

Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy

To be read in conjunction with
Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance – Student Engagement Policy Guidelines

Preamble

The **Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy** is central to actively supporting the on-going growth of students within their learning environment. Such growth will best occur within a caring, secure and well managed environment where there is positive recognition for student achievement and positive learning behaviour is displayed.

Rationale

Epping Secondary College is a co-educational college in the far northern suburbs of Melbourne. The surrounding area has seen substantial growth in industry and infrastructure over the past fifteen years. Recent planning initiatives in the City of Whittlesea have seen rapid growth in housing around South Morang, Mernda and Epping.

The student population is 974 with approximately the same number of boys as girls. The main feeder schools are Meadowglen, Epping and Epping Views Primary Schools, and the 2014 Year 7 enrolment was 193 students. In addition to these four local schools, Year 7 students enrolled from 24 other primary schools. Approximately 25% of the school community receive the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

The college is a harmonious multi-cultural community with staff and students from a range of backgrounds. Whilst most students are Australian born, there are a variety of nationalities represented in the student population.

A comprehensive VCE program and a VET in Schools program is in operation. The college runs an alternative Pathways program for Year 10 students to address the needs of students exploring a range of pathways. The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is well established at both Intermediate and Senior levels.

There are currently seventy eight teaching staff and twenty nine non-teaching staff at the college. Many of the staff have made a long-term commitment to the college.

Community Focus electives have been offered at Year 9 and the college is running the Advance Program in conjunction with the local Country Fire Authority (CFA).

Learning for Life is the college motto and is the foundation upon which the college programs continue to be developed. Student learning is the core purpose of the college and continuing improvement in student performance and attendance levels, the learning environment, and staff / student relationships are central to the endeavours of the college community.

Whole School Engagement Statement

At Epping Secondary College we aim to provide a pleasant, safe and secure environment where teachers, parents and students value each other, work together to improve and excel, and treat each other fairly.

The college aims to develop students' self-discipline, positive learning behaviours, responsibility, sense of fairness, and co-operation, through Rights which are protected by Responsibilities. Underpinning all of this are our College values of:

These are the established, agreed upon College values which guide all college policy. They help encourage and promote:

- the development of high levels of self-esteem, self-discipline, honesty and a desire to learn and take responsibility for their own behaviour and appearance.
- the desire and commitment to strive and to excel in all they do
- respect for other members of the college community and the rights of others to learn in a safe, supportive, non-discriminatory and secure environment.
- each individual to take pride in their physical environment, respecting the college's property and the property of others.
- the creation of an effective partnership between the college, home and the broader community.

The following definitions and behaviours assist in illustrating how these values manifest themselves in **Positive Learning Behaviours**:

COMMITMENT

This value means...

Persevering and giving it your best shot, realising that we can work through difficulties and understanding that challenges are a normal part of life.

Behaviours which demonstrate this:

- Giving 100%, not giving up and always striving for improvement
- Being punctual at all times including for class, meetings, sport and assemblies
- Attending regularly, attending all classes and with correct equipment
- Following instructions and being prepared to take on responsibilities and leadership tasks
- within the school
- Setting goals and showing enthusiasm and dedication
- Taking time to do things well
- Believing in ourselves and each other
- Taking appropriate risks
- Being responsible for our learning and our behaviours

FAIRNESS

This value means...

Being just and sensitive in our treatment of others.

Behaviours which demonstrate this:

- Giving everyone a chance
- When wanting someone's attention waiting our turn
- Making sure our working noise and yard noise does not interfere with the learning of others
- When moving around the college, doing so in an orderly manner without disturbing others
- Always recognising and valuing that we are all different

RESPECT

This value means...

Being considerate of others and their property and treating others the way that we would like to be treated.

Behaviours which demonstrate this:

- Following rules and expectations
- Taking care of others' property
- Being polite and considerate
- Being accepting of others and their differences
- Never putting others down (sexism, racism, harassment and bullying)
- Listening to others
- Considering other people's feelings and opinions and sharing ideas and

- materials
- Acknowledging and greeting others
- Showing pride in ourselves and our school

HONESTY

This value means...

Being sincere, genuine, open and truthful to ourselves and to other members of our school community.

Behaviours which demonstrate this:

- Being reliable and responsible
- Owning up for our actions and apologising for our mistakes
- Communicating honestly and openly and not spreading rumours
- Maintaining confidence and keeping our promises

Rights & Responsibilities

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 fairly & with respect and dignity.

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

Rights and Responsibilities of Students, Teachers and Parents:

<p>Student Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the right to an effective learning environment the right to a safe and secure environment the right to be treated fairly and with respect. the right to fair settlement of problems 	<p>Student Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attend all classes and be punctual to respect others' opinions and work co-operatively to not disrupt the learning of others to care for others and protect property avoid put downs, sexism and racism to be honest in their interactions & dealings with other members of the college community
<p>Staff Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the right to teach the right to a safe and secure environment the right to be treated fairly the right to fair settlement of problems the right to advice from other staff and support services 	<p>Staff Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to plan relevant, interesting lessons and to cater for individuals' abilities and interests to communicate clear expectations to avoid put downs, sexism and racism to be a positive role model in terms of respect, fair treatment and resolving problems to attend meetings, share ideas, support others to encourage a positive and co-operative classroom atmosphere to follow the LBW policy and its implementation guidelines
<p>Parent/Guardian Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the right to be involved in their children's learning the right to be included in decision making the right to information in own language the right to expect children's safety in a secure environment 	<p>Parent/Guardian Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to send children to school & on time to support children in good study habits and to encourage learning to support school programs and policies to attend report nights, information evenings, meetings etc. to avoid put downs, sexism, and racism

One of the most common ways in which Students' Rights are violated and Responsibility is not accepted in schools is through **Bullying and Harassment**. **Epping Secondary College supports a ZERO TOLERANCE Bullying philosophy.**

What is Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying is usually the result of repeated behaviour but may sometimes occur as an isolated incident. Bullying behaviour causes someone to feel embarrassed, angry, unfairly treated, fearful, threatened, excluded or in pain. This may occur as an isolated incident or over an extended period of time.

Types of Bullying:

- **Physical Bullying**
Any intentional and unwelcome use of physical contact or deliberate property damage.
- **Verbal Bullying**
Use of language to threaten or hurt i.e. put downs/teasing.
- **Exclusion Bullying**
Leaving someone out on purpose to cause feelings of non-acceptance.
- **Racial/Religious Bullying**
Antagonism or prejudice directed towards someone on the basis of their race/religion.
- **Sexual Bullying/Harassment**
Any unwelcome and, or uninvited comments, attention, contact or behaviour of a sexual nature that is humiliating, offensive or intimidating.
- **Gesture Bullying**
Use of non-verbal signals to cause intimidation, fear or belittle. Includes copying or inviting others to copy someone.
- **Extortion Bullying**
Students bullying others into giving up possessions, food, drink etc. This can extend as far as getting students to participate in criminal activity.
- **Cyber Bullying**
Use of email, computers, mobile phones, phones or faxes to spread rumours, cause intimidation and fear or sexually harass. This may include inappropriate use of someone else's image through mobile cameras and/or the internet.

At Epping Secondary College Bullying must be reported! It everyone's right and responsibility to report Harassment and Bullying whether it happens to you or someone else. As a college we will not allow cases of bullying or harassment to go unreported but will speak up, even at risk to ourselves.

What should you do if you are being bullied?

Talk to a member of the school community with whom you feel comfortable:
Homegroup
Teacher, Class Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Assistant Principal.

Procedures and consequences:

It is important that bullying behaviour is not ignored. It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to act when it occurs, by informing a Teacher, Wellbeing Coordinator or Assistant Principal of any bullying they have experienced or

witnessed.

All reports are treated confidentially. The victim and person/s reported are then interviewed. If it is a first report/complaint and the incident is not serious, work is done with the students to empathise with their victim, which includes a sincere apology. The report and perpetrator is put into the 'Bully Register', given a warning and acted on only if another incident occurs.

If the initial incident is serious it is dealt with under the 'School Wellbeing Policy'. If the incident is not deemed as serious then there is a focus on getting the students together to work on sharing responsibility for changing behaviours so that the sense of bullying does not continue. Restorative Justice approaches are applied and the emphasis is on how participants *feel* as a result of reported incidents and agreement for change is recorded.

A second incident of reported bullying in the bully register incurs an **administration detention**. A third incident will incur a suspension. A fourth incident will result in a **parent meeting and further serious consequences which may include review of enrolment and/or expulsion**.

Shared
Expectations

Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Schools have 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 of **Honesty, Respect, Fairness & Commitment** are based on the Australian Government's nine values for Australian schools, which are:

1. **Care and Compassion**
Care for self and others
2. **Integrity**
Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
3. **Doing Your Best**
Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
4. **Respect**
Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view
5. **Fair Go**
Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
6. **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
7. **Freedom**
Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
8. **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion**
Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

9. **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

The school 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).

Diversity in the school community

The school aims to address diversity by:

- maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better 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

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