

# Effective Schools are Engaging Schools

## Student Engagement Policy

### 2021 - 2024

#### *Introduction*

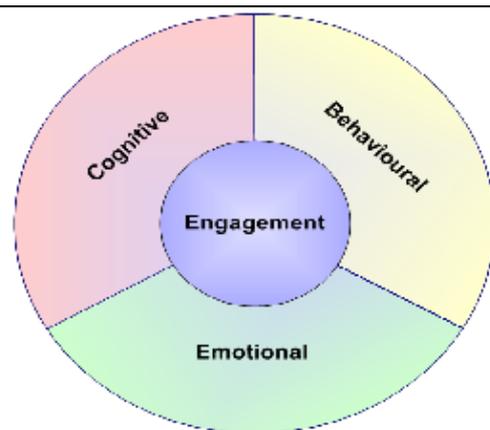
#### **Preamble**

Student engagement and school connectedness underpin effective student learning. 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 and measures a students' sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.

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



#### **Rationale**

The Department of Education and Training is committed to ensuring that every student thrives, learns and grows to their full potential by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment in all Victorian government schools. Students can only reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture that is fair and respectful to engage and support their learning.

#### **Guiding Principles**

To relate to and be consistent with the 'Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: *Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*', in areas such as the encouragement of educational achievement and excellence, prevention of absences and inappropriate behaviour.

Mount Ridley P - 12 College is dedicated to achieving excellence in teaching and learning, through innovative teaching practice and the promotion of core values and vital life skills. We are a community of active global citizens who are committed to life-long learning.

At Mount Ridley P - 12 College we will:

- develop a positive learning culture through an engaging and safe learning environment
- ensure access to varied and well-resourced programs
- provide innovative opportunities for skill development
- facilitate all aspects of learning
- foster independence and creativity
- support every student to achieve individual success
- provide support for individual circumstances when a student begins to disengage from their learning, when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated
- promote active involvement in the wider community, and
- provide genuine opportunities for student/parent participation and student/parent voice.

## **Section 1: School profile**

Mount Ridley P-12 College was founded in 2009 and is located in the City of Hume, one of Melbourne's rapid growth corridors. Situated on a 13.66-hectare site along Hampton Street in Craigieburn and approximately 26 kilometers north of the CBD, the College includes provision for primary and secondary students and an enrolment figure of just over 2650 students across the whole College in 2021. The current College's Student Family Occupation and Education (SFOE) level is 0.5134.

The College offers curriculum provision and facilities for students in Prep to Year 12 governed by a single School Council. It incorporates an innovative and flexible design to meet new and changing pedagogical approaches to State education. Located adjacent to the Maternal and Child Health service developed by the Hume City Council, the College works closely with the Craigieburn Child and Family Centre in integrating learning and teaching programs so as to achieve a seamless transition into primary school. Adjoining recreation facilities established by the Hume City Council, Stockland, the AFL and the Calder Cannons also providing opportunities for shared ventures. Since 2016, the College has developed a strong partnership with Lendlease which is overseen by the Australian Business and Community network (ABCN) and provides numerous opportunities through a variety of organizations for our students. The College has developed a Community Garden project which is focused on providing students of all ages with the opportunity of working with outside community groups for the purpose of learning, applying and sharing practical sustainability and healthy living skills.

The College is structured into four Mini Schools:

- Early Years (Prep – Year 4);
- Junior Years (Years 5 – 7);
- Middle Years (Years 8 and 9); and
- Senior Years (Years 10 – 12).

Mount Ridley College is well serviced by a range of facilities. Buildings in the Early Years Mini School are based around Learning Neighbourhoods with straight grades which incorporate creative, interactive and reflective spaces in each neighbourhood. The creative spaces are used for small group work and for problem solving or project-based work. There are purpose-built Art and Science learning areas, accessible for all P-4 classes. In addition, there is a separate music space, a multipurpose room and gymnasium that can be used for the performing arts and indoor recreational activities. A canteen, library and designated administration area provides easy access to the Assistant Principals and administration staff.

The Junior Years Mini School consists of two Learning Neighbourhoods incorporating interactive learning and teaching spaces, computer labs and specialist science rooms. Years 5 and 6 students are exclusively accommodated in one of the Learning Neighbourhoods, whilst Year 7 students are located in the other Learning Neighbourhood. Each Learning Neighbourhood has flexible learning areas that promote creative, interactive and reflective practices. An administration area servicing the needs of the Mini School is based in one of the Learning Neighbourhoods, accommodating an Assistant Principal, student management team and administration staff. Teaching teams are also located across the two Learning Neighbourhoods.

Students and staff in the Middle Years Mini School are accommodated in two Learning Neighbourhoods, along with a number of re-locatable general purpose classrooms. Specialist facilities in one of the Learning Neighbourhoods include a Science laboratory, computer suite and a combined Art and Technology room. In order to support students, a ~~administration~~ student management team hub is located in one of the Learning Neighbourhoods. Year 8 and 9 students are also located in distinct Learning Neighbourhoods.

The final stage of construction was completed late 2015 and incorporates a large Learning Neighbourhood for our Years 10-12 students. The Willandra building includes the addition of much needed, administrative

and teaching and learning spaces for our Senior and Middle Years Mini Schools. A Community Hub has also been incorporated into this facility to support and expand our numerous business and community alliances. The Pathways office and Senior Engagement offices are located in this building. Adjacent to this building is the newly constructed Languages and Professional Learning Centre (Landale) which services our Italian and Japanese Languages program, EAL Classes and Sister School partnerships, along with professional development programs for staff.

A full sized gymnasium for Years 5 – 12 students; a synthetic grassed futsal playing field; undercover hard-court; two synthetic surfaced basketball courts; a grassed football/rugby oval; numerous hard-courts; and synthetic surfaced combined running track and soccer field allow our students to keep active.

For students interested in the Arts, the Performing Arts Centre includes a music studio, instrumental music learning pods, drama room, and exhibition gallery and stage area. Our Science, Art and Technology facility (DICE Centre) boasts a series of external courtyard areas, which allow students to undertake projects involving the use of materials such as paint, clay, wood, metal and fabric. A senior student art studio, lecture theatre, exhibition area, and high-tech computer lab are also available for student use.

The College's Main Administration building houses a student cafeteria, conference facility and 150 seat tiered auditorium. State-of-the-art hospitality/food technology classroom kitchens are directly linked into the cafeteria's commercial kitchen facilities so that it can be utilised as an added resource for students. A Resource Centre featuring, a quiet reading area, exhibition and display areas, and reference and research spaces provide students with a variety of learning opportunities.

The student services and counselling facility provides students and their families with easy access to a range of services provided by specialist staff such as psychologists, speech pathologists, youth workers, doctors in schools etc. All students have access to allied health professionals through the student services team.

The Prep to Year 12 nature of the College offers great advantages. Comprehensive curriculum and transition programs allow the College to cater for the needs of all students through their various stages of development. Indeed, there is an emphasis on the social, emotional, cultural and academic needs of all students in order to develop their full potential. Through a caring and safe environment, individual students are encouraged to think, reflect and develop into life-long learners so that they can take their place in society as informed, responsible and active citizens of the global community.

The College has expended considerable time and resources on building social capital, creating structures, refining practices and establishing effective staff teams. Flexibility, creativity and collaboration form the basis of our success staff at the College are required to demonstrate a willingness to take on these approaches.

Mount Ridley College is defined by:

- A well balanced curriculum program that utilises purposeful and explicit teaching aimed at empowering students to be active learners, striving for personal excellence and ongoing growth and development;
- Challenging, innovative and creative approaches in learning and teaching practices that embrace the delivery of cross-curricula programs, Prep to Year 9 students and a full range of post compulsory pathways for Years 10 to 12 students;
- Highly skilled, versatile, dedicated and caring staff committed to life-long learning and developing the full potential of each student through the implementation of an effective personalised learning program;
- The active participation of staff in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities);
- Shared educational responsibility between parents, staff and students;
- Seamless transition for students as they progress through their various stages of development; and

- Effective channels of communication that promote trust, positive interactions and strong links with the wider community.

## ***Implementation***

### **Section 2: Whole School Prevention**

Student learning is greatly affected by the quality of teaching students experience and the relationships that are created. At Mount Ridley P–12 College, we believe that for students to be engaged in their learning they must feel valued, be challenged and provided with opportunities to contribute to the growth of the school. All levels of staff (classroom teachers, Education Support Staff, Team Leaders and Learning Neighbourhood Leaders, Leading Teachers and Principal Class) are actively engaged in developing classroom practice to provide students with a curriculum that is diverse, relevant and enjoyable. Students will also have the opportunity to develop independence and experience success in their learning. This will be achieved via the use and implementation of the Victorian Curriculum.

**School-Wide Positive Behaviour** support is an evidence-based framework for Victorian government schools for preventing and responding to student behaviour. At Mount Ridley College, it is referred to as Positive Behaviours and Relationships (PBR). It aims to create a positive school climate, a culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for all school community members. It is a framework for developing and explicitly teaching appropriate and positive behaviours. Teaching, modelling and reinforcing positive social behaviour is an important part of a student's educational experience. Teaching behavioural expectations and acknowledging students for meeting them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehaviour to occur before responding. Key components of PBR include an agreed upon and common approach; a matrix of positively stated expectations; explicit teaching of expectations; consistency of language; regular and frequent opportunities to practise expected behaviours. Through our Merit System, students are rewarded for meeting behavioural expectations.

At Mount Ridley College, we foster a **Restorative Justice** approach when incidences arise and harm is caused. Below are a set of questions to guide a discussion you can have with your child when conflict has occurred or a person has been harmed. This is called a WARRM conversation. These questions are based around the philosophy of Restorative Justice and aim to provide your child the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and provide them with strategies to help repair the harm or damage caused. These questions have been developed to promote responsibility without blame or shame imposed on the person. They aim to help change behaviours, strengthen relationships and reinforce positive behaviours.

#### **Restorative WARRM Conversation Questions:**

##### **W – WHAT HAPPENED?**

**What happened? How did it happen?**

##### **A – AFFECT**

**What were you thinking/feeling when you.....? What were you thinking about at the time?**

**Who has been affected by what you did/In what ways? Was what happened fair to them?**

**Was what happened the right thing?**

##### **R – REFLECT**

**What have you thought about since?**

##### **R – REPAIR**

**What needs to happen to make things right? How will this help put things right? When can this happen?**

**M – MOVING ON**

**How can we make sure this doesn't happen again? What would be a good plan/agreement if this happened again?**

Opportunities that contribute to the school and effectively engage students in their learning include:

- A College wide Step Up program at the end of each year where students meet and experience their class and teachers for the following year;
- A College Step-up Program where students develop a class vision and mission statement, class expectations and routines.
- Participation in a curriculum that is diverse, relevant and enjoyable, where all students have the opportunity to develop independence and experience success in their learning;
- A transition program that enables students to become familiar and comfortable when moving between Mini-Schools or prior to beginning their education at Mount Ridley P – 12 College;
- A flexible learning environment where students are provided with choice about where they work within the learning space.
- Developing pro-social behaviours through programs such as Better Buddies, Calmer Classrooms and the Berry Street Education Model.
- An approach using Restorative Practices where students are actively involved in discussing the impact of their behaviour on others, determining how best relationships can be repaired without shame and providing a range of options for future behaviour;
- Being proactive and demonstrating a consistent and fair approach to behaviour management;
- Pastoral care elements through a daily morning mentor session (Session 0), as well as a curriculum focused session.
- Excursions, incursions and providing opportunities to learn both inside and outside the classroom;
- A school camping and outdoor education program which provides educational experiences beyond those normally available within the regular classroom, and allows students to make connections between their learning and the wider community. Activities include: a School Breakfast, School Sleepover, Activity Programs, as well as local, interstate and international camping experiences;
- WeShare Conferences /Parent Teacher Interviews in Term 1 and 3 (Early/Junior/Middle); Term 1, 2 and 3 (Senior) which provide opportunities for students to share goals and reflections with their parents / carers;
- GPA reports which track achievement, behavior, attendance and effort;
- Providing opportunities for students to develop assessment rubrics with their class teacher so they know what and how tasks are assessed prior to them beginning;
- Utilising School Support Service Teams to provide counselling and support, such as a Psychologist, Social Worker and Speech Therapists;
- Connecting with external agencies to support students, such as Orygen, Royal Children's Hospital and Headspace;
- Developing partnerships with organisations, such as; ABCN, Beacon Foundation and various tertiary providers;
- Recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) and Literacy and Numeracy support programs including: Language Support, Early Intervention Programs;
- Intervening early to identify and respond to student needs, whether it be for extension, intervention, social or emotional support;
- Developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to assist students at-risk or who require extension for either academic, social, emotional or physical;
- undertake Case Management meetings to ensure at-risk students can be monitored and supported by relevant staff;
- Student leadership opportunities through our Student Advocacy program, including positions such as; College Captains and House Captains; These provide opportunities for student voice and advocacy to influence change within the school community;

- Encouraging student attendance by setting class goals and making students aware of the impact of being away from school for inadequate reasons;
- Providing opportunities for students to be involved and feel connected to school through student lead whole school events, such as Footy Day, Remembrance Day Ceremonies and College Productions.
- Recognising and rewarding student achievements through our College Merit System as well as recognising students achievements during College assemblies;
- Providing opportunities for parents/carers and the wider community to be involved in the College's programs e.g.; College Council, Classroom Helpers, PFA and excursions; and
- Professional Learning for staff, both internal and external, planning days, mentoring (including a leadership mentoring program), instructional coaching and observation to confirm and enhance best practice and provide for continuous learning for staff.

### Model for College Values:

<p><b>Respect and Tolerance</b></p>	<p>Taking ownership of our behaviour and actions through consideration of ourselves and others, while being understanding and open-minded of others' views.</p>	<p>In our College, evidence of this value includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understanding and embracing diversity;</li> <li>- using appropriate tone and dialogue when communicating with others; and</li> <li>- working in partnership with the College and wider community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Success</b></p>	<p>Setting and achieving individual goals and aspiring to reach your full potential.</p>	<p>In our College, evidence of this value includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- aspiring to be your best;</li> <li>- taking pride in achievements and celebrating success; and</li> <li>- valuing life-long learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Honesty and Trust</b></p>	<p>Telling the truth and being able to rely on others to do the right thing.</p>	<p>In our College, evidence of this value includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- following College guidelines and expectations with consistency;</li> <li>- communicating in a responsible manner with members of the College and wider community; and</li> <li>- creating an environment where telling the truth and responsibility are valued.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responsibility</b></p>	<p>Being accountable for one's actions, taking care of oneself, others and the environment.</p>	<p>In our College, evidence of this value includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- taking ownership of the decisions we make and our learning;</li> <li>- reinforcing appropriate behaviour; and</li> <li>- maintaining the integrity of the College and the wider community.</li> </ul>

### Expected Behaviours Matrix

The Behaviour Expectation Matrix illustrates Mount Ridley College's College Values into expected behaviours. Our expected behaviours are explicitly taught in every classrooms and consistently reinforced throughout the school. Our matrix is displayed throughout the college and is referred to and discussed regularly with all students and families. Refer to the Matrix.

### Section 3: Rights and Responsibilities

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasizes the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees to act compatibly with human rights and to consider them when making decisions and delivering services.

The following legislation needs to be considered when determining rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community:

1. *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*
2. *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
3. *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (in conjunction with DEECD Disability Standards for Education 2005)
4. *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
5. *Education Act 1958*

The following policies need to be considered and be consistent with implementing effective practice within the school community:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anaphylaxis Management policy</li> <li>2. Anti-Bullying policy</li> <li>3. Assessment and Reporting</li> <li>4. Asthma policy</li> <li>5. Attendance policy</li> <li>6. Camps Excursions and Incursion policy</li> <li>7. Canteen and Healthy Foods</li> <li>8. Class Formation policy</li> <li>9. Enrolment policy</li> <li>10. Equal opportunity policy</li> <li>11. First Aid policy</li> <li>12. Head Lice policy</li> <li>13. Healthy Relationships policy</li> <li>14. Home Study policy</li> <li>15. Individual Education policy</li> <li>16. Information Privacy policy</li> <li>17. Interschool Sport policy</li> <li>18. Induction and Mentoring policy</li> <li>19. Integration policy</li> <li>20. Interschool Sport policy</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting policy</li> <li>22. Social Media policy</li> <li>23. Occupational Violence policy</li> <li>24. OHS policy</li> <li>25. Parents and Friends association policy</li> <li>26. Pathways policy</li> <li>27. Professional Learning policy</li> <li>28. Student Acceptable Use policy</li> <li>29. Student Care and Supervision Operational guidelines</li> <li>30. Student leadership policy</li> <li>31. Student Promotion policy</li> <li>32. Sun protection policy</li> <li>33. Teaching and Learning policy</li> <li>34. Transition Policy</li> <li>35. Uniform policy</li> <li>36. VCE policy</li> <li>37. Visitors to College policy</li> <li>38. Volunteers in School policy</li> <li>39. Work experience policy</li> <li>40. Workplace Bullying policy</li> </ol> |
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At Mount Ridley P-12 College, we expect high standards of student behaviour based around the College values. We believe that everyone has the right to a safe and caring environment which promotes learning, personal growth and positive self-esteem. As a community, we all share in the responsibility of ensuring that this happens for every member of the College. The promotion of positive, constructive and non-discriminatory relationships among students, parents, staff and the wider community is an integral part of building a cohesive College environment.

The rights and responsibilities of the **Whole College** are set out in the table below:

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
To be involved in a caring and supportive environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a welcoming environment that values individuality</li> <li>• To provide assistance and support to other members of the community</li> </ul>
To be valued and treated with respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To build positive relationships with the school community</li> <li>• To use appropriate tone and dialogue when communicating with others</li> </ul>
To be free from bullying and harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure others are not harassed</li> <li>• To behave in a friendly and responsible manner with members of the College and wider community</li> </ul>

The rights and responsibilities of **students** are set out in the table below:

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
To a safe, clean and <i>engaging/fun</i> learning environment, free from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To follow school rules</li> <li>To refrain from using violence of any sort, including bullying, intimidating or harassing others</li> </ul>
To be treated fairly, courteously and with respect from teachers and other children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To treat others with courtesy and respect</li> <li>To help and care for themselves and other members of the school community</li> <li>To take responsibility for their actions, accept consequences and learn from one's mistakes</li> </ul>
To a high quality education where students are provided with materials / resources necessary to achieve individual success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make a genuine effort to participate in all learning activities and experiences</li> <li>To look after their own belongings and respect the belongings of others</li> </ul>
To learn in a classroom free from disruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To adhere to classroom rules negotiated by the teacher and students in the class</li> <li>To refrain from interrupting while others are speaking</li> </ul>
To attend a school which places value on dress code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To always wear the correct uniform when travelling to and from school, at school and on excursions</li> </ul>

The rights and responsibilities of **staff** are set out in the table below:

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
To carry out responsibilities with professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain current knowledge of curriculum and how students learn</li> <li>To demonstrate professionalism, participate in meetings, share ideas and support colleagues</li> </ul>
To be treated fairly, courteously and with respect from students, parents and other staff members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To model respect, fair treatment and problem solving behaviours</li> <li>To develop effective, consistent and appropriate management strategies in day to day interactions with students, as a preventative system of behaviour management</li> </ul>
To teach in a safe environment where the teaching / learning process is respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To establish a safe, positive environment which is conducive to learning</li> <li>To provide programs consistent with College Policies and DEECD, appropriate too individual needs</li> </ul>
To ask for and receive support form colleagues, administration, parents and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assess one's own performance and participate in professional learning activities</li> <li>To establish and maintain positive relationships with the College community</li> </ul>
To have access to appropriate teaching resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be aware of the resources available and to use them responsibly and effectively</li> <li>To use College resources to provide quality teaching and learning activities for students</li> </ul>

The rights and responsibilities of **parents** are set out in the table below:

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
To expect their child will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure their child attends school, is punctual and has the appropriate learning materials and attitude</li> <li>To consistently model appropriate communication procedures/ conventions during interactions with students, staff and other parents/caregivers</li> </ul>
To be informed of their child's progress – academically, socially and emotionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To acknowledge receipt of information; make contact with the College if necessary and support any actions taken</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide information about children or circumstances, that may impact on learning to the College</li> </ul>
To be involved in a learning partnership with the teachers and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support the College in the implementation of learning experiences and individual programs</li> <li>To communicate regularly with their child's teacher, at appropriate times and in accordance with the College's policy, including attendance at WeShare conferences and information sessions</li> </ul>
To be informed of College activities and be involved in the College community's decision making processes (as determined by DET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be supportive and reflect a positive attitude toward the learning programs and policies offered by the College</li> <li>To remain aware of school issues by reading the College Newsletter, communication sent to parents and the College website</li> <li>To participate in learning opportunities provided by the school, such as Parent Helpers course and Literacy and Numeracy evenings</li> </ul>

#### **Section 4: Shared Expectations**

Mount Ridley P – 12 College has developed shared expectations to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all members of the College community are met. These expectations focus on prevention and early intervention and set out appropriate behaviours for our school community. They are positive and explicit, so that everyone, including individual students and families who come to our community from diverse backgrounds, communities and experiences, knows what is expected.

#### **Staff Engagement**

The College Leadership Team will:

- uphold the right of every child to receive an education up to the compulsory age of schooling,
- ensure the College complies with its Duty of Care obligations to each student, as well as its obligations under the equal opportunity and human rights legislation,
- respond to the diversity of the College community by delivering teaching and learning, educational and extra-curricular activities and community services which are inclusive to student needs, and
- promote excellence in the delivery of curriculum programs across the College.

Staff will:

- develop relevant and challenging learning programs that are reflective of inclusive teaching practices and engage all learners to achieve success,
- develop positive relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning,
- use praise and positive reinforcement as the predominant classroom management strategy,
- provide students with the opportunity to have a say in what and how they learn in order to develop a positive school culture, and
- work with students to develop learning spaces that are attractive, stimulating places where resources are on hand and well managed.

#### **Attendance**

In compliance with DET procedures staff will:

- actively promote regular attendance with all members of the College community,
- monitor and follow up on student absences,
- show concern for students who are absent – ask them where they were and supply work missed, and
- monitor students and seek support from /team leaders if concerned about a particular student.

#### **Behaviour**

Mount Ridley P- 12 College will support and promote positive behaviours by providing activities, programs and policies which promote a safe school environment and healthy relationships. For students who are disengaged or require additional support, expectations will be developed through a staged response.

The College Leadership Team will:

- lead and promote preventative approaches to behavioural issues,
- monitor the profile of behaviour issues at the College and the effectiveness of implemented strategies,
- provide professional learning for staff to build their capacity to promote positive behaviours, and
- where appropriate, liaise with appropriate bodies such as the College Council, Department of Education and Training (DET) and other relevant committees in regard to incidents of bullying and harassment and significant behaviours.

The staff will:

- be proactive and aware - planning for behaviour and working with students with a positive mindset,
- enable students to be responsible for their actions through curriculum content and modeling appropriate behaviours,
- use College values to negotiate class rules and expectations at the beginning of the school year,
- employ behaviour management strategies that reflect agreed College procedures,
- Apply Restorative Practices to encourage harm in relationships to be repaired, allowing students to 'put it right' leading to change in behaviour.
- refer to the Student Engagement Policy where necessary.

## **Student Engagement**

All students are expected to:

- participate fully in the educational programs and relevant experiences provided,
- set high expectations for themselves and set an example for others to follow,
- take increasing responsibility for their own learning and growth as they move through the College,
- attempt new things and persist through challenges and difficulties in learning,
- take responsibility for their actions, accept consequences and learn from their mistakes, and
- respect, value and learn from the differences of others.

## **Attendance (Refer to MRC Attendance Policy)**

Students are required to:

- fully attend and be punctual to all timetabled classes, assemblies, excursions and other compulsory activities,
- 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.

## **Behaviour**

All students will:

- adhere to school rules and uphold school values,
- support each other's learning by behaving in a way that is courteous and respectful,
- have high expectations for themselves and others,
- be considerate, inclusive and supportive of others,
- refuse to be involved in any bullying and harassment situation; and
- report any incident or suspected incident of bullying and harassment.

## **Parents/Carers Engagement**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- assist by providing all relevant and up to date student information to the College to support the College's efforts in promoting, understanding and appreciating diversity,
- actively support their child at home in their learning,
- work with the College by attending parent/teacher meetings and responding to all communication in a timely manner, and
- take responsibility for their child's punctuality and attendance.

## Attendance (Refer to Attendance Policy)

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure that enrolment details for their child are correct,
- ensure that their child attends school regularly each day of the school year,
- Contact the College through Compass or the Absence Line on the day the child is absent from school.
- provide notification of extended holidays prior to the absence.

## Behaviour

Parents/carers should understand the College behavioural expectations and aim to provide a consistent approach that supports their child's learning and engagement, in and out of school.

### **Section 5: School Actions and Consequences**

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. The following are ways in which Mount Ridley P – 12 College promote and monitor school attendance:

- The College actively promotes the importance of student attendance to parents and the wider community.
- Attendance practices reflect DET philosophy of 'It's Not OK To Be Away'.
- All student absences/lateness are recorded each session by teachers in Prep-12. These are aggregated onto our CASES database and communicated to DET. Reasons for student absence are recorded by CASES21 codes (see rolls for specific codes).
- Parents of absent students are required to provide the College with the reason/s for their child's absence. These are recorded on Compass.
- When a parent contacts the College by phone or informs a staff member in person the following must be recorded: the child's name, the date of absence, reason for absence, informed by whom, the date the information was provided and the staff member's name.
- If there has been no response of satisfactory explanation within 10 school days of the initial absence, the absence should be recorded as unexplained.
- Attendance and absence records form part of each student's and semester reports to parents.
- When a student is absent for three unexplained consecutive days or more, or there are obvious absence patterns, the classroom/mentor teacher is to call home. This contact is conducted with courtesy, respect and with recognition to the potentially sensitive nature of the issue. Contact is made with the view to developing and implementing strategies that minimise absences and build positive home-school relationships.
- Staff members bring to the attention of the team leaders any student whose attendance is irregular, does not provide written notes adequately explaining absences, or whose absences appear unwarranted.
- Class teachers are to monitor and follow up on students who are consistently late. CAUTION SYSTEM
- Ongoing unexplained absences, lack of cooperation regarding student attendance or situations where a student is experiencing significant difficulties in attending school are referred to the Student Services Team, Director of Student Engagement Strategies and/or the Director of Student Services.
- Ongoing, unexplained absences/lateness, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. This may lead to the establishment of a Student Support Group. This Support Group will be convened by the relevant members of the Engagement and Wellbeing Team (or nominee) and attended by relevant teachers, relevant school student service support staff, parents/carers and the student (if appropriate). Professionals from other agencies may also attend as appropriate with the permission of parents/cares. An Individual Education Plan may be developed, incorporating attendance and punctuality goals (refer to Appendix 1, 2 and 3). Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the College Principal to Region or to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).
- A Return to School Plan may be implemented to assist in the reintegration of a student after a prolonged absence (refer to Appendix 4). This plan will be developed with the student,

parents/carers, team leaders and class teacher. Regular meetings will be held to monitor and modify the plan as required.

- Students on extended leave of 10 days or more will require a Student Absence Learning Plan to be completed in consultation with the student's classroom teacher, parent/carers and team leader (refer to Appendix 5). Extended periods of leave from school must be approved by the College.
- College start and finish times are clearly recorded in parent information booklets and on the College website.
- Term dates are available in our newsletters, on the College website and DET website so parents can plan holidays during school vacation times.
- Students who habitually commence school after the second bell or who are tardy to their next class are deemed late and will receive a caution.
- All absence notes and records of communication will be retained and stored at the College for a minimum of 7 years.

## **Behavioural Consequences**

At Mount Ridley P – 12 College, we foster a consistent and fair response to student behaviour. As a learning community we aim to develop competency, resiliency and enhance self-worth in our students. The management of students focuses on teachers being *proactive* as they aim to prevent misbehaviour, *planning* for behaviour as for any area of the curriculum, *prioritising* and maintaining perspective, having *positive* expectations of their student's behaviour, and *persisting* when change is required.

Students are best supported in calm, consistent and predictable classrooms and environments, which recognise their individual needs. It is also important to provide appropriate support to enable them to take control of their behaviour. Students with unacceptable behaviours will be supported through a staged response.

## **Prevention and Early Intervention**

- Equal emphasis will be placed on issuing positive consequences for meeting high expectations of behaviour as there is on negative consequences.
- Students who demonstrate positive behaviours that reflect our College values, may receive a Student Achievement Award. These awards are presented at College assemblies.
- The College curriculum will include units on responsibility, respect, resilience, friendships, co-operation, positive choices, physical/emotional/cyber bullying, conflict resolution and leadership.
- Parents/carers will be kept informed and actively encouraged to assist in the development of their children's behavioural performance.
- The College will continually strive to provide physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.
- All College community members will be expected to model and reinforce positive social behaviours.
- Regular class meetings provide opportunities for students to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making.
- Co-operative games will be taught in class and at any other appropriate opportunity.
- Early identification of students at risk is a high priority. Once identified, appropriate action is taken, students are monitored and records are kept for future reference.
- The College has clearly defined and documented processes for student management both within the classroom and the yard. Staff will undertake professional learning on these processes and discipline management at the beginning of each school year.
- Incidents will be recorded using COMPASS and communicated to families.
- Teachers may require a student to finish school work which has not been completed in the regular class time. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.
- All students will participate in the establishment of their class 'Start-Up' program, which indicates explicit behaviours for our school values, at the beginning of each year. This is to be revisited at the beginning of each term.

Consistent College consequences have been established for unacceptable behaviour and are clearly defined. Consequences will relate to the behaviour and be fair and just. They will focus students on their actions and the resulting consequences. Consequences will allow students to correct their behaviour

and show them how to they should behave in future. It is important that consequences are focused on the behaviour not the person. No form of corporal punishment shall be used against any student under any circumstances. Please refer to Clear and Consistent Consequence document (Appendix).

### Intervention

Key specialist staff and College based wellbeing staff will be involved in providing support for the student eg. Engagement and Wellbeing Principal, Director of Student Engagement Strategies, Director of Student Services, Student Manager, Team Leader and Student Services Team. An Individual Education Plan may be developed with the student's classroom teacher, and support and/or resources provided to implement the plan. Progress will be measured and support reduced gradually (refer to Appendix 1, 2 and 3).

### **Work Sessions / Redemption**

Students may be required to participate in a Lunchtime Redemption or may be required to remain at school after school hours; Afterschool Redemption (under supervision) to reflect on their unacceptable behaviour. This time should not exceed 45 minutes. The Student Manager/Team Leader should ensure that parents are informed at least 24 hours prior to the work session/redemption. Saturday morning detentions will be issued for more severe or ongoing behaviours. This time will not exceed 2 hours. Families will be notified a week prior to the Saturday morning detention occurring (refer to Appendix 8). Where family circumstances are such that the after school work session/redemption/detention would create undue hardship to the parent, the Student Manager/Team Leader may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures. All these sessions will be supervised by teaching staff members.

### **Student Support Group**

The aims of the Student Support Group are to:

- ensure that those with the most knowledge of, and responsibility for the student, work together to establish shared goals for the student's educational future;
- plan reasonable adjustments for the student to access the curriculum;
- provide educational planning that is ongoing throughout the student's life; and
- monitor the progress of the student.

A Student Support Group may be convened by schools to exchange information and facilitate solutions to behavioural problems or difficulties of students.

The formation of a Student Support Group may be deemed necessary. These groups must involve: Student Engagement and Wellbeing Principal or nominee as chairperson, Director of Student Engagement Strategies, student (as appropriate), the classroom teacher, Team Leader responsible for the student, parents/carers or support service staff who have been supporting the student or family, including Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Protective Services or community service organisation case manager (where necessary). Parents/carers may be accompanied by an advocate. The advocate is there to provide support and act as a witness and only act as an observer unless there has been a previously identified language or communication barrier.

Where necessary, an interpreter will be sourced (in languages other than English and sign language) and should be present at the Student Support Group meetings. Interpreters are not members of the Student Support Group.

The roles and responsibilities of members in the Student Support Groups include:

- sharing information about the student's interests, strengths, skills, preferences, abilities and preferred learning styles;
- sharing an understanding of the learning environment;
- setting educational goals (annual, long and short term) and strategies appropriate for the individual student;
- regularly monitoring the achievement and progress of the student; and
- providing advice to the principal on the specific educational needs of the student, and the most appropriate use of available resources.

These meetings are held at a suitable time both to the school and to the parents, on a regular basis and as soon as possible following a request by a Student Support Group member. Accurate minutes of each meeting are taken and provided to all Student Support Group members. All discussions and reports considered by, or arising from, the Student Support Group process are to be treated in the strictest confidence unless all members agree otherwise.

## **Exclusion**

Details of suspension and expulsion procedures are discussed below. However, it should be noted that parents are to be involved in exclusion procedures as stated, except where:

- a) The student is over 18 years of age; or
- b) The student is over 16 years of age, without disability or impairment and is living separately, apart and independent from his/her parents.
- c) For any reason the parent is not available or cannot be contacted. In these circumstances the principal may then refer to the student over the age of 18 years of age in place of 'a parent'. Where a student has a disability or impairment, the principal must make enquiries as to the student's ability to represent himself or herself. After making such enquiries, if the principal is satisfied that, the student lacks the ability to adequately represent himself or herself, the student cannot be referred to in place of 'a parent'. In this case, as with a student under 18 years of age, the principal may regard as 'a parent' an adult whom the principal considers to be suitable and available to perform the role of the parent.

## **Suspension**

### General information

Suspension should only be 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 Student Engagement and Wellbeing Principal is responsible for student suspensions in consultation with the College Principal. Consideration must be given to the behaviour, the educational needs of the student, disability, age and the residential and social circumstances when deciding. Two suspension options are available- in-school and out-of-school. Internal suspensions should be utilised first, whenever possible, and an appropriate supportive program, consisting of meaningful schoolwork consistent with the student's classes, must be provided for the student. The maximum number of consecutive days of suspension is 5 days. The time given for suspension should be as short as possible. The maximum period of suspension in one school year is 15 days, unless approval is sought from the Area Executive Director.

### Grounds for Suspension

A student may, by order of the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Principal in consultation with the College Principal, be suspended if, whilst attending school or travelling directly to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school, including travel organised by the school, the student:

- a) Behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
- b) Causes significant damage to or destruction of property;
- c) Commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;
- d) Possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
- e) Fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
- f) Consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender identity; disability; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parental status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual

- orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes; or
- g) Consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

#### Procedures prior to suspension

Before a student is suspended, except where an immediate response is required, Principals must ensure that all options, consistent with the staged response, have been considered. A Student Support Group should also be convened to inform the parents/carer and student that suspension is being considered. The aim of the meeting is to develop a range of strategies, which address the concern in order to avoid suspension.

#### Procedures for suspension

In determining whether a student may be suspended, the Principal must ensure that the response is appropriate to:

- a) the behaviour for which the student is being suspended;
- b) the educational needs of the student;
- c) any disability or additional learning needs of the student;
- d) the age of the student; and
- e) the residential and social circumstances of the student.

#### Before implementing a suspension

The Principal must be able to ensure that-

- a) the student has had the opportunity to be heard;
- b) any information or documentation provided by the student or their relevant person (as defined in Part 1(3) of Ministerial Order No. 625 and No. 1125) has been taken into account in making the decision regarding suspension; and
- c) other forms of action to address the behaviour for which the student is being suspended have been considered.

Prior to the suspension taking effect, or on the day of implementing a suspension with immediate effect, the Principal must-

- a) identify the relevant person in accordance with Part 2 of Ministerial Order No. 625 and No. 1125- Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion;
- b) give verbal notification to the student and notify the relevant person via telephone or in person of the reason/s for the suspension, the school days on which the suspension shall occur and where the suspension will occur;
- c) provide contact details for additional support services to the student and their relevant person, as appropriate;
- d) where the student is suspended for three days or less, provide meaningful work;
- e) where the student is suspended for more than three days, develop a Student Absence Learning Plan and Return to School Plan;
- f) provide the student and their relevant person with a Notice of Suspension which must include-
  - 1) the reasons for the suspension;
  - 2) the school days on which the suspension will occur;
- g) provide the student and their relevant person with copies of the Student Absence Learning Plan and the Return to School Plan (if required)
- h) provide the student and their relevant person with a copy of the information brochure Procedures for Suspension; and
- i) record the suspension in CASES 21

A Student Support Group must be held before a student is suspended (except in the case of immediate suspension). This group will develop a Student Absence Learning Plan that outlines the school work to be undertaken during the period of suspension (refer to Appendix 5). Notice of Suspension must be provided to students and their parents/carers prior to the day of commencement of the suspension (unless the suspension is immediate) (refer to Appendix 10). A Copy of the 'Procedures for Suspension' brochure must be provided to the student and their parent/carer. If the suspension is for more than 3 days, a post-suspension support group meeting must take place where a Return to School Plan will be developed (refer to Appendix 4).

Immediate suspension is permissible if a student's behaviour is such that it is putting the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves, staff or students at significant risk. The College Principal has a duty of care to provide supervision until the student can be collected by their parent/carer from school. A Student Support Group meeting must be held within 48 hours.

The maximum continuous period of time a student can be suspended at any one time is five school days, unless a longer period is approved by the ~~Regional Director~~ Area Executive Director in accordance with clause 8(2) of Ministerial Order No. 625

Where a student has been suspended for fifteen days in a school year, the school principal is required to seek secondary consultation and/or direct intervention support from their Area Executive Director to address the behavioural concerns.

## **Expulsion**

### General Information

Every Victorian student must be provided with an education. Schools should work in partnership to ensure that expelled students are guaranteed an educational placement. 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. Only the Principal has the authority to expel a student. This power cannot be delegated to any other person at the school level.

### Grounds for Expulsion

A Principal may expel a student if, whilst attending school or travelling directly to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school, including travel organised by the school:

- a) the student does anything for which they could be suspended;
- b) the student's behaviour is of such magnitude that, having regard to the need of the student to receive an education compared to the need to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of other students and staff and the need to maintain effectiveness of the school's education programs, an expulsion is the only available mechanism.

In determining whether to expel a student, the College Principal must ensure that the response is appropriate to:

- a) the behaviour for which the student is being expelled;
- b) the educational needs of the student;
- c) any disability or additional learning needs of the student;
- d) the age of the student; and
- e) the residential and social circumstances of the student.

### **Procedures prior to Expulsion**

Before a student can be expelled, Principals must ensure that a comprehensive range of strategies, consistent with the staged response, have been considered and implemented by the school. Despite these strategies, if the student's inappropriate behaviour persists, the student and parents/carer must be informed that expulsion is being considered and must be given the opportunity to be heard. This should be undertaken through the Student Support Group process. An immediate suspension may be implemented pending expulsion, when the Principal considers that such action is warranted.

### **Procedures for Expulsion**

The Principal must seek the support of a member selected from the regional approved list (RASP) to attend the Behaviour Support and Intervention Meeting to discuss the impending expulsion. Regional and school-based staff work in partnership to address the student's needs.

At the Student Support Group meeting, the Principal must provide the student and their parents/carers with:

- a) a 'Notice of Expulsion' (refer to Appendix 12);
- b) the 'Expulsion Appeal' proforma (refer to Appendix 13);
- c) a copy of the *Information for Parents and Carers about School Expulsions* brochure;
- d) an opportunity to be heard; and
- e) the future educational, training and/or employment options most suited to the student's needs.

Following the Student Support Group, if the College Principal determines another enrolment is an appropriate option, all members must work to facilitate that enrolment. It is the responsibility of the College Principal and regional nominee to ensure that the student's next enrolment takes place.

### **Procedures following Expulsion**

A Principal who has expelled a student must, within twenty-four hours of the commencement of the expulsion, forward a copy of the Notice of Expulsion (refer to Appendix 12) to the ~~Regional Director~~ Area Executive Director with a written expulsion report (refer to Appendix 14).

The principal of the expelling school, in collaboration with the DET regional office, must ensure that the student is provided with other educational and development opportunities as soon as is practicable after the expulsion and follow procedure as outlined in Part 12 or Ministerial Order No. 625 and No.1125

The Area Executive Director should work with the school to ensure the outcomes of the Expulsion report are achieved.

### **Transition Arrangements**

If a school expels a student, the school must schedule a meeting with the destination school or registered training organisation of the expelled student. It is the responsibility of the Principal of the expelling school to provide information relevant to the learning needs of the student in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2000.

### **Expulsion Appeal Process**

A Principal's decision to expel a student can be appealed by the student or the student's parents/carers. Grounds for appeal include:

- the expulsion process was not followed;
- reasons for the expulsion are considered unfair;
- there were not sufficient prior interventions and strategies utilised prior to the decision to expel where the student has a history of behavioural issues; and
- other extenuating circumstances.

The Principal must provide the student and parent/carers with an Expulsion and Appeal form, at the final Student Support Group meeting. The appeal must be lodged with the Principal within ten school days of receiving the Notice of Expulsion and the Principal must provide the regional director with a copy of the Expulsion Appeal with twenty-four hours. The Area Executive Director will convene an expulsion review panel. The decision of this panel must be unanimous. If a decision cannot be reached the Executive Director must make the decision. Verbal notification of the decision is provided to the person who brought the appeal within 24 hours of the decision being made. This is followed up by written communication, including a copy of the 'Expulsion Review Panel Report'. This report must also be provided to the Principal and the school council.

During an appeal process, the expelling school remains responsible for the student's educational provision and must provide the student with appropriate schoolwork for the duration of the appeal. If the expulsion appeal panel overturns the Principal's decision to expel the student, the student must be readmitted to school immediately. A return to school plan must be developed and the record of expulsion must be removed from the student's permanent record. Once this has occurred, the Principal is to notify the student and their parents/carers of this in writing.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Date policy ratified: August 2021

Date of next review: 2024

### **Victorian government departments**

- Department of Education and Training – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/default.aspx>
- Student Wellbeing and Health Support Branch –  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/default.htm>
- Department of Human Services – <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/home>
- Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development –  
<http://www.diird.vic.gov.au/CORPLIVE/homepage/home.htm>
- Department of Planning and Community Development – <http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/>
- Department of Justice – <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/>
- Victoria Police – [http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=2](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=2)
- Office for Youth – <http://www.youth.vic.gov.au/>
- Neighbourhood Renewal – <http://www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au/>

**See DET website for related policies.**

**[www.det.vic.gov.au](http://www.det.vic.gov.au)**