leadership for the common good

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

MHS 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. Both the academic program and the co-curricular programs are designed to promote students' learning and engagement. MHS's philosophy of 'more than just marks' is promoted to the school community and involvement by parents and students in the 'non-academic' aspects of the school as a means of encouraged as a means of fostering students' wellbeing and success, academic and otherwise. 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.

Summaries of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school are included below:

Universal Strategies

- 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, VCE and VET programs to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations

- teachers at Melbourne High School 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
- 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 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 productions, house program, music programs, outdoor education program, cocurricular program and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team, School Nurse, Student Learning Coordinators, Assistant Principals and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We 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
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
 - Game Aware
 - Fit to Drive
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, music program, recess and lunchtime activities)
- peers support 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 Strategies

- each year group has two Student Learning Coordinators, senior teachers 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
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through working with EAL schools, social workers, case managers and community as needed.
- 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](#) as well as providing for individual adjustments as required
- 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 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 undertake training in a trauma-informed approach to working students and apply this practice to students who have experienced trauma.
- all students are assisted to develop a career action plan, informed by tools such as Morrisby testing, the Career Voyage program and individual interviews, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Melbourne High School will assist students to plan their Year 10 work experience, and support the completion of their Career Action Plan.

Individual Strategies

Melbourne High School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement and wellbeing. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- utilising a case management model for particularly vulnerable students which includes allocation to a school-based case manager and review in fortnightly Case Management meetings attended by relevant staff
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school and support their wellbeing
- developing an [Individual Education Plan](#) and/or a [Behaviour Support Plan](#) and/or a Health Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up or seating plan
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports
 - [Student Support Services](#)
 - Appropriate external supports such as General Practitioners, council based youth and family services, [HeadSpace](#), other allied health professionals, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Child Protection 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 Education Support Officers
- running regular [Student Support Group](#) meetings as required for 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

Melbourne High School 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 High School 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
- detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- identification via wellbeing screening surveys and validated psychometric instruments

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
- to attend School regularly and punctually
- to respect the property and equipment of the School and others
- to carry out reasonable instructions to the best of their ability
- to conduct themselves in a courteous and appropriate manner in School and in public
- to observe the uniform code of the School
- To regularly monitor school communication systems
- 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 Values, Philosophy and Vision (section 2 of this document) and Student Rights and Responsibilities (section 5 of this document).

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 High School 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 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.

Strategies 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 Student Learning Coordinator or member of the Principal class team
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings

- suspension
- expulsion

Melbourne High School Guidelines for Consequences of Student Inappropriate Behaviour:

Levels	Examples of inappropriate behaviour	Range of Consequences
Level 5 Criminal activity / repeated breach	Serious criminal offence Offenses involving illicit drugs Serious / repeated damage of property, resources or equipment Theft Serious wilful interference with school network Smoking or vaping, or alcohol related activity Violent actions resulting in physical or emotional trauma Sexual assault Repeated harassment or bullying	Principal and Assistant Principal* External Suspension or Expulsion Referral to police Parent/Guardian interview Payment for damage Confiscation of device for checking Removal of access to school network Note on school record *Incident to be documented on Compass by classroom Principal or AP
Level 4 Harassment and Vandalism and other serious offences	Accessing, storing or transmitting indecent or offensive material e.g. abusive emails or messages Theft-including identity theft Bullying or harassment Cyber bullying Vandalism or wilful damage to property, resources or equipment Violent actions resulting in physical injury Using a recording device in breach of school policy Smoking or vaping, or alcohol related activity Forgery or false representation (official documents)	Assistant Principal or Student Learning Coordinator* Internal suspension External Suspension Withdrawal of Student from Regular School Activity Referral to police Parent/Guardian interview School Community service Payment for damage Confiscation of electronic device for checking Removal of access to school network Note on school record *Incident to be documented on Compass by classroom SLC or AP
Level 3 Repeated or major misdemeanours	Repeated inappropriate use of an electronic device Repeated failure to comply with expectations regarding acceptable use of electronic devices Inappropriate use of resources, facilities or equipment Leaving MHS campus without permission Regular truancy Noncompliance of uniform policy Plagiarism (refer to Intellectual Integrity document) Continued failure to follow instructions of staff member Forgery or false representation (official documents) Ongoing or severe occurrences of Level 1 and 2 incidents	Assistant Principal or Student Learning Coordinator* Parent/Guardian interview AP/SLC interview Internal Suspension Removal from class – time out space School Community service Removal of access to school network Official warning of potential suspension Ongoing monitoring program with SLC Note on school record *Incident to be documented on Compass by classroom SLC or AP
Level 2 Inappropriate or Irresponsible behaviour	Plagiarism or copyright infringement Facilitating plagiarism by providing work to other students Forgery or false representation Interfering with another student’s electronic device Sending inappropriate/nuisance emails or messages Knowledge of theft occurring without action Truancy OR leaving MHS campus without permission Failing to follow instructions of staff member Ongoing issues with lateness to class Inappropriate language use (racist, homophobic, sexist slurs)	Student Learning Coordinator, Form Teacher or Classroom Teacher* Contact parent or guardian Official warning of potential suspension Academic Integrity Program Request for application for leave Interview with SLC Written or verbal apology Note on school record School Community service Before or after school detention *Incident to be documented on Compass by classroom teacher or SLC

Level 1 Negligence	Failing to charge device overnight without a valid excuse Failing to bring electronic device to class Inappropriate use of electronic device Single instance of negligent use of resources, facilities or equipment Listening to music in class without permission Eating in classrooms or corridors Noncompliance with school uniform policy Noncompliance with school mobile phone policy Failing to follow instructions of staff member Arriving late to class Inappropriate language use	Classroom Teacher or Staff Member* Recess or lunchtime interview Short detention Verbal or written apology Move seat in classroom Liaise with Form Teacher Loss of access to electronic device for the remainder of class time Verbal correction or reprimand *Incident to be documented on Compass by classroom teacher or staff member
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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 High School 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.

Students have the right to appeal a disciplinary action in accordance with the MHS School Complaints Policy.

Inappropriate Behaviour: Classroom Teacher Reporting Guidelines

If a teacher witnesses students engaging in any of the following behaviours, they must report the incident to the Student Learning Coordinators.

- Abusive or inappropriate language towards a teacher
- Student leaving School grounds without permission
- Wagging / Truancy
- Smoking / Drug taking / Drinking of alcohol in uniform or during school activities
- Graffiti or wilful damage of School or personal property
- Theft
- Bullying or violent behaviour - verbal or physical
- Inappropriate material on technology or internet – pornography, racist, sexist etc
- Sexual Harassment of any sort

7. Engaging with families

Melbourne High School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child’s learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making including the development of policies
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Melbourne High School will collect data each year to understand the level of mental distress amongst 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:

- Annual wellbeing screening of each year level
- Clinical records data
- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Melbourne High School 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 in transition and enrolment packs
- 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/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

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

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	Wellbeing Team – 17/05/22 SLCs – 24/05/22, 30/05/22 SRC – 5/06/22 Principal - 14/06/22 School Council 21/06/22 School Council 19/07/22
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2024