



## Welfare and engagement policy at... **MOUNT CLEAR COLLEGE/GPLACE**

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Mount Clear College/GPlace is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher is a vital source of support and a determinant in the success of their students. The teachers at this school will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. This school recognises the need to be engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Our school strives to be a learning community where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are valued and respected.

Included with this Student Welfare Policy is the Mount Clear College/GPlace Student Engagement Policy and Procedures – see Appendix A.

**Also refer:** The [Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)

### 2. GUIDELINES

- 2.1 The school will focus on establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers and students, and establishing a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.
- 2.2 The school will collaboratively develop and implement a fair and respectful whole-school behaviour management approach.
- 2.3 The school will encourage and provide multiple opportunities for parents/carers and members of the broader community to play an active part in the life of the school and the education of their children.
- 2.4 The school's curriculum will include pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.
- 2.5 The school will promote active student participation and provide students with a sense of ownership of their environment.
- 2.6 The school will support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners.

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- 2.7 The school will establish social/emotional and educational support for vulnerable students and monitor and evaluate progress.
- 2.8 The school will have processes in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support.
- 2.9 The school will build strong links with the local community to gain access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of our school and our teachers to respond to the needs of the students.

### 3. PROGRAM

3.1.1 The curriculum programs of the school will recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the school's students by:

- accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning
- intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs

3.1.2 The school is committed to the delivery of an inclusive curriculum that ensures all our students have access to a quality education to meet their diverse needs.

To improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities, the following key strategies are in place:

- providing parents/carers with a learning program that best suits their child's needs
- involving students and parents in programming and planning decisions
- supporting students access to programs that let them pursue achievable pathways
- ensuring the expertise of teachers working in our school is maintained and developed

3.2 Our school will implement a whole-school behaviour management approach that is based on pro-social values, social competencies, incentives and positive peer relationships.

The key focus will be on prevention and early intervention strategies that:

- define and teach school-wide and classroom expectations
- establish consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for problem behaviour
- establish school-wide and classroom processes for early identification of students experiencing academic and/ or behaviour difficulty
- provide school-wide and classroom processes for ongoing collection and use of data for decision-making
- empower students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- provide a physical environment conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- utilise evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for those students who face difficulty with learning and/or behaviour

[Calmer Classrooms: A Guide to Working with Traumatised Children](#), developed by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, provides teachers and schools with effective relationship based classroom and school-wide strategies.

- 3.3 Involvement in our school by parents and carers helps children achieve the best possible learning outcomes. Parents and carers will be provided with the opportunity to participate in school life, both formally and informally, through school council, the Parent Association, volunteering and staying up to date with news about what is happening in education via our newsletter.
- 3.4 The school's strategies to promote pro-social values will be whole-school in focus and include close links with curriculum. The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) includes the learning domain of Physical, Personal and Social Learning, which encourages students to work with others, and to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school. In the context of the VELs, the school curriculum will include pro-social values and behaviours to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.
- 3.5 Student voice/student participation is about valuing people and valuing the learning that results when we engage the capacities and multiple voices in the school. It focuses on realising the leadership potential inherent within all learners. There are five dimensions to student participation:
1. student involvement in school and community development
  2. students as researchers and co-enquirers
  3. student feedback on teaching and learning
  4. students as peer-tutors
  5. student involvement as a manifestation of inclusion principles

The school promotes active 'student participation' as an avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating school change. Student participation ranges from young people sharing their opinions of problems and potential solutions through student council or in focus groups associated with school strategic planning. It also includes our students sharing their 'voice' by collaborating with teachers to actually improve education outcomes, including helping to improve teaching, curriculum and teacher-student relationships and leading to changes in student assessment.

- 3.6 The school will support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. It provides an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning. The school will ensure that the unique experiences and skills of our students' families enrich the learning environment and the school community.

The school will create successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:

- ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's Student Welfare Policy
- conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers and students to contribute
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families as participants in school decision-making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school
- providing opportunities to enhance parenting knowledge and skills

- 3.7.1 Implementing preventative and early intervention strategies to support positive behaviours is a key part of the Student Welfare Policy at our school. Prevention and early intervention strategies the school will deploy include:
- defining and teaching school-wide and classroom expectations
  - establishing consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for problem behaviour
  - establishing school-wide and classroom processes for early identification of students experiencing academic and/ or behaviour difficulty

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- providing school-wide and classroom processes for the ongoing collection and use of data for decision-making
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing a physical environment conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- utilise evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for those students who face difficulty with learning and/or behaviour

3.7.2 The school 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 absences
- 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

3.8.1 The school will use coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. The school will provide the following support structures:

- monitoring of, and responding to, protracted student absences
- trauma management plan
- protocol for mandatory reporting
- Student Support Group's for children in need
- bullying survey of students and school environment

3.8.2 Longitudinal data will be collected regarding frequency and types of welfare issues, so as to measure the success or otherwise of school-based strategies and approaches.

Some sources of data are:

- the Attitudes to School Survey data
- school level report data
- parent survey data
- data from case management work with students

The Student Mapping Tool (previously known as the Students at Risk Mapping Tool) allows our school to easily identify students who have characteristics that are known to increase disengagement at school.

Risk Factors explored by the Student Mapping Tool include:

- poor attendance
- low literacy
- low numeracy

- problematic school behaviour and relationships through the number of suspensions and the number of days suspended
- low income or unemployed family background - the occupation code of parents
- Koorie or Torres Strait Islander background
- refugee or ESL status
- presence of a physical disability
- presence of learning disorders leading to integration support
- receipt of Youth Allowance
- restricted access arrangements as a result of parent separation
- presence of a risk alert
- experience of significant health issues

3.9 The school will utilise relevant external student wellbeing support services in order to identify and address the barriers to learning that individual students may be facing. Such services to provide support for students and staff include:

- psychologist for psychological and academic assessment
- mentors – providing support for ‘at risk’ children
- Department of Human Services case managers and support workers
- social workers to provide services such as counselling, social skills and anger management programs
- youth agencies
- local parent support groups
- relevant DEECD support staff
- C.A.S.A. [Centre Against Sexual Assault]
- School Focused Youth Service (SFYS)

#### 4. **LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)**

Appendix A: Student Engagement Policy and Processes

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/engagement/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/additionalneeds/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/attendance/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/sfyouthservices/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/policy.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/default.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/oohc/effect/behaviour.htm>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/oohc/support.htm>

## 5. EVALUATION

<b>6. Date Implemented</b>	September 2012
<b>Author</b>	Fionna Wooller
<b>Approved By</b>	School Council /Policies sub-committee
<b>Approval Authority (Signature &amp; Date)</b>	
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	1 September 2012
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	Assistant Principal
<b>Review Date</b>	August 2013
<b>References</b>	Victorian Government Schools Policy and Advisory Guide

**APPENDIX A:  
MOUNT CLEAR COLLEGE/GPLACE  
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY & PROCESSES**

**1. Whole-school prevention statement**

At Mount Clear College/GPlace our aim is to develop a robust learning community with positive management and engagement strategies that enable the highest level student learning outcomes. In terms of student engagement and wellbeing, we strive to:

- build a positive and orderly learning environment with clear student routines and high expectations for behaviour and uniform
- build positive and professional staff-student relationships
- communicate clear expectations about attendance, participation and positive social behaviours
- maintain effective partnerships with key agencies and student support services.

**3. Rights and responsibilities**

**3.1 Guiding principles**

Every member of the Mount Clear College/GPlace community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

**3.2 Equal Opportunity**

We recognise and accept the equality of men and women and people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age. Under the Equal Opportunity Act, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their age, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, impairments, marital status, parental status, physical features, political beliefs, pregnancy, race, religious beliefs or personal associations.

**3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities**

We respect and promote the following four basic principles of human rights and responsibilities: freedom, respect, equality and dignity. When making decisions, we act compatibly with human rights and consider each of the following: the right not to be discriminated against; the right to privacy and reputation; the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; and cultural rights. Staff, students and parents understand that with human rights comes a concomitant responsibility to respect the human rights of others.

**3.4 Students with Disabilities**

As detailed in the Disability Standards for Education, we are committed to making reasonable adjustments to accommodate a student with a disability, balancing the interests of all parties affected including those of the student with the disability, the school, staff and other students.

**3.5 Bullying and Harassment**

See our separate Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Policy.

**3.6 Rights and Responsibilities of the School Community**

Our school rules, values, rights and responsibilities are prescribed so that students can enjoy a safe learning environment and actively pursue high levels of academic achievement and social and emotional development, with a view to becoming well-adjusted life-long learners. We are committed to building and maintaining a cooperative and supportive partnership between home and school to achieve positive outcomes for all students.

### Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learn in a safe and secure environment where they can fully develop their knowledge and skills without intimidation, harassment, bullying or cyberbullying.</li> <li>• participate fully in the school's educational program</li> <li>• receive reasonable assistance to resolve school-related problems</li> <li>• receive ongoing communication and feedback about their progress</li> </ul>	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follow the Code of Conduct, staff instructions and uniform requirements</li> <li>• take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning</li> <li>• display positive behaviours, including courtesy, care and respect for the rights of peers, teachers and all members of the school community</li> <li>• care for the school environment</li> <li>• attend school regularly and participate fully in learning programs</li> <li>• develop into independent learners who set and achieve learning goals and manage resources effectively.</li> </ul>

### Rights and Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Parents and carers have a right to expect that their child will be educated in a safe and secure environment where courtesy, care and respect for the rights of others are promoted.</p>	<p>Parents and carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure their child's prompt arrival and regular attendance at school</li> <li>• show an active interest in their child's schooling and progress</li> <li>• initiate and maintain regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning, engagement and wellbeing, including notifying the school of student absence as soon as reasonably possible</li> <li>• display and model positive behaviours and values</li> </ul>

### Rights and Responsibilities of Staff (Teachers and School Leadership Team)

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Staff have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teach in an orderly and collaborative environment</li> <li>• be informed about matters relating to students, within privacy restrictions, that may affect the teaching and learning program for students</li> </ul>	<p>Staff have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follow the VIT Teacher Code of Conduct, Mount Clear College/GPlace Professional Code of Practice, Professional Standards, and uphold an active, professional and positive presence, including Professional Learning.</li> <li>• consistently and fairly implement the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• display, model and teach the school values and positive social behaviours</li> <li>• acknowledge student efforts and results in both curriculum and behaviour</li> <li>• set the scene at lesson commencement and clearly communicate expectations</li> <li>• implement effective teaching strategies and use assessment data to drive teaching and learning</li> <li>• create and maintain safe and stimulating learning environments</li> <li>• initiate and maintain regular and constructive communication with students and parents about learning, engagement and wellbeing</li> <li>• organise connections for students with appropriate student services</li> </ul>

#### **4. Shared Expectations**

As a school community, we have a shared commitment to creating and maintaining a safe, stimulating and orderly learning environment that ensures all students can engage effectively in their education. As a high priority, we will progressively develop a core set of school values with the school community upon the opening of the school. These values will be aligned with the human rights listed above: freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

We bring our school values to life through our behaviours and interactions with each other. We will display and model our school values through behaviours such as the following:

- Attending school on time and arriving promptly to each lesson
- Preparing properly for school and for each lesson
- Meeting appearance, dress and uniform standards
- Moving safely through the school environment
- Participating fully in learning activities
- Attentively following instructions
- Listening to each other
- Treating each other with respect, courtesy and fairness
- Valuing the particular individual strengths and differences of others
- Inclusive teaching and learning practices
- Demonstrating and monitoring our own learning progress
- Attempting learning tasks to the best of our ability
- Making appropriate choices, even without supervision

#### **5. School Actions and Consequences**

We encourage and support high levels of student attendance, engagement, learning and positive behaviours through a consistent set of whole-school practices, including the following actions:

- Establishing a safe, secure and inclusive learning environment
- Developing, modelling, teaching and encouraging a set of core school-wide values, rights and responsibilities and shared expectations
- Acknowledging positive behaviours and celebrating effort and achievement
- Discouraging inappropriate behaviours
- Empowering students to be involved in school decision-making and leadership activities
- Applying professional judgement to particular cases and incidents, and understanding individual students, their life circumstances and their particular learning and wellbeing needs
- Identifying students at risk of disengagement from learning in a timely manner
- Monitoring, measuring and communicating progress with students and parents in a timely manner
- Rigorously monitoring, recording and following up student absence in a timely and rigorous manner
- Implementing evidence-based early intervention processes and programs and regularly reviewing their effectiveness to ensure continued relevance
- Using out-of-class support strategies and Student Support Groups for students with at-risk behaviours, to repair relationships and to develop agreed goals and plans around learning and behaviour. In convening Student Support Groups, key stakeholders will be involved as needed, including parents, teachers, principal class officers, counsellors, psychologists and youth workers.
- Connecting to external student support services as appropriate
- Ensuring that students who have displayed unacceptable behaviours towards others can repair the relationship – for example by apologising, completing a reflection form and catching up on missed work.

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- Implementing effective and supportive transition programs and processes into and out of the school, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school

### **Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion**

We will only exclude a student 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.

In applying consequences for unacceptable behaviour, both the individual circumstances and actions of the student and the needs and rights of school community members will be considered at all times.

Consequences are applied to provide the opportunity for all students to learn, to ensure the safety of staff and students, and to assist students with accepting responsibility for their actions.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class. Where appropriate, parents or carers will be informed of such withdrawals.
- Detention: a student may be required to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or undertake other duties at a reasonable time and place, as instructed by their teacher. No more than half the time allocated for any recess will be used for this work, and in the case of an after-school detention, students will be detained for no more than 45 minutes. Students will be fully supervised during detentions. Parents or carers will be informed at least the day before the after-school detention and where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship, we will endeavour to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents or carers.

### **Suspensions – guiding principles**

When the principal determines that a suspension is justified, a Student Support Group meeting will be convened to provide a Notice of Suspension, explain the reasons for suspension, detail the school days on which the suspension will occur and where the suspensions will occur, provide contact details for additional support services, and develop a Student Absence Learning Plan that outlines school work to be undertaken during the period of suspension.

In the case of a student putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, staff or other students at significant risk, the principal may suspend a student immediately, scheduling a Student Support Group meeting within 48 hours of the student being suspended. When a student is suspended it will be for the shortest time necessary. If the suspension is for five days, a post-suspension Student Support Group meeting will also be scheduled.

In determining whether to implement an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension, we will consider the educational, social and emotional impacts on the student and the school community.