

Student Engagement



Overview

From its establishment, MRC has worked with educational consultants, Jenny Mackay (Classroom Management), Glen Pearsall (Calmer Classrooms), Tom Brunzell (Berry Street Education Model) and David Vinegrad (Restorative Practices) to develop teacher competence in student engagement, classroom management, trauma informed teaching, conflict resolution and to provide strategies to build, strengthen and restore relationships.

In 2015, the school implemented the Positive Behaviours and Relationships Model (PBR). PBR is a blend of Restorative Practices and School Wide Positive Behaviours which encompasses strategies and processes related to all of the above key areas of student engagement and well-being at the College.

Principles of the PBR's Model

- Healthy, respectful and positive interactions between students, staff and parents require modelling. PBR aims to modify student behaviour through explicit modelling, language of expectations and positive reinforcement
- Models respectful and productive relationships through the use of Restorative Justice practices (RJ)
- Underpins the College Values and the expected student behaviours as it relates to "What it is to be part of the MRC community"
- Student Voice and student focused approach, mobilizing the Student Leadership Body.

PBR's Links to other College priorities

PBR directly links to and supports our College Values. Growing and building on College Culture through our Animating Principle, Merit awards, Merits and Cautions and Respectful Relationships Model.

Directly related to the following Policies:

- Student Engagement Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy

Victorian Curriculum compliant and integrated into the current MRC curriculum delivery structure through programs such as the Mentor Program, Social Skills Program (Early Years Mini School) and RJ philosophies in classroom teaching for academic activities.

Links to trauma aware teaching and calmer classrooms which has been a focus of the College's work in the last four years.

Attendance

Regular attendance enables students to maximise their full educational potential and actively participate and engage in their learning. Absences can interfere with fundamental stages of academic and social development.

Students and their families are required to:

- fully attend and be punctual to all timetabled classes, assemblies, excursions and other compulsory activities,
- advise the college of any explained absences through COMPASS, the Absence Line or bring a note from a parent/guardian or medical certificates for all absences on their return to school, and
- inform subject teachers of known extended absences and seek information about work missed.

In line with VCAA, students in the Senior Years are required to meet a minimum of 85% attendance for any given subject and overall. If a student fails to comply with this, the opportunity to make up the missed time is available to them during Attendance Club.

Behaviour

All students will demonstrate our College Expectations by:

- adhering to school rules and upholding school values,
- supporting each other's learning by behaving in a way that is courteous and respectful,
- having high expectations for themselves and others,
- being considerate, inclusive and supportive of others,
- reporting any incident or suspected incident of bullying and harassment,
- participating in Restorative Practices to be accountable for any harm they may have caused, fix any harm that has been caused and repair relationships.

Suspension

Suspension is only considered when all measures have been tried without success. This time is to be used as an opportunity to reflect on the present difficulties and develop positive, student focused re-engagement strategies. The Director of Student Engagement and Wellbeing working together with the Mini-School Assistant Principal is responsible for student suspensions in consultation with the College Principal.

Expulsion

Permanent expulsion from a school is the most extreme sanction open to a Principal. Except in the most unusual and extreme circumstances, it will only be used after all other measures consistent with a staged response and the Student Engagement Policy have been implemented without success.

Bullying and Harassment

While it is acknowledged that various forms of bullying and harassment occur in schools and the broader community, MRC adopts a 'zero-tolerance policy'. This means that all reported cases of bullying and harassment will be followed up accordingly through student management strategies.

Bullying and harassment can be committed by an individual or by a group and can cause long lasting harm to an individual's personal development and well-being. Victims of bullying or harassment may:

- feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated;
- have difficulty with their school work, concentrating and sleeping;
- experience difficulties when interacting with family and friends; and/or
- feel confused and not know what to do about the problem.

Students are required to report a bullying or harassment incident to a member of staff they feel comfortable talking to, or directly to the Classroom Teacher, Yard Duty Teacher, a Team Leader, Student Manager, the Student Wellbeing Officer or the Director of Student Engagement and Wellbeing.

When a student has harassed or bullied another student, options will be discussed with the student and action will be taken. The incident will be dealt with as soon as possible after a report has been made. All incidents will be referred on to the Team Leader for follow up. Depending on the form of bullying and/or harassment that has taken place, the College will utilise a range of steps in line with College policies and Department guidelines to address the issue.

Through the use of Restorative Practices, actions will be taken to address the harm and establish agreements in restoring and repairing the harm caused. Additional support such as Student Support Group meetings, counselling, psychological referrals and safety plans may also be utilised.

It should be noted that disciplinary action will be taken against any person making a false accusation, as this in itself constitutes a form of harassment.