



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Mentone Girls' Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, secure, and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy, and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Mentone Girls Secondary College was founded in 1955 and is located a short walk from Port Phillip Bay in the City of Kingston in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne, approximately 22 kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District. We acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present and emerging traditional owners of the land on which we stand - the Bunurong people. This land covers the traditional lands along the eastern side of Port Phillip Bay, including Mornington Peninsula, Western Port and South Gippsland.

Students attending the college travel from over 45 different suburbs as MGSC is the only government girls' school in the South-Eastern Suburbs. As one of six remaining government girls' schools in Victoria, we have an important

role to play in building the self-efficacy and self-esteem of girls and young women. Students at MGSC benefit from having strong, positive role models in the form of past students from the college, as well as current Student Leaders, who have entered non-traditional fields of study and work. MGSC is a school where every girl from everywhere can experience success.

There are 1043 students enrolled at the college from years 7 to 12 in 2022. The College offers a VCE program with access to VET subjects through the local LLEN. Twelve percent of students have English as an additional language and there are two Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students.

The school facilities include a STEAM Centre, Performing Arts and Media Centres, a Middle School Wing, Junior Learning Centre, a VCE Study Centre, Science Wing, and a Library. The grounds include a double gymnasium basketball and netball courts, an oval comprising of a running track, high jump, long jump, and triple jump pits, and soccer and football goals. The College promote a healthy and active lifestyle for girls and women.

The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 includes a subject called Personal Learning and at Year 10 this becomes Thrive. Personal Learning and Thrive have a wellbeing and career focus. Regular assemblies for students in Years 11 and 12 provide opportunities for guest speakers and sessions related to student wellbeing and engagement.

2. School values, philosophy, and vision

The Vision of the College is that Mentone Girls' Secondary College students, through courage and work, will develop compassion and tolerance in a dynamic learning environment, enabling them to make a fulfilling contribution in local and global communities.

The Mentone Girls' Secondary College Community promotes and celebrates:

- Diversity, Understanding, Respect and Compassion
- School Pride and Student Wellbeing
- The Development of the Whole Person
- Student Leadership, Agency, and Voice
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Striving for Personal Best
- Problem-based Learning and Challenging Thinking
- Engaging with Emerging Technologies

The college's socio-economic band value is "low" meaning that the most families do not experience financial hardship and have higher levels of education. There are 72 full-time equivalent teachers, and 21.6 full time equivalent Education Support (ES) staff employed at the college. The college employs two part-time Mental Health Professionals and a Student Wellbeing Counsellor to provide wellbeing services to students. The Disability Inclusion Team includes three part-time staff members.

There are seven International Students enrolled in the College and the college employs and International Student Coordinator and a Language Assistant to oversee the program. The College offers specialist programs such as instrumental music and/or band forms and an Enhancement Program that operates in Years 7, 8 and 9.

3. Engagement strategies

Mentone Girls' Secondary College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional, or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing*
- *creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging, and supportive*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning*
- *analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data*
- *deliver a broad curriculum including to ensure that students can choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Mentone Girls' Secondary College use an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common, and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *teachers at Mentone Girls' Secondary College adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching*
- *our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community*
- *carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents*
- *monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort, and individual level*
- *students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Leadership program.*
- *Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Student Manager, Director of their sub-school, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *all students are welcome to arrange a referral to the Wellbeing team.*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, recess, and lunchtime activities)*
- *Peer support and student leadership programs*

Targeted

- *Each year group has a two Student Managers, a Director of sub-school and an Assistant Principal responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support*
- *all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future*
- *connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer*
- *all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *Mentone Girls' Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan*
- *wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year*
- *staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*

Individual

Mentone Girls' Secondary College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- *building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances*
- *meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school*
- *developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan*
- *considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up*
- *referring the student to:*
 - *school-based wellbeing supports*
 - *Student Support Services*
 - *Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, Headspace, child, and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst*
 - *Re-engagement programs such as Navigator*

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- *being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing*
- *collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student*
- *monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family*
- *running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:*
 - *with a disability*
 - *in Out of Home Care*
 - *and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

4. Identifying students in need of support

Mentone Girls' Secondary College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally, and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mentone Girls' Secondary College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social, or educational support:

- *personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled*
- *attendance records*
- *academic performance*
- *observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation*
- *attendance, detention, and suspension data*
- *engagement with families*
- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents, and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Mentone Girls' Secondary College's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Mentone Girls' Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores, and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- *warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate*
- *teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour*
- *withdrawal of privileges*
- *referral to the Year Level Coordinator*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*
- *behaviour support and intervention meetings*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Mentone Girls' Secondary College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

7. Engaging with families

Mentone Girls' Secondary College values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Mentone Girls' Secondary College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data

Mentone Girls' Secondary College will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways Available publicly on our school's website

- Included in staff induction processes

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Information on related policies including *Statement of Values, Bullying Prevention and Child Safe Standards*. Can be found on the College website: <https://mgsc.vic.edu.au/our-college/policies>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	The principal, wellbeing team and relevant staff were consulted with in the development of this policy.
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	2026