INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY POLICY

	Help for non-English speakers
Interpreter	If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the School by telephoning 03 9376 1622.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain Mount Alexander College's commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity. This policy should be read alongside the following Department of Education and Training policies:

- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students
- For staff, the Respectful Workplaces policies (including Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying) as these whole of Department policies apply to all staff at Mount Alexander College.

2. DEFINITIONS

- **Personal attribute** - a personal characteristic that is protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. These include: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious belief or activity, political belief or activity, age, intersex status, physical features, pregnancy, carer and parental status, breastfeeding, marital or relationship status, lawful sexual activity, employment activity, industrial activity, expunged homosexual conviction or personal association with anyone who is identified with reference to any protected attribute.

- **Direct discrimination** - unfavourable treatment because of a person's protected attribute.

- **Indirect discrimination** - imposing an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that disadvantages a person or group of people with a protected attribute.

- **Sexual harassment** - unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature towards another person which could reasonably be expected to make that other person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It may be physical, verbal, visual or written.

- **Disability harassment** - an action taken in relation to the person's disability that is reasonably likely, in all the circumstances, to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress the person.

- **Vilification** - conduct that incites hatred towards or revulsion or severe ridicule of a person or group of people on the basis of their race or religion.

- **Victimisation** - subjecting a person or threatening to subject them to detrimental treatment because they (or their associate) has made an allegation of discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected attribute (or asserted their rights under relevant policies or law).

3. SCOPE

The school is committed to creating a school community where all members of our school community are welcomed, accepted and treated equitably and with respect regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes such as race, language, religious beliefs, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve and thrive at school.

4. POLICY

Mount Alexander College strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment which values the human rights of all students and staff.

Mount Alexander College welcomes all students, staff and families and recognises that we are all different and, regardless of this difference, we treat each other with respect and dignity.

At Mount Alexander College, learning occurs in a safe, positive, vibrant, well-connected and dynamic context that engages and empowers students to achieve their potential. This is underpinned by respectful

relationships and a commitment to impartiality and equity. Students are known at Mount Alexander. They are warmly welcomed into our caring community through a comprehensive induction program. Pastoral care and wellbeing is addressed through the House Mentoring Program and daily classroom teacher and Wellbeing and Engagement Team (Heads of House) observations.

Our vertical curriculum structure allows students to select subjects that they are passionate about regardless of their year level. This makes it possible for a Year 8 student to undertake a Pre VCE or VCE subject. Each student's individual learning plan is developed in consultation with course counsellors and parents. Our ethos of student voice based teaching and learning ensures students are active participants in the construction of subjects offered. While complying with mandated content to meet VCAA, VET or VCAL requirements, options that coincide with students' passions and interests are still accommodated. This makes for well engaged, passionate learners who look forward to school every day. It is also contributing to our rapidly increasing enrolments.

Continuous reporting via Compass enables parents/guardians to keep well informed about student learning progress. Teachers provide reports every six weeks using software that graphs achievement in each subject over the year. Access to the best technology for each learning task is provided through the Bring Your Own Device program. We intend to work actively with the local community and be seen as the school of choice in the area for providing an education that is accessible and equal for all; a core tenant of public education. On a system level we intend to foster communities of collaboration and cooperation rather than competition.

In 2022 the College has an enrolment of 630 and the staffing profile consists of 2 Principal Class, 45 teaching staff and 21 Education Support staff.

The school community is currently comprised of:

- 48.35% of students were born overseas
- 4.42% have a disability
- 1.74% are refugees
- 1.1% of students have an indigenous background
- 12 are International students

The school acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community and we will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others. At Mount Alexander College we value the human rights of every student and we take our obligations under anti-discrimination laws and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities seriously.

The school will:

- Recognise the range of diverse student and family attributes and pay attention to:
  - cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
  - the needs of students with disability and responses to disability
  - the needs of students from diverse religious and cultural communities
  - the impact of prior trauma
  - gender differences
  - the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
  - challenges for students who are in foster care, out of home care, living away from home or international students
  - students experiencing pregnancy or who are young parents
  - socio-economic factors including experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, low educational attainment, mental health issues, remote or regional isolation).
- Actively nurture and promote a culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that students are not discriminated against (directly or indirectly) and where necessary, are reasonably accommodated to participate in their education and school activities including all extracurricular activities on the same basis as their peers.
- Acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students

- Encourage empathy and fairness towards others.
- Challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices.
- Contribute to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students.
- Respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that students are not victimised and feel heard.
- Teach students about inclusion and diversity through the House Mentoring Program.
- Teach and model respect for diversity in the school community through our School Wide Positive Behaviours and restorative practices.
- Develop and implement curriculum that acknowledges and caters for the diverse learning needs of students, is inclusive and promotes equal access.
- Promote and celebrate diversity days including, but not limited to: Eid al-Adha, Harmony Week, Cultural Diversity Week, National Reconciliation Week, Naidoc Week, IDAHOBT.
- Pay attention to diverse student cohorts and individuals in our community, recognising that they may have higher risk of harm.
- Normalise asking for and using people's preferred pronouns and names for students.
- Communicate that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated – if incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, address the incident in line with school policy.
- Let students know that they can raise concerns or report incidents that occurred at school and outside the school.
- Check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. This can occur at pick-up or drop-off, at parent teacher interviews or through informal discussions.
- Engage genuinely with students. Find out what matters to them, what they know and don't know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe.
- Validate students' feelings. Students may feel that they have not been listened to or believed in the past.
- Offer buddying and mentoring for students who are at risk of social isolation.
- Discuss how students feel about discussing their personal circumstances and respect their wishes. Note: (that) where staff or volunteers have formed a reasonable belief that sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare, they may be required to share information despite the wishes of the student that their information remain confidential.
- Take a holistic approach when responding to family violence.
- Respond to family violence in a way that is accessible, culturally responsive, safe, child-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

Reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities

Mount Alexander College also understands that it has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist students with disabilities to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities in consultation with the student, their parents or carers, their teachers and if appropriate, their treating practitioners. The school may consult through Student Support Group processes and in other less formal ways. For more information about support available for students with disabilities, and communicating with us in relation to a student's disability, refer to the school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy or contact the Student Wellbeing Coordinator for further information.

5. COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Reminders in school newsletters
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

6. FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Mount Alexander College policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- Statement of Values & School Philosophy Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy

- available online http://www.mountalexandercollege.vic.edu.au/about-mac/school-policies/

Department of Education and Training resources:

- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights — Students Policy
  https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity-human-rights-students/policy
- Respectful Workplaces Policy
  https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/respectful-workplaces/overview
- DET Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy
  https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity/policy-and-guidelines
- DET Sexual Harassment Policy
  https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/sexual-harassment/policy-and-guidelines
- DET Workplace Bullying Policy
  https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-bullying/policy

7. POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed:	August 2022
Consultation:	Consultation on this policy has included school management and staff, student leadership team and the School Council.
Approved by:	Principal - Dani Angelico – August 3rd, 2022
Next scheduled review date:	August 2025 Note: the review cycle is 3 years (or earlier if required).