



PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

RATIONALE

Melba College believes that parents are valuable contributors and participants in the life of our community and we aim to work in partnership with parents in the care and growth of each student. The purpose of this policy is to:

- outline the Melba College expectations of parental conduct and behaviour
- ensure a respectful learning environment that is open, welcoming, inclusive, safe, positive and supportive for all students, staff and visitors of the College.
- ensure all members of the College community have a right to an environment free from disrespectful, intimidating, offensive or harassing behaviour and to converse comfortably in a positive and co-operative manner.

SCOPE

The Melba College Parent Code of Conduct provides clear guidelines to all parents and visitors regarding the conduct expected of them whilst on the College premises, engaging in College related activities or representing the College. This policy applies to all adults including parents, carers, step-parents, grandparents, extended family members and caregivers. In the policy, the word “parents” applies to all caregivers listed above and applies to all matters relating to Melba College.

COLLEGE VALUES

At Melba College we provide a stimulating, nurturing and challenging environment where the values of respect and integrity are central to the life of the College. Our students are challenged to pursue their passions and develop their strengths. Our focus is on the development of the whole person: academic, emotional, social, creative and physical, with personal achievements across all areas of endeavour being acknowledged and celebrated.

These values are fostered by our professional, passionate and highly capable staff who have a genuine love of learning and an interest in our students and their personal pursuit of excellence. Our staff abide by a Staff Code of Conduct.

The conduct of the staff is regulated by:

- The Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct for Teachers, and/or
- The Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees
- Our school and Department of Education and Training policies

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTAL CONDUCT

All parents and friends of students enrolled at Melba College are expected to support and uphold the values, activities and ethos of the College. Parents are encouraged to read and understand the policies of Melba College (including this Parent Code of Conduct) and must act in accordance with the College’s policies at all times.

Melba College has a zero tolerance policy regarding violence of any kind, including fighting, assault, threats of violence or any form of threatening language, gestures or conduct.

Members of the Melba College community will respect diversity in people, their ideas and opinions, their legal and moral rights and treat others fairly, with dignity and respect at all times regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. College community members should acknowledge good performance and efforts of all participants (including the opposition) in any co-curricular activities.

Inappropriate language, sledging or harassment of staff will not be tolerated at any time. Parents are asked to respect the privacy of other students, parents, staff, contractors and volunteers in the College community.. Parents are also asked not to take a photo or video recording of another student or parent without their consent.

When attending Melba College or any College related event, parents are asked to:

- behave lawfully, and observe the terms of any court orders in place
- refrain from smoking
- not be intoxicated by alcohol
- not be in possession of, under the influence of, or provide others with, illegal drugs

- behave with courtesy and consideration for others
- refrain from all forms of bullying and harassment
- respect College property and the property of staff, contractors, volunteers and other students.

In addition, when visiting Melba College:

- parents will comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place at our school and in the event of an emergency, while they are on school grounds, will follow the instructions given by any member of school staff.
- parents may not discipline a child who is not their own or speak to a child who is not their own about their behaviour. This is the role of teaching staff. Being approached by an adult they do not know can be distressing for children. Parents should therefore raise any behavioural, bullying or peer group issues with a member of the teaching staff and it is the teacher's responsibility to deal with these issues. (Common sense would apply in an emergency where a child is at risk of harm or where a parent is supervising a small group of students on an excursion).
- parent may not interrupt or distract a teacher while classroom instruction or learning activities are underway.
- attending any kind of school assembly or public meeting parents will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff, and will refrain from creating any noise or disturbance during performances or speeches by students, staff or visitors. Parents who deliberately distract or disrespect school staff or students during assembly may be asked to leave.
- parents will treat all other visitors to our school, including Members of Parliament and representatives of the Education Department, with courtesy and respect.
- classrooms, parents accept the authority of the teacher (or teachers) and that they are in attendance on the teacher's terms.

Melba College values parental involvement and assistance, but teaching staff may ask a parent to leave the classroom or class activity for any reason, but not limited to:

- parental assistance not being required at the time;
- parental assistance in the classroom or at the activity is disturbing or distracting to any student or teacher;
- the parent not being in control of their emotions.

COMMUNICATION

When communicating with school staff all school staff are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of all students as well as staff themselves.

Parents should ensure that their communication with Melba College staff are constructive and respectful. The priority for school staff is the welfare and education of all students in the school, therefore:

- all emails and telephone calls are to be directed to the school's email address unless requested to communicate directly with a coordinator or Principal. School staff are not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously.
- if the matter is urgent the most efficient means of communication is a telephone call to the school so we can assess the priority and respond in a timely manner.
- normal service standards suggest that an appointment should be made with the appropriate person where possible unless it is an emergency.
- where possible parents are asked to schedule an appointment with College staff when they wish to discuss a concern
- the time available for parents to meet with staff is limited and must be scheduled at a time that does not disrupt the classroom. Parents should be mindful of the teacher's time, communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the teacher time to prepare, unless there is a genuine emergency that needs to be discussed.

When communicating with the Melba College School Council:

- parents should recognise that Melba College school council members are volunteers who support the Principal to provide the best possible outcomes for all students. School Councils are responsible for governance and oversight, but are not responsible for day to day operations. As such, when issues arise with the day to day operations of the school these queries should be directed to the school and/or the Principal not the school council representatives.
- feedback from parents and correspondence to school council should be forwarded to the school's email address, the school council president's email address or in letter format. It will then be tabled and discussed at the next school council meeting if it is a matter that falls within the scope of school council's powers and functions. If it relates to an operational matter for the school, the letter will be tabled and noted but not discussed as it will be re-directed to school staff for appropriate response.
- parents are welcome to attend Melba College council meetings. The basis upon which parents may attend and speak at school council meetings is set out in Schools Policy Advisory Guide – 'School Councils' and 'Improving School Governance', and parents are expected to comply with the rulings of the chairperson at any meeting which they attend.

When communicating with other Melba College parents, we ask that:

- parents respect the privacy of other parents' email addresses and not to send any unsolicited emails or 'spam' to school parents or forward unsolicited emails or spam that they receive to other parents.
- parents not to forward other parent's email addresses without their permission. (Parents provide their email addresses to the school in order to receive communications from the school about school related matters and their child.)
- respect be given to parents who act as school representatives, fundraising coordinators and fundraising committee members. They are valued volunteers who play a critical role in our College community and commit a great deal of time for the benefit of all. Apart from the general principles that always apply, parents should be sensitive about the manner in which they provide feedback and ask questions of hardworking volunteers.

Melba College will not give out the email address of parents to other parents.

Written and spoken communication to anyone in the College community should be courteous and respectful.

Where parents do not act in accordance with this Parent Code of Conduct in their communications, a Melba College staff member may:

- request that the parent cease their inappropriate communication in order to allow the communication to proceed
- inform the parent that unless the inappropriate communication ceases, the staff member may put an end to the phone call, meeting or discussion
- request another staff member be present for the remainder of the meeting
- request the Principal or Assistant Principal of the College to escort the parent from the College grounds.

ONLINE CONDUCT

When using social media, online forums or other platforms, parents are asked to:

- be respectful to staff, contractors, volunteers, other parents, and/or students
- not use it as a means to voice grievances about Melba College
- make reasonable efforts to ensure that their children comply with the Melba College's Information Communication & Technology policies
- not post a photo or video recording of another student or parent on social media without consent
- not post photographs of students in Melba College uniform representing the College and its students if they have the potential to bring negative connotations towards Melba College, its staff and students.
- not engage in any form of cyber bullying or cyber abuse. Cyber bullying and/or cyber abuse will not be tolerated by Melba College.

BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The consequences of a breach of this policy by a member of the Melba College community will be determined at the discretion of the Principal. Any parent, member of school staff or student may notify the Principal or Assistant Principal of a possible breach of the Parent Code of Conduct. The Principal or Assistant Principal will investigate the complaint and if satisfied that a breach has occurred Melba College may:

- utilise mediation and counselling services
- consider alternative communication strategies being applied
- issue a formal notice preventing entry onto school premises or attendance at school activities.
- seek an intervention order being sought
- provide a first and final warning that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred and that a further breach will not be tolerated;
- where the breach concerned unacceptable behaviour on a visit to the school, issue a trespass warning to the parent, which, if the behaviour continues, may accelerate to a trespass notice requiring the parent to stay away from the school unless on the school grounds with the express permission of the Principal or Assistant Principal
- inform the police which may result in a charge of trespass or assault.

Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, because of the language and expression used or the manner in which it is sent or delivered, will not be responded to.

Correspondence which is defined as 'vexatious' according to the Complaints and Grievances Policy will not be responded to. Nothing in this policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect of obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.

The Principal or Assistant Principal may further:

- direct that any member of the Melba College community communicate with staff only through a nominated representative
- involve other authorities, where appropriate. The College may determine other reasonable action (e.g. mediation) according to the nature of the breach.

- In the case of extreme, repeated or prolonged breach of this Code of Conduct by a parent, Melba College may refer the matter to the Legal Unit of the Department of Education and Training.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Parents have the right to raise issues and concerns related to the education of their child or school matters.

Melba College takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. Parents have the right to raise issues and concerns related to the education of their child or other matters relating to the College. In raising a complaint or grievance, parents can expect:

- to be listened to respectfully and communicated with courteously
- to have confidentiality respected and maintained
- to receive a timely response to concerns raised. Parents with a complaint or grievance should refer to the College’s Complaints and Grievances Policy.

Parents should ensure that they raise their issues and concerns with the right person and follow the correct communication channels. When making a complaint parents should refer to:

- the Melba College Complaints and Grievances Policy, which is available on the school website; and
- the Department of Education and Training Complaints policy, which is available on its website.

It is a breach of this Parent Code of Conduct to make a complaint in a way that is not consistent with the school Complaints and Grievances Policy, especially when the complaint is about a teacher or member of school staff.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Other school policies that are relevant to parent conduct:

- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Legislation that is relevant to parent conduct:

- Working with Children Act

Policy Reviewed by School Council	Person Responsible for Policy	Next School Council Review
2019	Assistant Principal - Accountabilities	2022