

Murrayville Community College

Student Welfare Policy

Rationale

This policy deals with rights and responsibilities, behaviour and discipline.

Murrayville Community College is a member of the Mallee Network of schools within the North West Victoria Region. The College is Prep to Year 12. Our students are drawn from an area that crosses the South Australian border, and the school is twenty-six kilometres from this border. It is a proud community, needing to be mutually inter-dependent because of its distance from urban centres. Student learning is supported by an experienced staff with a focus on high expectations.

Aims

All members of Murrayville Community College believe we are custodians of a clean, happy, safe, well resourced, enjoyable learning community.

Murrayville Community College is proactive in tackling bullying issues and prioritises the safety of all students. Most discipline issues are successfully handled using a restorative justice approach.

Students should enjoy being at school and appreciate the opportunities made available to them.

This school aims to minimise student absences, minimise student suspensions, maximise student safety and maximise student learning outcomes.

Implementation

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.

Equal Opportunity

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.

It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of the following attributes:

- Age
- Breastfeeding
- Gender identity
- Impairment
- Industrial activity
- Lawful sexual activity
- Marital status
- Parental status or status as carer
- Physical features
- Political belief or activity
- Pregnancy
- Race
- Religious belief or activity
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Personal association (with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes)

Murrayville Community College

Student Welfare Policy

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

The Charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. It affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the Charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The Charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services. It specifies:

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect the human rights of others.

All DEECD 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
- 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.

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.

Murrayville Community College

Student Welfare Policy

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 Disability Discrimination Act and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

Bullying and Harassment

Refer to ‘Bullying and Harassment Policies and Procedures’

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment, they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambitions • Participate fully in the school’s educational program 	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate fully in the school’s educational program and to attend regularly. Students are also expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for property, 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, which will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. • Take greater responsibility, as they progress through school, 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.

Murrayville Community College

Student Welfare Policy

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Rights	Responsibilities
Parents/carers have a right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged 	Parents/carers have a responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours. • Ensure their child's regular attendance • Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning. • Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
Teachers have a right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment • Be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student 	Teachers have a responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively • Know the content they teach • Know their students • Plan and assess for effective learning • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments • Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning • Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the school's policies • Complete professional development on contemporary teaching and learning and student management practices

Murrayville Community College

Student Welfare Policy

Shared Expectations

Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Murrayville Community College has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

The school's values are consistent with the Australian Government's nine values for Australian schools, which are:

- *Care and Compassion* - care for self and others
- *Integrity* - act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
- *Doing Your Best* - seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue, excel
- *Respect* - treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view
- *Fair Go* - pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
- *Responsibility* - be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
- *Freedom* - enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
- *Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion* - be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others
- *Honesty and Trustworthiness* - be honest, sincere and seek the truth

School expectations include:

- Inclusive teaching practices
- Accessible educational provision for all students
- Parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- Community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success
- Provision of appropriate student services
- Development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.

Restorative Practices

Murrayville Community College is committed to the use of restorative practices with students. Restorative Practices:

- Are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness (Bond et al 2001, Fuller 1999)
- Promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy (Hopkins 2002)
- Involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution (Braithwaite 2001b)
- Promote relationship management rather than behaviour management (Cameron & Thorsborne 2001)
- Separate the deed from the doer (Marshall et al 2002)
- Are systematic, not situational (Armstrong 2004)
- Are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied (Morrison 2002)

Murrayville Community College

Student Welfare Policy

Diversity in the school community

The school aims to address diversity by:

- Maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are able to meet the needs of a diverse school community
- Attracting highly skilled and diverse staff, making the school a preferred employer
- Increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce
- Enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs
- Creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems

School Actions and Consequences

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- Establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- Ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole-school expectations
- Providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- Consistently acknowledging all students
- Empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- Understanding the student's background and needs
- Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by students and teachers
- Providing consistent school and classroom environments
- Continuously building student learning on what has been previously learned

Broader support strategies will include:

- Involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- Involving the form teacher, welfare coordinator, managed individual pathways coordinator or careers coordinator
- Tutoring/peer tutoring
- Mentoring and/or counselling
- Convening circle time meetings – circle time is an important component of problem-solving around conflict
- Developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- Providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts
- Involving community support agencies

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

Refer to Student Code of Conduct Policy

Murrayville Community College

Student Welfare Policy

References

Student Engagement – Inclusion Guidance 2014	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eeo/eeoact.htm
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543/Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf

Evaluation

When First Approved: October 2010

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