



# INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY POLICY

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain St Albans Secondary College's commitment to developing and sustaining a positive, safe and caring learning environment in which every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity and feels connected protected and respected. We strive to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for all students and members of our school community.

Any form of discrimination or harassment is unacceptable at St Albans Secondary College. The Inclusion and Diversity Policy applies within the college, while travelling to or from school or while engaged in any official school sanctioned activity or event.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The College is committed to creating a school community where all members acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community. We will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others.

We promote a school community in which everybody feels valued, respected and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood, and accepted.

We acknowledge our role as educators, peers and role models to provide a positive and safe place where our students are free to explore themselves and their world, and to practise the skills necessary for them to become fully educated, aware, compassionate and empowered citizens.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community have the right to feel comfortable and safe, and the responsibility to contribute to the comfort and safety of others.

Everyone has a responsibility to develop empathy for the wellbeing of others.

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This policy supports the requirements and principles of the following laws and documents:

- Equal Opportunity Act, Victoria
- Anti-Discrimination Act (Federal & State)
- Supporting Sexual Diversity in Schools
- Respectful Relationships in Education

### **St Albans Secondary College's:**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- College Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Student management policy
- Individual Needs policy

### **The Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide:**

- [Inclusive Education](#)
- [Koorie Education](#)
- [Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture](#)
- [Gender Identity](#)

- [Safe Schools](#)
- [Supports and Services](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

#### Other DET Resources

- Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/marrung.aspx>
- Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/multicultural/Pages/koorieculture.aspx>

## DEFINITIONS

**Personal attribute:** a feature of a person's background or personal characteristics that is protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation, for example: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion etc.

**Discrimination:** Acts of discrimination closely parallel acts of bullying. They are behaviours that are designed to hurt individuals and isolate them from their peers and community. It creates a risk to another person's health and safety, either psychologically or physically, or their property, reputation or social acceptance. Acts of discrimination against a person can include:

**Racism:** This refers to prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race. Racism includes:

- o making "jokes" or stating negative comments about a particular ethnic group
- o calling others racist names or verbally abusing them
- o bullying, hassling or intimidating others because of their race
- o writing racist graffiti/words on books and public places
- o making offensive comments online
- o excluding others from groups based on their race

**Sexism:** This refers to prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different sex (typically towards women and girls). It is often related to stereotypes and gender roles, and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another.

**Homophobic and Transphobic Language:** This refers to any derogatory language (written or verbal) used to intentionally discriminate against people who are, or are assumed to be, same sex attracted, gender questioning or transitioning. This includes, but is not limited to, name calling such as 'fag' and 'dyke' but also phrases such as 'that's so gay.' It also includes discrimination directed against someone on the basis of their gender identity.

**Direct Discrimination:** This refers to any spoken, written (including online), or physical behaviour of a discriminatory nature. It refers to any action in which someone is treated differently because of their background or personal attributes.

**Indirect Discrimination:** This is often carried out behind the targeted person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect discrimination can be verbal or written, including via email, text messaging, or social media and includes:

- o lying and spreading rumours
- o playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- o mimicking
- o excluding someone or encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- o damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
- o speaking or writing defamatory comments about a person's sexuality or perceived sexuality.

**By-Stander:** This involves being a spectator to any form of discriminatory action, and not intervening or speaking out. Being a by-stander means the person is ignoring their community responsibility to contribute to the safety and wellbeing of others.

## INDICATORS OF DISCRIMINATION

Students who are experiencing acts of discrimination may show some or all of the following signs:

- unwilling to go to school.
- become withdrawn, and refuse to say what is wrong.
- begin to do poorly in school work.
- presenting regularly with damaged clothes or possessions.
- have unexplained scratches or bruises.
- cry themselves to sleep or have nightmares.
- refuse to work in a particular group, or sit next to a particular student.
- demonstrate mood swings.
- become withdrawn from social activities with peers.
- avoid eye contact with adults during conversations.

## IMPLEMENTATION

St Albans Secondary College will:

- ensure that all students and members of our school community are treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that students are not discriminated against and, where necessary, are accommodated to participate in education and all school activities (e.g. school sports, concerts, assemblies and events) 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.

All members of the College community will be made aware of this policy through:

- the promotion of an environment that celebrates diversity (racial, cultural, sexual and gender diversity) through the use of media (posters, brochures), presentations at assemblies and discussions in classrooms.
- conducting staff PD to provide teachers with knowledge and resources on how to respond to discriminatory (including sexism, racism, homophobic and transphobic) language in the classroom, and create a safe and supportive school environment for students and staff.
- publishing articles in the school newsletter to highlight the school's commitment to equal opportunity and the provision of a safe, supportive non-discriminatory environment.
- within the context of a proactive whole school approach to health and wellbeing, conducting classroom workshops for students to develop an inclusive attitude.
- developing and maintaining links with community organisations that can provide support to same sex attracted and gender diverse students, and referring students to these services where appropriate.
- supporting students with disabilities to receive the necessary adjustments to curriculum and school activities to participate equally with their peers.
- scheduling and supporting school activities and initiatives which challenge homophobia/transphobia and which celebrate an acceptance of diversity and the rights of individuals such as: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia Biphobia and Intersexism (IDAHOTB Day), Multicultural day/s, International Women's Day, R U OK Day, National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence and NAIDOC Week activities.

Note: Our membership of Safe Schools Coalition will be maintained to provide ongoing access to resources and information.

## INTERVENTION

Discriminatory behaviour should be treated in the same way as any other inappropriate behaviour in the classroom. The teacher should employ a 'Hierarchy of Consequences' to encourage the student to modify their behaviour and contribute positively to the classroom

environment. The consequences should be scaffolded to deal with repeated non-compliance of the student and the severity of their actions.

What the staff/school will do:

- Staff should challenge racism, sexism, homophobic, transphobic and discriminatory language every time they hear it and name the issue. For example: "That comment is homophobic."
- Refer to school policy or classroom agreement: For example: "Our school has made an agreement of zero tolerance to sexism/racism/homophobic/transphobic language and discriminatory behaviour".
- Staff should give consequences for racism, sexism, homophobic transphobic and discriminatory language and acts of discrimination. Refer to the Student Management Policy for further information.
- Staff should support positive discussions around sexual and gender diversity and always intervene in inappropriate discussion.
- If the actions are serious, or are repeated behaviour, report the incident to Year Level Coordinator.

\*\*Always ensure that the victim is supported and if you have concerns about their wellbeing refer them to the Year Level Coordinator.

#### **Year Level Coordinator Action:**

- Discuss the incident with the reporting teacher.
- Interview all students involved in incident and record all details of the interview.
- Inform both the student at fault and, if appropriate, the victim's parents of the incident and the involvement of their child.
- Check for prior reports. Repeat offenders will attract more severe action as outlined in the Student Management Policy.
- Decide if any further follow up is needed with parents, Wellbeing and PCOs. Convene a Student Support Group (SSG) if needed.
- Provide feedback on action taken to the teacher, and to other staff, if required.

#### **FALSE CLAIM**

If it is found that a student has deliberately falsified an accusation of discrimination against another member of the school community, the accusing student will be dealt with as the offending student.

#### **REVIEW PERIOD**

This policy was last updated on **27 February 2019** and is scheduled for review in **February 2022**.