

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Preamble

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the current Victorian Equal Opportunity legislation, including the *The Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) 2010*. Schools are covered by this act because they educate children, employ staff, provide goods and services and organise sporting teams.

“Equal Opportunity” applies to gender identity, age, race, disabilities impairment, religion, political belief or activity, pregnancy, breastfeeding, marital status, carer and parental status, lawful sexual activity, sexual orientation, employment activity, industrial activity, physical features and national extraction.

Rationale

Mount Ridley Prep-12 College is committed to valuing diversity and providing equal opportunity for all. This involves promoting a supportive school environment that is caring, friendly, co-operative, stimulating, safe, well-resourced and well-maintained. It is also identified that enhanced student learning opportunities will occur in an environment in which the skills of all people are valued.

Guiding Principles

In all of its activities, organisational structures, practices, operations, policies and curriculum, Mount Ridley Prep-12 College fosters respect for all individuals and an environment that does not tolerate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation, providing equal opportunity for all. All members of the College community have a role to play in the educational and social environment of the College. This policy aims to ensure that students, parents and staff can participate in the educational and administrative decision making processes of the College. It also aims to ensure that Mount Ridley Prep-12 College provides a comprehensive curriculum that allows all students to have equal access to educational development and successful experiences at school.

Implementation

- Promote recognition and acceptance of everyone’s rights to equal opportunity.
- Ensure that all decisions at Mount Ridley Prep-12 College are made on the basis of merit and fairness.
- Apply Merit and Equity to all employment matters at the College, including:
 - Recruitment, selection, information gathering and verification, appointment, transfer and promotion;
 - Processing grievances, discipline and dismissal cases;
 - Remuneration and conditions of work; and
 - Staff development training, assignment of special duties and assignment of acting higher duties positions.
- Encourage members of the local community, especially those from Language Backgrounds Other Than English (LBOTE), to participate in College activities and decision-making processes.
- Ensure that all students have equal access to physical resources, teacher time and all areas of learning.
- Provide curriculum at the College that has a balance between knowledge, skills, action, values, theory, co-operation and practice, internal and external activities.

- Ensure that teaching and learning programs at the College promote attitudes, behaviour and language which contribute to the eradication of gender bias, sexual identity, violence and racial/cultural vilification.
- Ensure that all members of the College community have access to this policy and are reminded of their rights and responsibilities in current Victorian Equal Opportunity legislation.
- Raise awareness of anti-discrimination, anti-sexual harassment, anti-victimisation and anti-bullying policies in the school environment.
- Ensure that all members of the College community are aware that it is unlawful to sexually harass another person within the College environment; and ensure that all College staff complete online sexual harassment training as determined by the Department of Education and Training (DET).
- Complaints of discrimination must first be lodged with the College Principal. Where a satisfactory outcome is not achieved, the following avenues may be utilised:
 - Regional personnel
 - Merit Protection Board
 - Equal Opportunity Commission
- Ensure that all complaints are investigated promptly, confidentially and with impartiality. Complaints will be managed in a manner consistent with DET procedures and legislative requirements.
- Complainants are protected by the *The Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) 2010* from victimisation for using or proposing to use processes under the Act.

Evaluation

As part of the College review cycle this policy will be reviewed every three years or in conjunction with reviews to the Victorian Equal Opportunity legislation.

Date policy ratified:

Date of next review: 2024

Supporting Documentation:

The Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) 2010

Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Fair Work Act 2009

Equal Opportunity and Anti-discrimination Policy (DET) - 2018