



Adopted by College Council

Date: Prior to 2016

Last Review: May 2024

## **WELFARE and STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

### **Rationale**

Because Melton Christian College seeks to follow the teachings of Christ, concern for individual and communal welfare is fundamental to College practices.

All Christians are called to obey two commands above all others, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” And the second is “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22, 37-39). Therefore all those involved in governance, or employed at the College, as well as volunteers and students are expected to implement this Welfare and Student Engagement Policy.

### **Policy**

Within the appropriate limitations of their roles, and to the extent that it is reasonable and practical, all staff at Melton Christian College are expected to monitor, and contribute to the welfare of students and others, particularly students who are in their direct care.

### **Christ Centered Schooling**

In our form of Christian schooling, Christian faith permeates everything. Faith is not merely an addition to an excellent curriculum; at our school faith underpins every program, every policy, every protocol, every practice and all pedagogy.

Our faith teaches us that God has shown himself through Christ and through the Christian Bible. So, our curriculum and pedagogy are to be grounded in and infused by biblical principles.

At our school, Christian education means Christ-centred nurture and growth, so our teaching seeks to unlock every child’s God-given gifts and potential.

Our teaching fuses faith with knowledge, knowledge with character, and character with a life of service to the Lord. Therefore, because wholistic learning involves Head, Heart and Hand, learning outcomes are not only measured in terms of students knowing more, but also students being more, that is, lives characterised by wisdom and service.

Christ-centred education guides students to discover their God-given calling. Learning flourishes when parents and staff are united by a commitment to biblically faithful schooling underpinned by our core values.

### **Child Safe Culture**

All staff have delegated responsibility from the Principal, as do the governing authority of the College to:

- Work towards embedding an organisational culture of child safety
- Be familiar with and promote familiarity with the College Child Safety and Welfare Policy
- Be familiar with and promote familiarity with the VIT Code of Conduct, and the additional points that establish the College’s expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- Take part in screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- Be familiar with and promote familiarity with processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- Always work to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Always work towards appropriate participation and empowerment of children.

### **Homerooms**

In both our onsite and online settings, homeroom is a key aspect of our approach to student welfare. In on-campus schooling it is centred on daily timetabled meetings in year level sub-groups. In our Online Campus, homeroom is community-focussed relationship-forming time, allocated at regular times throughout the study week.

### **Class Capacity**

The upper limit on student numbers in classes is determined by College Council in consultation with the Principal. For onsite, on-campus classes, capacity is considered reached at 26 students. At the time of the most recent review of this policy, the upper limit is set at 26 students per class, and this will also apply to Online Campus classes. This may be reviewed during the early years of the Online Campus. In both settings; onsite and online, it is appropriate for the Principal to propose temporary, short-term changes to the upper limit, and College Council will decide these proposals on a case-by-case basis, with consideration for our Enrolment Policy.

### **Pastoral Care**

At MCC Pastoral Care includes the following practices:

- Encouraging the Christ-centred spiritual development of students individually and as a group
- Empowering Class-teachers and Homeroom teachers in their role as ministers, pastoral carers and Biblical instructors
- Aligning the College's Core Values and their implementation with the Bible teaching program throughout the College
- Aligning the College's Core Values and their implementation with the Personal Development programs and Student Leadership programs
- Aligning the College's Core Values and their implementation with the Chapel program
- Implementing the College's Core Values throughout every aspect and program as we seek Christ-like selflessness within the staff and student body
- Assigning staff to work with Homeroom teachers in helping students to deal with difficult issues
- Providing support, counselling and or referrals to appropriate services to students as needed

### **Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment**

Responding to Bullying and Harassment (including sexual harassment) is a key aspect of our approach to student and staff welfare and is described in separate Bullying and Harassment Policies, one specific to students, the other specific to staff.

### **Unlawful Discrimination**

Consistent with our Vision and Values, Melton Christian College will endeavor not to discriminate unlawfully against any member of the College or wider community.

### **Child Safety**

Responding to suspected child abuse (including neglect) is a key aspect of our approach to student welfare and is described in a separate Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy accessible on the College website or direct from the College office anytime.

### **Written/Visual communication**

It is reasonable that Melton Christian College protects its reputation and image by determining and retaining control over the suitability of written and visual communications.

The school name, motto, logo, uniform and words or images of staff or students must not be used without permission and in any way which would result in a negative impact for the school and its community.

### **Use of ICT and Digital Communication**

The College has a comprehensive and clear statement of what constitutes acceptable and appropriate electronic communication behaviour. The College ICT Protocols are accessible within the annually updated

Handbook, accessible on the College website. The ICT Protocols – the MCC way, explains the benefits and consequences of compliance and non-compliance with the protocols.

Suggestions for students (and their parents) in managing computer and phone abuse:

- A student should not reply/react/respond to any inappropriate communication, they should tell their parent, and then notify their Homeroom Teacher
- Students should report any further inappropriate communication to their parent and again notify their Teacher and Year Level Coordinator
- Students should retain screenshots or other authentic evidence of inappropriate comments to assist with identifying a perpetrator
- Students should keep in mind that sometimes cyber bullying becomes a matter for the police
- Students are likely to find this situation distressing, and MCC provides support through: Head of Pastoral Care, Homeroom Teacher, Coordinator, other programs such as Strength and Shine.

**MCC Response to Breaches of Implementing this Policy**

This policy states that within the appropriate limitations of their roles, and to the extent that it is reasonable and practical, all staff at Melton Christian College are expected to monitor, and contribute to the welfare of students and others, particularly students who are in their direct care.

Therefore, behaviour which jeopardises the safety or wellbeing of others, physically or emotionally, should be immediately reported in the following order of accountability:

Teaching	Non-Teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher: Homeroom Teacher, Classroom Teacher, Subject Teacher</li> <li>• Coordinator: Year-Level Coordinator, Teaching and Learning Coordinator</li> <li>• Departmental Head: Head of Primary, Head of Secondary, Head of Campus, Head of Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Principal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line Manager, eg: Property Manager, ICT Manager</li> <li>• Head of Operations</li> <li>• Head of Finance</li> <li>• Principal</li> </ul>

If the breach of policy relates to behaviour by the Principal, it may become appropriate that the College Council Chairperson be approached for guidance and a response.

In situations where a student’s destructive behaviour is critical and/or ongoing, Head of Pastoral Care may also be called upon to work with the student and their family. Suspension or expulsion may be required/justified simply for the safety of others. If all avenues for restoration are exhausted, and expulsion is the right and only option, then counselling should still be provided so that even the expulsion is a constructive, albeit terminal event for the departing student and the good reputation of the College remains intact.

**Student Code of Conduct**

The student Code of Conduct is contained within the annually updated Handbook and should be accessed through the website. It is the reasonable expectation of MCC that students who choose to accept an enrolment place will always conform to the fair requirements of the Code of Conduct.

**Parent Code of Conduct**

MCC has a Parent Code of Conduct which forms part of the enrolment application documentation, it is accessible on the website. Parents who accept a place for their children are thereby agreeing to abide by the Parent Code of Conduct.

**Student wellbeing - relationships**

The College Handbook (accessible on the website) explains that the MCC practice is that in line with our core values of Respect and Community, our goal is to see peace, kindness, consideration, joy and forgiveness demonstrated in friendly and supportive relationships between College students. Inclusive friendliness is encouraged and exclusiveness/cliques among students are discouraged. Students are expected to empower and support each other in all areas of College life building positive relationships for all. Romantic relationships

and demonstrations of romantic affection are not permitted at school because these behaviours isolate students, and invariably distract students from their learning. Sexual activity of any kind is not permitted at school or school events.

### **Student wellbeing - support**

Student wellbeing and support is a high priority at MCC and begins with each student's homeroom or class teachers. These homeroom or class teachers are the first point of contact concerning pastoral care. Year Level Coordinators can further assist students with academic or emotional issues. Our Head of Pastoral Care is also available by referral or request as a resource person to assist with concerns.

### **Whole-School Engagement with MCC Core Values**

The five Core Values are included in full on the College website. They are simplified for everyday use as follows:

1. Christ-centredness
2. Excellence
3. Respect
4. Community
5. Passion for Teaching and Learning

### **Engagement through Curriculum**

MCC implements a Christ-centred Curriculum with the intention of engaging all students and challenging them to achieve their full academic potential. The richer and deeper intention is that through the curriculum, students are encouraged to discover their God-given gifts and calling.

### **House System**

MCC House Teams are such that families are affiliated to one of four Houses: Daniel, Caleb, Gideon or Joshua. The House system facilitates internal competitive and cultural events, as well as creating a sense of belonging and identity for students.

In onsite campuses, House membership is by family, and siblings are consequently within the same House Team, Class-teachers and Homeroom Teachers. This means they are able to build ongoing relationships with the families within our College community. Students remain members of their House for the duration of their schooling, P-12. House membership may be different for Online Campus students and may be determined by region/location.

### **Student Wellbeing Staffer**

The Head of Pastoral Care (HoPC) has a significant role in developing and implementing strategies, practices and programs to enhance student wellbeing. The HoPC also helps identify significant issues in the school community and works with relevant staff teams to develop a school culture where all students are valued, accepted and able to develop their potential for learning.

The HoPC is the first point of resourcing Homeroom teachers to equip them to assist students in need. In cases of critical need, the HoPC , provides counselling and guidance directly to students. Students may refer themselves, or be referred by a friend, a teacher or parent, and the HoPC uses discretion and may refer students as appropriate to external agencies.

### **Engagement through Inclusion**

In relation to inclusion of students with special needs, MCC has the policy that if reasonable adjustments are necessary to enable an enrolled child to participate at the College, the College will make those adjustments to the extent that they do not involve unjustifiable hardship.

It is the general aim of the College that to the extent that it is reasonably possible:

- students are able to develop their potential to the greatest extent possible
- inclusive special education techniques are implemented
- that children's time away from mainstream lessons is minimal, or is optimal on a case by case basis
- that our teachers understand that in a learning community they all are required to be teachers of children with special needs

### **Safety: a Right and a Responsibility**

It is important that all members of MCC Christian learning community feel safe and secure at school. Therefore, while all members of our school community have the right to a safe and secure learning environment, they equally have a responsibility to contribute actively to such an environment.

### **Participation: a Right and a Responsibility**

MCC students will participate fully in the educational program and participate in all scheduled classes. MCC students exhibit constructive, pro-social behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community. MCC students demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, and they contribute to effective educational immersion for themselves and other students.

Moreover, as students progress through the year levels they are to take greater responsibility for their own learning. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and behaviour.

### **Student Behaviour - Belonging: a Right and a Responsibility**

The College makes comprehensive and clear statements of what constitutes acceptable and appropriate behaviour by students. The Student Code of Conduct is one element of that statement. Other, extensive explanations are in the Handbook which is updated annually, and is accessible on the College website.

Students have the right to belong within the College community. They also have the responsibility to behave in ways that allow others to belong fully too.

### **Statement regarding Racism**

MCC learning spaces, playgrounds, offsite-activities and all workspaces and events whether online or face to face are to be culturally safe environments for children, young people and students. All people from all and any cultural and racial backgrounds are to be respected and valued. This means that staff of MCC will ensure that when racism is identified, it is confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism within the school environment are addressed with appropriate consequences.

### **Maintaining a Culturally Safe Environment**

The Creator's goodness can be seen in glimpses throughout all of life, and all human activities can be done with a sense of obedience to God. All societies and their cultures have elements that reflect God. Here at Melton Christian College, we are committed to establishing an environment of respect for the strengths of Aboriginal culture. It is enormously important to us that every enrolled student has positive learning experiences in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise that Aboriginal culture and identity are linked to their sense of safety. So, we actively support inclusion, agency and cultural safety for Aboriginal students.

### **Student Attendance**

The College insists that students P-12 attend all scheduled schooldays and participate in all timetabled classes or other events during those days further details are in the Handbook, accessed via the website.

The class roll is marked by the classroom teacher electronically. If a student of an onsite campus is absent from school without prior explanation an auto-SMS message will be sent to the parent. Online Campus students' parents will be contacted if they are not participating in scheduled lessons that they were expected to join. Parents and guardians are to phone, send a note/email, or provide a medical certificate to account for student absences. For both onsite and online settings, staff will investigate unexplained absences. Further information is in the Handbook, accessible via the website.

### **Restrictive Interventions**

In onsite settings, to protect the safety of a student and members of the school community, it may be appropriate, albeit very very rarely, to use physical restraint or seclusion. Physical restraint and seclusion are only permitted in exceptional circumstances where it is immediately required and reasonably necessary to protect the safety of a student or another person. Physical restraint and seclusion are not permitted at any other time.

**Physical restraint** - Physical restraint is the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained. The definition of physical restraint does not include protective physical interventions which use physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage a student's grip, but from which a student can move freely away.

**Seclusion** - Seclusion refers to leaving a student alone in a room or area from which they are prevented from leaving by a barrier or another person. This includes situations where a door is locked as well as where the door is blocked by other objects or held closed by another person. The definition of seclusion does not include supervised situations such as time-out, in-school suspensions, detentions, exam situations, or ordinary online self-paced learning time; other situations where the student can freely exit an area, or suspension and expulsion from school.

MCC staff may only use physical restraint and seclusion where:

- there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to a student or others and
- the physical restraint and seclusion are reasonable in all the circumstances and
- there is no less restrictive measure available in the circumstances.

During physical restraint and seclusion incidents, the student/s must be visually monitored for signs of distress and pain to ensure the student's physical health is not jeopardised and that the student, other students, and staff are safe. Staff must ensure that the use of physical restraint and seclusion is time limited and that it stops as soon as the immediate threat of harm or danger to the student or others has passed.

School staff must never use physical restraint and seclusion as behaviour management techniques, for convenience, as retaliation, or to discipline or punish a student. Physical restraint must never be used where it has the effect of:

- covering a student's mouth or nose, or in any way interferes with breathing
- taking a student to the ground into the prone or supine position
- putting stress on a student's joints
- applying pressure to the neck, back, chest or joints
- deliberately applying pain to gain compliance
- intentionally causing a student to fall
- having a person sitting, lying, or kneeling on a student.

Therefore, the following techniques are prohibited:

- headlocks, choke holds, basket holds, bear hugs, 'therapeutic holding' or wrestling holds (including 'full or half nelsons')
- using a hog-tied position
- straddling any part of a student's body
- dragging a student along the ground.

As soon as possible. During or after physical restraint or seclusion are implemented, notify the principal. Staff members involved in the incident must immediately notify the principal or their delegate. The principal or their delegate will, as soon as practicable inform parents/carers following an incident in which physical restraint or seclusion has been used with their child.

Following the use of physical restraint or seclusion, appropriate supports must be offered to all affected students, including, but not limited to, physical and psychological needs and ongoing monitoring and recovery support.

Also, following an incident of physical restraint or seclusion, the school must consider any preventative and de-escalation strategies that might reduce the likelihood of an incident happening again.