

COLAC SECONDARY COLLEGE

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

Colac Secondary College is a Child Safe School and as such we support the rights of all members of the school community to be provided with, and engage in a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment.

School Profile Statement

The Colac Otway Shire is a richly diverse area located two hours west of Melbourne. Colac Otway is one of the most picturesque municipalities in Victoria, covering a diverse area from volcanic lakes, craters and plains in the north, through the hinterland forests of the Otway Ranges to the Great Ocean Road coastline. Colac is the key industrial, commercial and service center for the shire and surrounding region with a population of 22,370. Colac Secondary College is the largest state secondary school in the shire. It is an important educational hub for the Colac township and surrounds.

Our core business at Colac Secondary College is student learning, and we have an unrelenting focus on achieving 12 months learning growth in 12 months for every student. We empower our students to aim and aspire for success and to achieve their individual educational pathways. We promote the development of emotional intelligence for every student so that our students are equipped to become respectful and responsible members of the community.

The College is committed to a school improvement focus that extends and transforms teaching and learning to promote high levels of academic achievement. Our teachers provide an inclusive and personalised program to meet the diverse range of student learning needs. A differentiating curriculum approach supports students in their learning growth.

We are committed to building students' potential for success and wellbeing through strong partnerships that emphasise all aspects of life that relate to the holistic development of a students' talents, interests, and goals. We pride ourselves in providing an environment that is conducive to each child achieving their personal potential.

Student wellbeing is seen as critical in empowering students with the social and emotional competencies to experience success and happiness in their lives. A comprehensive student wellbeing structure is in place throughout the College that focuses on student care. These teams coordinate a series of inclusive programs that build student self-worth, personal identity and relationships of mutual respect. We effectively monitor and compassionately support students at all levels of the College regarding their individual and collective wellbeing needs.

Whole School Prevention Statement

Colac Secondary College fosters positive relationships between staff, students, parents and the wider school community and create a safe and orderly learning environment that is fair, consistent

and democratic. This approach focuses on recognizing the harm that has been caused to others by inappropriate behaviour and provides an opportunity to repair that harm. This approach is also applied to incidents of serious harm. Everyone affected, including families, are provided with the opportunity to talk about what has happened, how they have been affected by it and what they want to happen to repair the harm that has been caused. This approach focuses on relationships and people, over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punitive punishment.

The social, emotional and physical wellbeing of students is pivotal to their success at school, as adolescents and in their future lives. Colac Secondary College endeavours to provide a healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students, to raise awareness of what makes students resilient, to develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities, to build student and school connectedness, and to increase coping skills.

Our College values are:

Respect – Treating ourselves and others with consideration, being courteous at all times and acknowledging diversity and rights of others.

Responsibility – Taking ownership of our behaviour and actions, contributing in a positive way.

Honesty – Being honest and acting ethically, ensuring consistency between words and actions.

Achievement – Aiming and Aspiring to do our best, being committed to **Achieving** our full potential in learning and life goals

Our values form an integral part of daily school life and are referred to by all teachers within the class context and within the yard.

Rights and Responsibilities:

1. Guiding Principles

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

2. Equal Opportunity

At Colac Secondary College we support the rights of all members of the school community to be provided with, and engage in a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Equal Opportunity Policy Statement

Colac Secondary College aims to provide a welcoming, supportive, and emotionally and physically secure learning and working environment for every member of the school community.

Colac Secondary College recognizes and promotes human rights, and values the diversity of culture, beliefs, practices, customs, physical and intellectual abilities and life experience of the whole school community

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

3. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- Freedom

- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights. All DET employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:

- Encourage compliance with the Charter.
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights.

Part of the monitoring of Human Rights will be to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist on the School Compliance web site.

4. Students with Disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- The nature of the student's disability.
- His or her preferred adjustment.
- Any adjustments that have been provided previously.
- Any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- Costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum.
- Costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers.

- Benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- Any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.
- The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

5. Bullying and Harassment

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings).

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- Teasing and being made fun of.
- Spreading of rumours online.
- Sending unwanted messages.
- Defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include:

- Poor health – anxiety, depression.
- Lower self-esteem.
- Reduced study performance.
- Missed classes, social withdrawal.
- Reduced career prospects.

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied, they should tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully. Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle: (The most common)

They include:

- Offensive staring and leering.

- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
- Questions about another's sexual activity.
- Persistent comments about a person's private life or family.
- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body.
- Offensive name calling.

Explicit: (obvious)

They include:

- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
- Displays of sexually graphic material– pornography.
- Requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

Bullying can involve such things as:

Grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.

- Publicly excluding a person from your group.
- Taking or breaking a person's property.
- Knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk.
- Teasing a person because of their looks.

Cyberbullying

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- The language you use and the things you say.
- How you treat others.
- Respecting people's property (e.g. copyright).
- Visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- Protecting your own privacy and personal information (we used to call it 'stranger danger').
- Selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute.
- Protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images).
- Being proactive in letting someone know if there is something is 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If you are being harassed or bullied, you should:

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- Discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Rights

Students have a right to:

- work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition.
- participate fully in the school's educational program.

Responsibilities

Students have a responsibility to:

- participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.
- Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.
- As students' progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.
- Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every one to two years or more frequently if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Council Approval date	October 2024
Review date	2026
DET/VRQA required	Yes