



Mount Lilydale Mercy College

Student Positive Behaviour Policy

1. RATIONALE

Mount Lilydale Mercy College is a Catholic, learning, faith community in the Mercy tradition that has at its centre the dignity and safety of each person. Our Mercy Values of Respect, Compassion, Justice, Courage, Hospitality and Service compel us to ensure the wellbeing of all College community members is cherished and developed. All young people have the right to a positive learning experience, where diversity and individual differences are celebrated and respected. The College strives to do this through inclusive practices that invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and achievement of appropriate learning outcomes. We offer a rich, broad curriculum which nurtures faith, provides personalised learning, promotes healthy personal relationships, stresses the importance of student leadership and agency, and promotes self-discipline and responsibility.

The Student Positive Behaviour Policy reflects the school community's shared expectations in relation to student engagement, attendance and behaviour. This Policy sets out the clear processes to be followed in order to support students' behavioural, educational and emotional engagement.

This Policy provides an overview of how Mount Lilydale Mercy College will:

- promote positive behaviour in the school community;
- seek to prevent behavioural issues; and
- respond to challenging student behaviour occurring at school, at a school activity away from the school grounds or while travelling to or from school or a school activity.

2. PRINCIPLES

Every person is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), with the inherent dignity that this implies, and all are created as social beings, with the mutual rights, obligations and needs that this implies

At the heart of everything the College does is the promotion of the whole person – spiritual, cognitive, social, physical.

Every person at the College has the right to feel safe, to be happy and to learn; therefore, we aim to:

- Promote the values of honesty, respect, justice, courage, compassion, service and hospitality.
- Affirm cooperation as well as responsible independence in learning
- Foster self-discipline and develop responsibility for one's own behaviour
- Acknowledge the worth of all members of the community and their right to work and learn in a positive environment.

Humans are relational beings and the building of respectful, genuine, and authentic relationships is foundational to our work with students, families and the school community. Developing and promoting these relationships, and upholding the values and mission of the College is the

responsibility of all staff, students, and families within the College community. Therefore, every member of the College should strive to make their interactions with each other a living example of the Mercy ethos.

Positive student behaviour is best achieved within a school environment that is safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering, where diversity is respected and valued, human rights and the common good are honoured, and where those experiencing difficulty or special need receive particular care and support.

Developing positive student behaviour is seen as educative, requiring age-appropriate education and skilling of students, and pastorally driven management of student behaviour through processes focused on both individual and community wellbeing, and on ensuring a just and reasonable balance of individual and community rights, needs and responsibilities.

The College sets clear guidelines for student attitudes and behaviours. When students do not meet these standards, they need to be respectfully challenged to accept responsibility for their actions and supported to understand the breakdown of relationships. We do this through the practice of restorative justice where we aim to use a restorative, rather than punitive approach to student behaviour that is deemed as inappropriate and falls below the College standards.

Effective school-community partnerships offer opportunities for networks of pastoral care for students. Appropriate local services and agencies may be identified, and links or partnerships developed, to support the needs of students and their families and to enhance this school's own pastoral initiatives.

Students' Guiding Principles (Personal Respect And Dignity Statement)

At Mount Lilydale Mercy College, we strive to show respect for all individuals and treat each other with dignity. To achieve this all members of the College Community are expected to:

- show respect for the thoughts, opinions, actions and belongings of others
- be positive and supportive in our use of language and in our actions
- behave in a manner that contributes to the safety of ourselves and others
- allow others to learn in a caring, supportive and clean environment
- show respect for the individuality and personal gifts of each person
- show respect for the rights of individuals and respect their confidentiality
- give assistance to those in need, including those who experience bullying.

3. DEFINITIONS

Behaviour is defined as the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. In general terms, it can be considered to be anything we say or do.

Appropriate behaviour is behaving in a manner that is suitable for a public gathering, respecting the other members of the forum (class, meeting, assembly, gathering) and treating others as you would wish to be treated. Members are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to show mutual respect, maturity, and common sense. In general, appropriate behaviour is any behaviour that contributes to the positive learning environment and aligns with our College expectations.

Inappropriate behaviour or unacceptable behaviour (including bullying, harassment and victimisation), may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as written, telephone or e-mail communications or through social media.

Discriminatory conduct is conduct whereby an individual is treated less favourably on the basis of a relevant attribute, including their sex, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or belief or gender reassignment. Such action may constitute discriminatory conduct that is contrary to Commonwealth and Victorian anti-discrimination legislation.

Bullying is a broad concept which may generally be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying generally involves a series or pattern of events in which one individual has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards another individual. Situations that harm respectful relationships and hinder safe, inclusive communities include (but are not limited to):

- **Relational:** hurting others by damaging or manipulating relationships, such as spreading rumours, deliberately leaving people 'out' of activities, or treating them as if they do not exist
- **Verbal:** name calling, putting people down and making intimidating noises
- **Physical:** unwanted physical contact that is used to harm or intimidate, non-verbal gestures which are designed to intimidate, negative body language, or invasion of personal space and property
- **Extortion:** standover tactics to control someone else's behaviour, eg. to force them to give up possessions
- **Cyber:** using electronic devices or social-networking sites to transmit material of an offensive nature. Examples include communicating unsanctioned information about an individual, assuming someone's identity online and implementing social-exclusion campaigns

Challenging behaviour is behaviour that significantly challenges the day-to-day functioning of the school. The behaviour impacts on learning and interrupts students' and staff capacity to function in a safe and orderly environment.

At Risk behaviour is any behaviour that has the potential to cause harm or injury to self or other. This includes physical, emotional or psychological harm.

Criminal offences refer to forms of unacceptable behaviour that may be serious enough to constitute a criminal offence. If the College becomes aware that an offence has been or may have been committed, these concerns will be reported to the police or other authorities, as appropriate.

4. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The *Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)* (sch 4 cl 12) outlines the College's obligations to ensure the care, safety and welfare of all students attending the College. In discharging duty of care responsibilities, the College and teachers must exercise professional judgment to achieve a balance between ensuring that students do not face an unreasonable risk of harm and encouraging students' independence and maximising learning opportunities. Non-teaching staff, other workplace participants and external providers must exercise judgment appropriate in the circumstances. The College must also comply with legislation related to Occupational Health and Safety for workplace participants.

This document is informed by relevant Australian and Victorian legislation including:

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic.)*

This document is also informed by the following resources:

- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) policy requirements
- National Safe Schools Framework www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0
- Health Promoting Schools Framework www.ahpsa.org.au
- CECV Intervention Framework 2015
- www.ceciv.catholic.edu.au/publications/CECV-Intervention-Framework.pdf
- CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018
- CEM - Policy 2.26 Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools
- Diocesan policy and regulations.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

Ensuring that students attend school each day is a shared expectation of all students, families and the wider school community. The table below sets out the College's shared attendance expectations for its students, families and staff.

Students are expected to:

- attend all timetabled classes punctually. This includes Homeroom, classes, whole school events and year level events, other meetings and assemblies;
- be prepared to fully participate in lessons;
- remain on the school premises during school time unless they have permission to leave from families and the College;
- show an explanatory note or a medical certificate to Student Reception the day after an absence has occurred, unless families have notified the College of the absence in advance by SMS, email or telephone call;
- advise Homeroom and subject teachers in advance of any known absence (e.g. medical treatment, sporting or other excursions);
- sign in/out when arriving or leaving the College outside of normal school hours (9am-3.15pm). An email, SMS, phone call or note from the student's family is required to explain late arrival/early departure;
- complete all missed work when absent from class.
- work cooperatively with the College to develop personal attendance improvement goals when their attendance has been inconsistent;
- complete at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction per subject per semester if enrolled in VCE/VET/VCAL subjects. NB: Assessment tasks missed due to an approved absence (an absence accompanied by a medical certificate, death notice) will be completed during the next contingency class or at a time deemed appropriate by the VCE Coordinator.

Families are expected to:

- ensure their child's enrolment details are correct;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure their children attend school punctually each day;
- inform the College of a student's absence prior to 9 am on the day of the absence. NB: If the College is not notified by 9.00am, Student Reception will inform the family via SMS and phone calls as soon as practical on the day of the absence. The families should promptly reply to the College's attempts at making contact;
- account for all student absences and provide the College with a medical documentation confirming an illness that is causing extended absence from school;

- avoid making any non-essential appointments during the school day;
- avoid arranging family holidays during the school term.;
- communicate with the Homeroom Teacher if, for any reason, the student is reluctant to attend school;
- support their child's learning during absences and work with the school to reintegrate students after prolonged absences;
- work cooperatively and collaboratively with the College (and external practitioners as required) to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school.

The College will:

- proactively promote regular attendance;
- record student attendance and punctuality on Compass at morning Homeroom and the commencement of each lesson;
- follow up on any unexplained absences promptly and consistently, ensuring all notes brought by the student to explain a previous absence are delivered to Student Reception for recording;
- identify trends via data analysis and communicate with families about unexplained, ongoing or excessive absences.

Homeroom Teachers will:

- record the date(s) and reason of a student's proposed future absence or advise Reception staff to do so;
- report any concerns regarding inconsistent or excessive student absences to the Year Level Leader;

Year Level Leaders (YLLs) will:

- apply a consequence in accordance with this Policy to any student found to have deliberately missed a class without a valid reason;
- monitor student absences and counsel students with ongoing attendance concerns;
- work collaboratively with families and students to develop an agreed Learning Plan when a student's absence from school is excessive;
- send letters to families about the importance of regular attendance, and provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with families has not been possible or if the student's attendance pattern continues to be irregular after the initial meeting with family;
- report lengthy or unexplained absences to the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS), DHHS, and/or DET Attendance Officer;

The VCE, VCE Vocational Major and VET Coordinators will:

- ensure all students enrolled in classes at the College, including external students, are aware of and adhere to the VCE Attendance Policy requirement and complete at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction per subject per semester;
- communicate with families when any student is at risk of not satisfying the requirements of a unit due to absence;

Student Reception will:

- send an SMS message to families who fail to notify the College of child's absence before 9.00am, as soon as practical on the day of the absence;
- record any reasons for absences, late arrivals or early departures on Compass.

Shared Behaviour Expectations

The College recognises the importance of providing clear guidance and expectations which are applicable to all members of the school community. The school administration, in consultation with the school community wherever appropriate, will prescribe standards of dress, appearance and behaviour for the student body. As a term of enrolment, families are expected to support the College's expectations, values and Code of Conduct, upholding prescribed standards of dress, appearance and behaviour.

Repeated behaviour by a student or families that, in the school's view, is unacceptable and damaging to the partnership between the College and the family, may result in suspension or termination of the student's enrolment. The table below sets out the College's expectations for its students, families and staff.

Students are expected to:

- participate actively and cooperatively in learning, taking responsibility for their learning and having high expectations in themselves that they can learn;
- model the College's core Mercy values of respect, compassion, justice, service, courage and hospitality;
- take responsibility for their own behaviour and the impact of their behaviour on others;
- behave in a manner reflective of this Policy and work with teachers, family, and College or external support services in developing strategies to improve outcomes to:
- follow all reasonable requests of staff;
- respect the rights of others to be safe and learn;
- respect the property of the College and others;
- report any matter they observe or are involved in that does not reflect Mercy values and does not build a sense of inclusion and community within the College;
- advocate for others within the College community to ensure they are treated with respect and dignity;
- use informed, respectful, and appropriate processes to provide their views on school community decisions;
- be at school attending class or in a permitted area, unless a valid reason to be absent has been received by the school from the family;
- punctually attend all scheduled classes, have the required learning materials with them, and all homework completed;
- use electronic devices only when it assists their learning and only after seeking permission from a staff member;
- keep the school environment clean, placing all litter in the bins provided. Chewing gum is detrimental to the environment and therefore should not be consumed at school;
- store their belongings in a locker securely locked with the lock provided by the College;
- observe all expectations relating to the wearing of uniforms, jewellery, hair and grooming);

- ensure a safe and healthy learning community, free from cigarettes, alcohol, illicit drugs and other banned substances. These substances should never be brought to school or consumed whilst in the school environment, or in school uniform (refer to Banned Substances Policy).

Families are expected to:

- participate in the academic, social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cultural development of their children;
- have high expectations of their child's behaviour and have an understanding of the College's expectations;
- actively participate in the life of the College where appropriate;
- communicate with the College in regards to their child's circumstances;
- share responsibility for shaping their children's understanding about appropriate behaviour by assisting in the development and enforcement of strategies to address individual needs;
- support the provision of a caring, safe environment for the College community in the light of Mercy values, treating all members of the College community fairly and respectfully at all times;
- support their children to act assertively, stand up for themselves, and reflect carefully when specific incidents arise that brings an individual's well-being into question, advising their children to report such incidents to a trusted adult within the College community;
- provide complete, accurate and up to date information when completing an enrolment form and supply the College prior to enrolment, with any additional information as may be requested, including copies of documents such as medical/specialist reports (where relevant to the student's schooling), reports from previous schools, court orders or parenting agreements;
- comply with the College's expectations and Code of Conduct, supporting the school in upholding prescribed standards of dress, appearance and behaviour;
- acknowledge and understand that unacceptable behaviour by a student, or repeated behaviour by a family member that, in the school's view, is unacceptable and damaging to the partnership between family and school, may result in suspension or termination of the child's enrolment.

The College and/or workplace participants will:

- work with all members of the College community to ensure that when dealing with issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of its members, a balanced, timely and consistent approach is adopted;
- foster a community that enables students to develop a feeling of safety, connectedness, belonging, trust and forgiveness;
- provide a supportive environment which encourages positive relationships between students, staff and families;
- provide educational opportunities that enhance inclusivity for families through the College communication channels;
- assist students to develop skills for building assertiveness and resolving conflict by providing opportunities for discussion of appropriate social skills and behaviour throughout the school curriculum;

- provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for staff to raise awareness of how to develop and maintain positive relationships with their students and create a culture of inclusion and safety;
- promote positive reinforcement and enhance student self-esteem by having a planned approach for recognising and responding to appropriate behaviour;
- employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a culture in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students and focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues;
- recognise that for some students, additional support may be needed in the form of staged responses and staff are committed to working collaboratively with families to engage students in their learning;
- consistently apply this Policy through a shared collegiate understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances;
- ensure staff members understand their role in making students feel included and safe so that students are empowered to share any experiences that may make them feel uncomfortable, threatened or unsafe;
- commit to, and live the policies and procedures outlined by the College contributing to the provision of a caring, well-managed, safe environment for the entire community;
- treat all members of the College community fairly and with respect at all times taking into account the dignity of the human person in the light of the Mercy values;
- acquaint themselves each year with the College Expectations, acting on and reporting all instances where students are not following expectations or are behaving in an unbecoming, irresponsible or dangerous manner contrary to building safe, inclusive communities;
- offer support to those experiencing discomfort due to breakdown of relationships;
- recognise and acknowledge positive behaviour and resolution problems;
- teach and practice effective conflict resolution;
- ensure all teachers establish explicit classroom expectations with their classes early in the year/semester, and subsequently at any time when the revision or reinforcement of a particular expectation seems appropriate.

College Actions For Building Positive Behaviour

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school practices, as well as targeted and individualised support when required. Effective student behaviour change and student behaviour support is enhanced through internally-based school support structures, and externally-based family, education, community and interagency partnerships.

The College will apply a range of supports and measures to address inappropriate student behaviour. Where a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, the College will institute a staged response, in accordance with the CECV Positive Support Guidelines, 2018. Where applicable, an incident report will be completed and provided to the Principal or relevant staff member.

Positive Reinforcement of Appropriate Behaviour

The College aims to develop in our students a sense of social responsibility and an awareness of the need to live in harmony with others and their surroundings. All members of Mount Lilydale Mercy

College community are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that shows respect for oneself, others and property, and ensures the safety of all individuals. Students are educated to know that their actions must not stop others from learning or make others feel excluded or uncomfortable. Persons who witness inappropriate conduct are also encouraged to 'speak-up', so that the individual is challenged to act in a manner consistent with the school's expectations.

The College celebrates positive action and behaviour through verbal recognition, awards, commendations, communication with families and the wider school community as appropriate.

Accountability Processes

The College adopts a staged response to challenging behaviour and appropriate consequences for students' inappropriate behaviour. Accountability measures may be used with other engagement and support strategies to address the range of factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour.

The initial response when dealing with a breach of this policy is restorative. Restorative practices raise students' awareness of the impact of behaviour on self and others through personal accountability, with the focus being on restoring relationships, taking responsibility for actions and to change and heal destructive behaviours. It is acknowledged that repeated or more serious infringements may require the use of supplementary interventions.

Measures should always be proportionate to the nature of the behaviour, and are best used with support measures to identify and address causes of the behaviour. Accountability measures will be implemented in accordance with the CECV Positive Support Guidelines.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is NOT permitted as a means of addressing behavioural or educational concerns. This form of punishment is not consistent with the restorative process and is expressly prohibited at the College and under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*.

Disruptive Behaviour

The usual procedures for addressing disruptive behaviour would involve one or more of the following, as appropriate:

- Non-verbal warning – eg eye contact / hand movement / shake of head / teacher positioning to stand near student(s) behaving inappropriately;
- Verbal warning which identifies the misbehaviour and gives student the opportunity to change her behaviour;
- Moving student to a less disruptive position in the room;
- Separating a student from the class for a short period of time to reflect on their actions, if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class. During this time, the student remains the responsibility of the staff member who initiated this action;
- In serious cases, Reception will be contacted to arrange for a Year Level Leader, Campus Director or Deputy Principal to take appropriate action. In the event of any of these staff members being unavailable, Reception is to contact another College Leader;
- In situations where the student is not able to comply with the instruction to relocate, the class (all other students) will be relocated/evacuated. The student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities to provide an opportunity to de-escalate or for a specified period of time. Families should be informed of such withdrawals.

- The subject teacher is required to follow up incidents of disruptive behaviour using a restorative approach as soon as practicable and include the Year Level Leader, Campus Director or Deputy Principal as appropriate.

Responding to Incidents of Bullying or the Breakdown of Relationships

Humans are relational beings; as such disputes are inevitable and relationships will be tested. The best dispute management is educative, based on trust, openness, shared understanding and forgiveness. When relationships break down, those involved are encouraged to rethink, learn, and restore respectful relationships.

- Once identified, a staff member will investigate by communicating with the students involved to gain understanding of each member's perspective of the situation
- All investigations will be fully documented by the staff member involved and if necessary be passed on to the appropriate member of Student Support.
- All students involved will be offered mediation and support and if needed counselling
- Where considered necessary, the College may refer the matter to a third party such as Victoria Police.

Responding to Incidents Where Banned Substances Are Involved

Drug and alcohol usage, dependency and associated issues and actions can put an individual and College community at risk. The use of illegal drugs and the abuse of drugs and alcohol of any kind are not condoned by Mount Lilydale Mercy College. Such substances have no place within the College environment including retreats, camps, and student social events. Students travelling to and from these venues and/or school activities are expected to observe school policies. College activities do not include any private parties or functions, responsibility for which rests with families.

All people working in schools have a responsibility to care for children, to promote their well-being and to protect them from any form of harm. The College seeks to minimize potential or actual drug-related harm through appropriate health promotion initiatives, positive education approaches, age-appropriate drug education programs based on a harm minimisation approach, and agreed and understood procedures for responding to drug related issues.

Breaches of Conduct

Addressing breaches of student conduct at the College involves one or more of the following, as appropriate:

- initial correction of the conduct by a staff member;
- teacher discussion with student using a restorative approach deciding on immediate consequence to repair the damage to relationships;
- recording infringement via Compass;
- contact with families, if appropriate;
- communication between Subject Teacher/Homeroom Teacher / Year Level Leader;
- interviews by Homeroom Teacher/Year Level Leader;
- for serious breaches, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the Campus Director or Deputy Principal – Pastoral Care.

When concerns arise about a student's on-going behaviour or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of inappropriate or at-risk behaviour, the College will implement a targeted response to identify and address the presenting issues. This may involve the following responses if and where appropriate:

- convening a meeting involving the student, their family, Year Level Leader, Campus Director or Deputy Principal, and Wellbeing team member;
- developing or revising a Individual Learning Plan (ILP) or attendance plan;
- development of a Behaviour Support Plan and/or Safety Plan where appropriate for individual students;
- internal or external withdrawal from class, school or school activities;
- referral to Catholic Education or external Health or Allied Health providers
- contact with the Regional/Diocesan Office
- negotiated transfer after interview with Deputy Principal/Principal, student & family.

As every child's educational needs can change over time, it will often be necessary for the College to review any additional assistance that is being provided to the child, in consultation with families and the young person's treating medical/allied health professionals, in order to assess:

- whether the additional assistance remains necessary and/or appropriate to the child's needs;
- whether the additional assistance is having the anticipated positive effect on the child's individual physical, functional, emotional or educational goals; and
- whether it remains within the school's ability to continue to provide the additional assistance, given any limitations that may exist.

Conclusion

The College seeks to educate the whole person. Therefore, whilst enrolled at the College, a student's rights are balanced by their responsibilities to know and observe the rules that enable the school community to function successfully.

Assessing And Mitigating Risk

To assist the school to discharge its safety responsibilities, the College will adhere to an Occupational Health and Safety Program through which potential safety hazards are identified and analysed in terms of the likelihood of an event occurring, and the potential consequences if the event was to occur. A similar risk-based approach is taken with respect to Student Duty of Care, with the definitions of likelihood and consequences.

It is important that all workplace participants consistently enforce school rules and safety policies, and actively engage in ensuring the physical and emotional wellbeing of students.

REVIEW HISTORY

Version	Date Released	Next Review	Author	Authorised by:
2.0	August 2023	2024	Deputy Principal Pastoral Care	MLMC Advisory Council

Version control added to policy commencing with V2.0 All previous versions are called 1.0 and have been archived and stored accordingly