



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

CHILD SAFE STATEMENT

At Mornington Secondary College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental expectation of our college. Mornington Secondary College is committed to protecting students from abuse or harm while at school and in our care. Mornington Secondary College's Child Safety Code of Conduct is consistent with the Education Department's recommendation.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

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.

Mornington Secondary College provides a strong foundation for student learning with student engagement and wellbeing as a whole-school priority.

Student wellbeing is everyone's responsibility - social and emotional wellbeing underpin effective student learning and positive behaviour. Mornington SC recognises that we are preparing young people for their adult lives. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's International Commission identifies learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be as the pillars of learning for the 21st century.

Mornington SC focuses on the development of student social competencies by embedding such learning opportunities into our pedagogy, curriculum, behaviour management systems, expectations and structures.

A positive school culture ensures that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. Mornington SC is engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Student engagement can be defined as three interrelated components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive.

- Behavioural engagement refers to students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school.
- Emotional engagement encompasses students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school. It can be defined as students' sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.



- Cognitive engagement relates to students' investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self regulation.

Young people will encounter some difficulty, including learning difficulty, during their school life and will be supported by strategies to address such challenges. Risks for students may involve individual, social, emotional or physical factors, and may be related to family or community factors. The College has in place processes to identify and intervene early when an individual student is at risk of disengaging from learning or from school. Our teachers have a responsibility to respond when students experience difficulty with their schooling.

Teachers at Mornington SC are supported by a planned, sequential and detailed whole-school approach to student support and by professional learning to assist with implementation. Our teachers need to 'believe they can make a difference and have a commitment to do so ... as well as a belief in the capacity of all students to make progress, given sufficient time and support'. (Hill & Crevola, 1998, pp. 133–57).

The Mornington Secondary College Student Engagement Policy will focus on:

- creating a positive school culture that is fair and respectful
- building a safe and supportive school environment
- expecting positive, supportive and respectful relationships that value diversity
- promoting pro-social values and behaviours
- encouraging student participation and student voice
- proactively engaging with parents/carers
- implementing preventative and early intervention approaches
- responding to individual students
- linking to the local community.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation



POLICY

1. School profile

Mornington Secondary College is a school of 1500+ students situated approximately 50km south east of Melbourne. The college offers a broad curriculum to enable students to follow a variety of Pathways. Curriculum offerings are extensive and are supported by an extra curricula program which includes a variety of sports, clubs, camping and outdoor education, a well resourced instrumental and classroom music program and theatrical productions.

The College's strength is in the provision of programs that cater for a broad range of student abilities and interests.

An integrated curriculum operates in the Junior School, Years 7 and Years 8 which involves a coordinated approach to the teaching of English, Mathematics, Science and SOSE and Sport Education. Teachers working at Year 7 and 8 are responsible for the delivery of a student's curriculum. This program is delivered in a purpose built learning centre.

At Year 9, Broad Horizons provides a program that exposes students, in and out of a school setting, to opportunities to build self-confidence and esteem through their engagement with the key elements of community, the environment and the city.

The College provides increased opportunities for students in the post-compulsory years with the greater uptake of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), increased access to Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs along with a broad selection of pathways in traditional VCE programs.

The College has outstanding facilities that include a heated indoor swimming pool, a performing arts centre, a three court indoor basketball complex and 26 acres of extensive and attractive well maintained grounds.

More detailed information can be found on the College Website at www.mornsc.vic.edu.au.

2. School values and philosophy

Mornington SC's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community.

Mornington SC is an inspirational learning environment built on mutual respect and committed to success in a student-centered, safe atmosphere. High educational standards are expected and encouraged as is respect for diversity, self and others. The provision of broad educational opportunities allows all students a pathway to success as responsible members of the global community.

Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of:

- S Support students to achieve success
- T Teamwork, bringing the school community together
- R Respect for all
- I Inspire minds
- V Value every opportunity
- E Endeavour to be the best you can



3. Engagement strategies

Mornington SC 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.

As an effective school Mornington Secondary College will promote and maintain high levels of student attendance and participation through:

- articulating high expectations to all members of the school community
- adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence
- following up student absences promptly and consistently
- implementing data-driven attendance improvement strategies
- creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- providing early identification of and supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance
- linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support
- providing a staged response

The Student Engagement Policy, the Engagement and Wellbeing goals and targets in the School Strategic and Annual Implementation Plans provide the development of whole-school strategies that foster full student attendance and participation.

A whole-college approach to attendance identifies effective prevention and early intervention strategies as follows:

- clear written and verbal statements made regularly to parents/carers and students about school and community attendance expectations
- promoting awareness that student absences result in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities
- whole-school modelling of punctuality
- delegation of responsibilities to all staff, with a key members of staff leading attendance improvement initiatives
- regular discussions on student attendance in staff meetings and in the staff performance and development review process
- implementation of effective and supportive transition programs, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school, and pathways and careers support programs
- class and home group structures and environments that enable opportunities for increased connectedness to individual teachers and peers
- Individual Student Learning Plans, including attendance and punctuality goals
- provision of out-of-school programs, including breakfast, homework and sporting clubs.



4. Identifying students in need of support

Mornington SC 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. Mornington SC will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

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

5. Student rights and responsibilities

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

Students 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.

The school adopts a four-phase approach to bullying. This can be viewed in the college bullying policy on the college website. For more information, see Safe Schools are Effective Schools at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm> and departmental advice to schools on cyber bullying at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm>

6. Student attendance expectations



Ensuring that students attend school each day is the shared expectation of all parents/carers, students and the school. The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 describes a reasonable excuse for a student not attending school as being due to:

- illness, accident, an unforeseen event or an unavoidable cause
- there being no government school within a prescribed distance of the child's residence and the child receiving a distance education program through a registered school
- the child undertaking an educational program provided by a registered education and training organisation
- the child being suspended or expelled and undertaking other educational programs provided by the Department or another registered school
- the child's disobedience, not due to any fault of the parents/carers
- the child is attending or observing a religious event or obligation as a result of a genuinely held belief of the child or child's parents/carers
- exemption from attendance at school has been granted by the Minister.

Expectations – parents/carers are required to:

- ensure that their child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction (see Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Section 2.1.1)
- promote and provide organisational support to their child for full attendance and participation at school on all designated school days
- ensure that their child is on time for school each day
- notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence
- notify the school in advance if an absence of any period is planned
- support their child's learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan available through the school.
- work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school
- work cooperatively with the school in supporting the child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence
- ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up to date.

Expectations: Students are expected to:

- attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction
- arrive on time to school and to every class
- provide a written explanation from their parents/carers to their teachers when they have been absent from school
- remain on the school premises during school time unless they have the permission to leave from both the school and their parents/carer
- work with their teacher to develop learning activities to be included in the Student Absence Learning Plan and to be completed during a prolonged absence
- work cooperatively with the school to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent.



The school will:

- promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures
- develop and implement rigorous and effective systems to record and monitor attendance
- ensure that student attendance is recorded in every class.
- maintain accurate attendance records on CASES21 through compatible attendance package.
- ensure the prompt processing of student transfers by immediately contacting the student's transferring school upon the student's enrolment at their new school
- monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly to identify students at risk for early identification and the provision of timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school
- monitor and follow up all individual cases of student absence promptly and consistently
- pursue and record an explanation for every absence
- work collaboratively with parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time.
- convene where necessary student support group meetings which is attendance focused with parents/carers and students when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the school
- provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with parents/carers has not been possible.
- At not stage will the college engage in corporal punishment

7. Student behaviour expectations

Regular attendance and positive behaviours are supported most effectively at Mornington Secondary College through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- implementing school-wide positive and educative behaviour support strategies.

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 Mornington SC's Bullying policy.

As students progress through school they are encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing our students as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.

Students are expected by their parents/carers and their school to participate fully in the College's educational program and to attend regularly. Students are also expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.



Demonstration of respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, contributes to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.

Mornington SC actively encourages students whole school engagement, attendance and behavioural expectations through the participation in whole school and cross year level events such as sport, production and camps which creates a highly predictable environment that allows students to understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from each other.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, may be responded to through staged responses, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. that have a prevention and early intervention, data based focus, including:

- understanding the student
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

Broader support strategies will include:

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators
- tutoring/peer tutoring
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/ outdoor education/creative arts
- involving community support agencies.

A student will only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour consistent with Department policy, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

The school actions and consequences process is framed in a way to encourage students to accept responsibility for their actions, and to participate fully and positively in their educational experience. Exclusions will occur only when all other options have been exhausted or where the wellbeing or safety of another student is at risk.

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



8. Engaging with families

Mornington SC 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.
- asking parents and carers to support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

9 Evaluation

Mornington SC 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
- SOCS



FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Mornington Secondary College's Child Safety Code of Conduct is consistent with the Education Department's recommendation.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

Safe Schools are Effective Schools at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm> and departmental advice to schools on cyber bullying at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm>

Suspension guidelines:

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

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in May 2018 and is scheduled for review in March 2020.