

WELLBEING POLICY

"Each Mercy Secondary School strives to reflect in its structures, curriculum and practices and in the quality of the relationships within it, the particular spirit of mercy that Jesus lived and taught. Each school endeavours to reflect its commitment to these values by expressing its unity and solidarity with the poor, the unemployed, the distressed and the marginalised through its service to the community. Through their faithfulness to the spirit of Catherine McAuley's vision, Mercy schools work to provide a Catholic Education which enables the formation of the whole person imbued with those values which Catherine exemplified."

Academy of Mary Immaculate

RATIONALE

The aim of the Wellbeing Policy for the Academy of Mary Immaculate is to ensure that all students are able to develop spiritually, academically, psychologically, socially and physically in an environment, which is safe and conducive to learning. Moreover, this policy seeks to ensure the wellbeing of staff by providing the necessary support so that they can fulfil their roles effectively.

The College expects students, parents and staff to observe the College regulations in a spirit of cooperation and respect for others. Our College must be a place where tolerance and acceptance become part of the human condition, where an individual can learn to disagree with another's actions or attributes without rejecting the person; where one can acknowledge another's limitations or abilities without the need to seek revenge or envy; where one can fail and yet succeed. All this must be done knowing that we are all made in the image, and likeness, of God (Gen 1:27) and this calls for a deep respect for the innate dignity and uniqueness of the individual.

Underpinning this policy are the six key Mercy values of respect, service, courage, hospitality, compassion, and justice all of which unite to form a safe and supportive teaching and learning environment.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Wellbeing Policy seeks to:

- Actively foster respect amongst and between all members of the College community
- Promote tolerance, acceptance and mercy for all individuals
- Develop a safe, supportive, and inclusive teaching and learning environment
- Encourage positive behaviours/relationships towards all members of the community
- Honour the philosophy and implementation of restorative practices

GUIDELINES

Wellbeing is promoted in the following ways:

- The implementation, review and evaluation of wellbeing programs
- Timetabled positive education and extended homeroom lessons which focus on developing students socially, emotionally and psychologically
- Consistent contact, correspondence, and engagement with parents and families in supporting student welfare
- Employment of trained, skilled and experienced staff
- Collaboration of staff in providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum
- The development of effective and rigorous risk-management strategies and policies
- The continued development, review and evaluation of a broad curriculum
- The provision of professional learning opportunities for staff

STUDENT WELLBEING

Students are encouraged to be aware of and accept both their rights and their responsibilities to themselves and to other members of the College community as outlined in the College's Code of Conduct. College rules and corrective action encourage students to "... progressively grow in their capacity to exercise moral judgement, democratic values and a concern for the common good." (CEO Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools p.6).

When students fail in their responsibilities, there will be consequences; however, at the same time the College recognises the right of students to be given opportunities to improve their behaviour and to experience forgiveness. Under the auspices of Restorative Practices, in issuing consequences, parents/guardians are invited to be part of the process so that an active and participatory partnership is developed in not only catering for the student's wellbeing but teaching them to understand their responsibilities in being respectful, just, tolerant, and compassionate members of the College community. Staff are also expected to engage in positive talk about the students in their care and to celebrate the successes the students achieve.

Prior Knowledge meetings are conducted at the start of each year in which students who experience impediments to their educational wellbeing are highlighted by members of the Student Wellbeing Team. The information presented at these meetings will be reviewed and evaluated with any updates being made available to staff.

Additional Learning Needs assistance is made available to students who struggle academically. To that end, tasks and assessment items are modified and learning support via withdrawal from mainstream classes is provided to cater for the learning needs of individual students.

Celebration of student achievement is sought at all times both formally and informally. Student achievement celebrates performance, effort and attitude and is thus highly accessible. In particular, the Student of the Term Award is given to a nominated student in each year level at the College Term Assemblies. These awards are not exclusive to the highest academically achieving student; such an award is open to all students in the College.

Given that wellbeing is not mutually exclusive from the teaching and learning that takes place in the College, programs are developed by the Student Wellbeing Team with a view to preparing the students to navigate the contemporary landscape in which they live. These programs are delivered within timetabled Extended Homeroom (Years 9-12) and Positive Education (Years 7 & 8) periods. The College's Wellbeing programs seek to promote "positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience" (*Pastoral Care of Students*, Policy 2.26, CEM). These programs are evaluated and revised according to student needs on an annual basis.

The College actively engages parents through consistent and clear communication with parents in developing a participatory partnership that serves the overall wellbeing of the students in our care.

The College also has a fulltime College Counsellor who is available for students to access at any time. Additionally, the students have access to a Careers Practitioner who helps students with the transition to post-school opportunities.

STAFF WELLBEING

The College recognises that as important as it is to develop students' wellbeing, it is also imperative that staff wellbeing remains a key focus. As a College, we continually strive to support staff in their work with a view to maximising their talents and abilities.

A key part of this involves providing support for staff in not only continually developing their teaching and work capabilities, but also catering for their spiritual, social, emotional psychological and physical wellbeing.

Moreover, transparent, consultative, and consistent approaches to policy implementation is created by open communication between the Senior Leadership Team and the staff.

Staff are supported in their work by the provision of various professional learning opportunities designed to empower and motivate them. These opportunities are provided within the College on Professional Learning Days and staff are supported to engage with opportunities presented by external agencies in growing their own capacities.

For teachers with classes of excessively large numbers, in-lieu time is offered on a per-semester basis. The College's annual Spirituality Day provides an opportunity to lend spiritual support in encouraging them to reflect on their own selves and the vocation of teaching and working in a Catholic school. It is designed to provide some respite from the rigour of the busyness of the school environment.

The College has a Staff Consultative Committee in which relevant staff issues and concerns are raised and addressed in a timely manner.

Staff who are experiencing personal difficulty are offered access to the Employee Assistance Program, a work-based intervention program designed to enhance the emotional, mental, and general psychological wellbeing of all employees and includes services for immediate family members. Staff also have access to the College Counsellor should the need arise.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Policy 2.26 *Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools*, Catholic Education Office, Melbourne found at:

<http://www.cem.edu.au/publications-policies/policy/policy-2.26-pastoral-care-of-students-in-catholic-schools/>

Leading School-Wide Wellbeing & Resilience for Student and Staff Success found at:

http://www.acu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/89913/Leading_Schoolwide_Wellbeing__and__Resilience.pdf

Revision History

Version	Author	Description of Changes	Release Date	Review Date
1	Paul Finneran		May 2017	December 2017