



## Mirboo North Secondary College

# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the college administration on (03) 5667-9000

## 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.

Mirboo North Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture 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
3. Engagement strategies
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Mirboo North is a co-educational secondary college nestled in the Strzelecki Ranges that has a proud academic history and we continue to provide a well-rounded and quality education for all our students in this 21st of learning.



## Mirboo North Secondary College

The college was established in 1955 and is located approximately 150 kilometres south east of Melbourne. We have 390 students enrolled from Year 7 to 12 and 55 staff members including a Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse and Mental Health Nurse.

Our school grounds back onto native bushland, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Most students that attend our school live locally or in neighbouring satellite towns and so students tend to walk or bus to school. Mirboo North Secondary College has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Every student at our college can experience success and we value the many different pathways that they each want to pursue in life. We also appreciate that we must equip them with a range of skills that are transferable across a broad spectrum of industries, and which can be built further upon as they grow in their years beyond secondary education. To this end, our teachers understand that no two students are the same and their focus is on teaching the individual no matter where they are on the learning continuum. They are adaptable and flexible and ensure that all students have equal opportunity to develop and progress in the classroom and beyond.

Our inclusive learning environment aims to see that all students can be the best versions of themselves, and we strive to always foster a supportive and caring atmosphere, where students can be then challenged to grow and improve. We believe that all students can develop and achieve success across a range of curricular and co-curricular activities and that by setting high expectations, it empowers them and inspires their confidence to take on responsibility for their own learning progress.

Our end goal is to ensure that students experience significant learning growth, particularly with respect to their literacy and numeracy skills. But whilst we acknowledge the fundamental importance of this goal, we also understand that students want a positive experience at school and to be happy. We know that the happier the student, the more likely it is that they will experience success at school, so we also aim to make learning fun and look to celebrate successes at every possible moment, no matter how big or small.

### 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Mirboo North Secondary College's Statement of Values and Vision 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, trust and pride 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: <https://www.mnsc.vic.edu.au/values-vision/>

### 3. Engagement strategies

*Mirboo North Secondary 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*



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- *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 Mirboo North Secondary College ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *teachers at Mirboo North Secondary 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 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 Voice of Students (VOS) / Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Mental Health Nurse, Year Level Coordinators, 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*
  - *Bully Stoppers*
  - *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*

Targeted



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- *each year group has a Year Level Coordinator 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 9 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 a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *Mirboo North Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 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 \(SSG\)](#) - An SSG is a partnership between schools, parents/carers, the student and relevant agencies. The group works together to plan and support the educational, health, social, cultural and emotional wellbeing of students with diverse learning needs.
- [Individual Education Plans \(IEPs/ILPs\)](#) - An IEP is a written statement that describes the adjustments, goals and strategies to meet a student's individual educational needs so they can reach their full potential. An IEP is essential as it helps you plan and monitor a student's unique learning needs.

*IEPs are also known as individual learning plans, individual learning improvement plans*

- [Behaviour - Students](#) – Our college will consider, explore and aim to implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.
- [Behaviour Support Plans \(BSPs\)](#) – A BSP is a document that addresses inappropriate behaviour of a student, and outlines strategies to improve their behaviour.
- [Student Support Services \(SSS\)](#) - Student Support Services (SSS) teams are comprised of professionals including:
  - psychologists
  - speech pathologists
  - social workers

*They support schools in assisting children and young people facing barriers to learning to achieve their educational and developmental potential.*

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

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



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- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

Mirboo North Secondary 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 local council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst (Orange Door)*
  - *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*
- *running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:*
  - *with a disability*
  - *in Out of Home Care*
  - *and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

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

Mirboo North Secondary College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mirboo North Secondary College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- *personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled*
- *attendance records*
- *academic performance*
- *observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation*
- *attendance, detention and suspension data*
- *engagement with families*



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- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*

### 5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, 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.

### 6. Student behavioural expectations and management

*Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Mirboo North Secondary College's Bullying policy.*

*When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mirboo North Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.*

*Our school considers, explores and 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*



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- *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 Mirboo North Secondary College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

### 7. Engaging with families

Mirboo North Secondary College values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

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

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

### 8. Evaluation

Mirboo North Secondary College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management



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- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Mirboo North Secondary College will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

### COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following

Available publicly on our school's website.

- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

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

### FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related policies include:

- *Bullying Prevention Policy*
- *Child Safe Standards Policy*
- *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*

Our college *Statement of Values and School* can be accessed via <http://www.mnsc.vic.edu/values-vision/>

### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2021
Consultation	Student Representative Group (Voice of Students) School Council [Can occur alongside Bullying Prevention Policy (every 2 years)]
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2023