

Mercy Regional College Student Behaviour Policy

1. Purpose

The Mercy Regional College Student 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 to support students' behavioural, educational, and emotional engagement.

This Policy provides an overview of how Mercy Regional 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.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with all School policies, including Attendance Monitoring Policy and the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines

2. School Profile

Mercy Regional College is committed to holistic education: we are determined to ensure that each student flourishes academically, spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically.

The school considers that awareness of, recognition of, and responsiveness to the needs and rights of all individuals are essential to human dignity. Inclusive practices embrace and celebrate diversity, invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

Foundational to our work with students, families and the school community is the building of genuine, authentic relationships. The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. All teachers, students, families, parishes, and the wider community contribute to fostering life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity of each person.

3. Rationale

At Mercy Regional College we strive to provide an inclusive education which values diversity and celebrates difference. Diversity is enacted through a pedagogy of inclusion and a commitment to uphold the rights of all to be welcomed, valued, acknowledged and actively engaged in education. Our learning community is committed to processes that support all students to make optimal progress and respect the rights of all students to learn in a positive and supportive environment. We seek to provide successful participation and to intervene as early as possible when students are not actively engaged in learning. Student behaviour is

linked to the quality of the learning experiences. Purposeful, authentic, and relevant learning experiences that are of a sufficiently challenging yet achievable standard maximise positive behaviour.

4. Vision

Mercy Regional College serves a wide rural community which values growth and diversity in Catholic education in the Mercy tradition

Mercy Regional College is committed to education students in the Mercy tradition of kindness, compassion, and selflessness. We are following the example of Jesus Christ and striving to make his message known and loved by all

5. Mission

Mercy Regional College is committed to providing educational opportunities that actively welcome, engage, inspire and challenge all students to learn in a safe and enlivening Catholic environment.

In the spirit of the Gospels we commit ourselves to the core values of commitment, inclusiveness, learning, care, justice and mercy, excellence and achievement

6. Aims

Our school is a community that exemplifies the gospel values of love, forgiveness, justice, and truth. Our school community recognises that everyone has the right to be respected, to feel safe and be safe and, in turn, our school community acknowledges each member's own obligation to behave responsibly. This Policy is intended to guide our school's actions. It has been developed in consultation with the school community and seeks to prioritise respectful relationships and safety in response to the rights and needs of all members of the school community. A safe and supportive environment respects the rights of all students to learn, the rights of all teachers to teach and the rights of all members of the school community to be safe. Every person at the school has a right to feel safe, to be happy and to learn. Therefore, our school aims:

- to promote the values of honesty, fairness and respect for others;
- to acknowledge the worth of all members of the community and their right to work and learn in a positive environment;
- to maintain good order and harmony;
- to affirm cooperation as well as responsible independence in learning; and
- to foster self-discipline and to develop responsibility for one's own behaviour.

7. Principles

Mercy Regional College strives to build a safe and positive school environment that is guided by Gospel values and honours the dignity of the individual, the family, and the school.

The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. Teachers, students, families, parish members and the wider community contribute to and share in the responsibility to foster life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity and safety of each person.

Members of the school community are expected to contribute to the mission and vision of the school and to understand their rights and acknowledge their obligation to behave responsibly.

As a provider of Catholic education, the school Principal will consider the need for the school community to represent and conform with the doctrines, beliefs and principles of the Catholic faith when making decisions regarding matters of school administration, including enrolment. Pupils and families who are members of other faiths are warmly welcomed at our school. However, the school reserves its right to exercise its administrative discretion in appropriate circumstances, where it is necessary to do so to avoid injury to the religious sensitivities of the Catholic school community.

It is vitally important that the school is made aware of each child's individual circumstances insofar as these may impact upon his or her physical, functional, emotional, or educational needs, particularly where the school is required to provide additional support to the child.

8. Definitions

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.

Behaviours of concern: May include behaviour that could be labelled as inappropriate, unacceptable, bullying, harassment, and victimisation. It includes anything a person does or says which is likely to limit or deny access to regular school routines and activities. Such behaviours may be those a person does or says which causes stress, worry, risk, of or actual harm to others.

It may be anything a person does or says of such intensity, frequency, or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is impacted.

Unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour: can take place in different environments and mediums e.g., sporting field, school yard, bus, line, classroom online, via social media, writing, drawing, gesture.

Behaviour support: The educational support a student receives from the schools to learn and maintain identified behaviour.

Behaviour Support Plan (BSP): is a working document designed to clearly outline the adjustments that will be implemented to maximise the student's engagement, thereby increasing learning outcomes.

Bullying: 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.

Chemical restraint: refers to the use of medication primarily to control or subdue behaviour and which is not being used to treat an underlying physical or mental illness or a physical condition.

Criminal offences: Behaviour that may be serious enough to constitute a criminal offence. If an offence has been or may have been committed, these concerns will be reported to the police or other authorities, as appropriate.

Discriminatory conduct: 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.

Dynamic Risk Assessment: means to make an on-the-spot assessment of the likely outcomes of the available options before deciding which option to choose in a situation which is stressful and evolving rapidly.

Expected Behaviour: 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. In general, appropriate behaviour is any behaviour that contributes to the positive learning environment and aligns with school rules and behavioural expectations.

Mechanical restraint: refers to the use of a device to prevent, restrict or subdue a person's movement for the primary purpose of influencing that person's behaviour. It does not refer to therapeutic devices, prescribed by appropriate professionals and those approved for purposes such as vehicle safety restraints.

Pastoral Care: is defined as the actions of a personal, social, physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual nature taken within the educational community by its leaders and community members to promote and enhance the wellbeing of the individual. Key elements of wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviour, and personal resilience.

Program Support Group (PSG): comprises the people with the best knowledge of and responsibility for a student, including parents/guardians, an advocate for the parents (optional), the student's teacher(s) or nominated staff member, senior staff and invited consultants who work together to establish goals, plan for adjustments to programs plan for ongoing education and monitor learning progress. Decision and formal communication will generally occur in PSG meetings. A PSG may also be referred to as a Student Support Group (SSG).

Reasonable action: means to take action that is proportionate and necessary. What is considered reasonable may depend on individual circumstance and is a matter of professional judgement.

Restraint: refers to physical restraint. Physical restraint is the use of force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body where the student is not free to move away. Restraint does not include 'protective physical interventions' which involve physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions or disengage from a student's grip. In these instances, the student remains free to move away.

Restrictive intervention: is any intervention which restricts a person's freedom of movement.

Safe place, chill out or time out rooms (safe place): Having students go to a safe place does not amount to seclusion. The purpose of such rooms or areas is to support students who require a break from stressful or demanding situations, often when their behaviour is escalating. Exit to a safe place is a planned intervention to be used as part of an overall approach to supporting students exhibiting complex behaviour. The use of a safe place should form part of a student's BSP and/or Student Safety Plan. It is used to settle and return to a state of calm, so they are more actively able to participate academically and socially. The use of a safe place can be either teacher-directed or self-directed and takes place in a setting that is not locked.

School-wide positive behaviour support (SWPBS): is a framework that brings school communities together to develop positive, safe, supportive learning cultures. SWPBS assists

schools to improve social, emotional, behavioural, and academic outcomes for children and young people. SWPBS can be implemented in any school setting to support students from Foundation through to Year 12. The framework supports schools to identify and implement successful evidence-based whole-school practices to enhance learning outcomes for children and young people.

Seclusion: is the solitary confinement of a student in a room or area from which their exit is prevented by a barrier or another person. Seclusion involves situations where a person is left alone in a room or area and reasonably believes they cannot leave that room or area even if they may be physically able to (e.g. The door is not locked). Seclusion does not include safe places, time out or chill out rooms, these being conditions set up to support students.

Student: A person enrolled at a DOBCEL School.

Student behaviour support plan: is a working document designed to clearly outline the adjustments that will be implemented in order to maximise a student's engagement, thereby increasing learning outcomes. It is developed in consultation with those who know the student well, including medical or allied health professionals.

Student Safety Plan (SSP): is designed to provide school teams with a planned response to support the management of a student's escalation cycle and created by staff who know the student well and can accurately describe the student's escalation cycle.

Time out: A procedure in which the person is separated temporarily from a rewarding environment as part of a planned and therapeutic program to modify behaviour.

9. Legislative Context

The Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.) (sch 4 cl 12) outlines the School's obligations to ensure that the care, safety and welfare of all students attending the School. In discharging duty of care responsibilities, the School and teaching staff 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, volunteers and external providers must exercise judgment appropriate in the circumstances. The school must also comply with legislation related to Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) for staff.

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.)

10. Related Documents and/or Legislation

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- DOBCEL Attendance Policy
- DOBCEL Complaints Management Policy and Procedure
- DOBCEL Duty of Care Policy Suite

- DOBCEL Enrolment Policy
- DOBCEL: Suspensions and Expulsions Policy and Procedures
- DOBCEL Learning and Teaching Policy
- DOBCEL Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy
- DOBCEL Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedures
- CECV Child Safety Commitment Statement
- Code of Conduct for Caring for Children - Professional Standards Catholic Diocese of Ballarat
- CECVPositiveBehaviourGuidelineshttps://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/bc1d235d-9a98-4bb4-b3ac-84b50fa7c639/CECV-Positive-Behaviour-Guidelines_FINAL2.aspx?ext=.pdf
- Privacy and Data Protection Act (Vic) 2014
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/num_act/padpa201460o2014317/