



ELTHAM HIGH SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT

Inclusion, Diversity and Respect

INTRODUCTION

Eltham High School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment that values the human rights of all students and staff. Our school values underpin all aspects of life at Eltham High School and are at the heart of the school's approach to managing safe behaviour and respectful relationships.

This policy aims to explain Eltham High School's commitment to making sure every member of our school community - regardless of their background or personal attributes - is treated with respect and dignity. For staff, this policy should be read alongside the Department of Education and Training's [Respectful Workplaces](#) policies (including [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#), [Sexual Harassment](#) and [Workplace Bullying](#)) as these Department policies apply to all staff within the Department of Education and Training.

PHILOSOPHY

Eltham High 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, neurodivergence, disability or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve and thrive at school.

Eltham High School acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community, and we will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that vilify, label, stereotype or demean others. At Eltham High School, we value the human rights of every student and staff member, and we take our obligations under anti-discrimination laws and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities seriously. Bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification and other forms of inappropriate behaviour targeting individuals or groups will not be tolerated at Eltham High School. We will take appropriate measures consistent with our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Prevention of Bullying* policies to respond to these behaviours at our school. Students who may have experienced or witnessed this type of behaviour are encouraged to speak up and to let their teachers, parents or carers know about those behaviours to ensure that inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.

The school is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all school community members. This commitment should be evident in everyday interactions, the language used within the school community, the curriculum, the messages displayed around the school and the physical environment.

Whilst we recognise the role that education settings can take in implementing cultural change, the involvement and commitment of the whole-school community are required to achieve a culture in which safe and respectful relationships are everyone's concern and responsibility.

POLICY STATEMENT

Eltham High School will:

- Actively promote equality and equity throughout our community and challenge stereotypes, attitudes, prejudice, structures and behaviours that lead to inequality. This is to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity.
- Acknowledge, accommodate, respond to and celebrate the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all members of our community.
- Safeguard students against discrimination so that they can fully engage and participate in all the educational opportunities offered to all students across the school.

- Promote the language of respect in the school environment; through interactions, the curriculum, and messages displayed in the school and through the physical environment.
- Facilitate teaching and learning in a calm and focused environment, supported by clear and consistent expectations made explicit to all.
- Manage lapses in expected behaviour and strained relationships in a restorative way.
- Respond to complaints and allegations in a timely and considered manner to avoid students being victimised.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

The school's approach to creating an environment characterised by safe behaviour and respectful relationships is underpinned by explicit education and clear expectations.

In defining these guidelines, Eltham High School aims to be explicit in the support for all members of our school community. Students experience inclusive education when they can access and fully participate in learning alongside their similar-aged peers, and are involved in making decisions about their education so that reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies can be tailored to meet their individual needs. Inclusion is embedded in all aspects of school life and is supported by culture, policies and everyday practices.

Support for members of our community from diverse backgrounds

These guidelines aim to support members of our school community:

Inclusive Language and gender affirmation

Eltham High School prides itself on being a school where all students, staff and community members feel safe to be themselves without prejudice or fear. We recognise that issues of gender identity are different to issues of sexual orientation. The school community has prioritised supporting our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex, queer, asexual and questioning (LGBTIQ+) members of our community and being respectful through the understanding and use of inclusive language. Language is inclusive when we use words in ways that demonstrate respect for how people describe themselves.

In support of gender diversity, Eltham High School provides support and training for all staff by communicating general information about the support and processes available for gender affirmation and specific information in support of students accessing this support when agreed to by that student. In addition to understanding the particular needs of the students in a classroom, there is encouragement for staff to de-gender language and activities in the classroom.

The Student Services team will work with students and their families at the appropriate time to develop a Student Support Plan – Gender Affirmation. The student will be at the centre of the process at all times and will have every opportunity to have a voice in all decisions made about their gender affirmation.

Reasonable adjustments for students with additional needs

Eltham High School recognises its responsibility to support students with additional needs and seeks to help students to be able to engage positively with the curriculum. The school understands that it has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with additional needs. A reasonable adjustment relates to a measure or action taken to assist students with additional needs to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers.

The school will develop an Individual Education Plan to outline information about the student and make this information available to teachers and support staff. The Individual Education Plan will be made for students with additional needs in consultation with the student, their parents or carers, their teachers, and their treating practitioners. The school may consult through Student Support Group processes and other less formal ways.

For more information about support available for students with disabilities and communicating with us about a student's disability, please refer to our school's Student Engagement Policy or contact the Additional Needs Coordinator for further information.

Students from culturally and linguistically diverse communities

We recognise the enduring traditions and cultures of First Nations People and also acknowledge the rich migrant heritage of our increasingly diverse society.

As a school, we are aware that racism can take many forms, such as jokes, comments or other forms of language use that cause offence or hurt, sometimes unintentionally; name-calling or verbal abuse; harassment or intimidation, or commentary in the media or online that inflames hostility towards certain groups. All of which can potentially result in acts of physical abuse and violence. The school's response to this is outlined in the Bullying Prevention policy.

We are committed to increasing everyone's understanding of the impact of racism, including unconscious bias and prejudice so that all school community members can feel welcomed, accepted, and treated equitably.

Culture of respect

All school community members have a right to work and learn in a safe and inclusive environment that models positive and effective interactions. We use the school values of Pursuit of Excellence, *Individuality, Creativity, Social and Environmental Responsibility, Respect for Diversity and Integrity* to discuss how we continually work towards a culture of respect. When we tackle issues and make changes that address lapses of expected behaviour, students, staff and members of our community can engage in meaningful learning. Staff are supported to deliver learning opportunities that are inclusive and based on mutual respect.

We have the following expectations of our school community:

- Members of our community use respectful and inclusive language. We expect language to be positive, encouraging and provide a sense of hope.
- Instructions/expectations are delivered respectfully and are responded to respectfully. Where appropriate, reference will be made to how the instructions relate to the school values.
- Members of our community are recognised as active bystanders. We teach our community to challenge and report disrespectful or unsafe behaviour.
- We strive to be a community that focuses on every individual being encouraged to do their best.

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices are a community approach to positive and healthy relationships. They emphasise the strength and potential of each community member and encourage all parties to focus on moving forward together after an issue has arisen. Restorative practices focus on helping young people become aware of their behaviour's impact on others. Through a restorative philosophy, we believe that relationships can be mended, and, we can achieve an environment where all community members feel heard and supported.

Through a Restorative Practices approach, we endeavour to build a stronger community founded on respectful relationships. We believe that our approach to responding to student behaviour should primarily be educative. The fundamental aim of our philosophy is positive behaviour development so that students learn to take personal responsibility for their actions and make genuine and positive contributions to their community.

Learning

The school's approach to supporting all school community members to engage respectfully is supported by the school's teaching and learning program. The school identifies opportunities for this focus to be embedded within the curriculum, and where needed, targeted programs are developed and offered.

The school implements aspects of the '*Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships*' (RRRR) education program. This program is designed to help teachers provide learning that supports the development of personal and social capabilities that are part of the Victorian Curriculum.

A detailed outline of how the school addresses the mandated requirement that respectful relationships education is taught in Victorian Government Schools will be outlined through the following teaching and learning documents:

- Curriculum audit demonstrating the cross-curricular approaches taken across all KLA areas.
- Teaching and learning overview of the Health, Involve and Tutorial programs where most of the RRRR curriculum is delivered.

Support

The school is proud of the structures in place to support members of the school community. These structures are based on the school's sub-school structure supported by the Student Services and the Additional Needs teams. In addition, the Student Services team has created a strong community support network for students and families who may require further assistance.

It is essential that an understanding of this support network is communicated to all members of our school community and that all members understand the available referral processes. This information is communicated to new families at the Year 7 Parent Information Night and regularly through the parent newsletter and student assemblies.

Recognition and success

In supporting a culture of respect, we want members of our community to respect themselves and each other as learners. We do this through the promotion of a growth mindset and the acknowledgement of effort. Underpinning our Student Recognition model collects data about student effort and participation in curricular, extra-curricular and community pursuits.

BASIS OF DISCRETION

The School Council has responsibility for the establishment, evaluation and review of school policies. The School Principal is responsible for ensuring that school policies are implemented effectively. Minor changes to the policy (changes that will not affect the spirit of the policy) may be made at the Principal's discretion.

The Policy Review and Evaluation process will recommend any significant changes to the policy to School Council.

RELATED POLICIES

Eltham High School policies -

<http://www.elthamhs.vic.edu.au/documents/index.php?dir=Information+and+Help%2FPolicies%2F>

Student Engagement Policy & Guidelines

Bullying Prevention

Equal Opportunity

Dress Code

Teaching & Learning

Safe Connections

Creating a Culture of Student Leadership

Child Protection Reporting

Child Safe

Respectful Relationships Education

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/respectfulrelationships.aspx>

Victorian Curriculum – Intercultural Capabilities

<https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/intercultural-capability/introduction/rationale-and-aims>

Teaching resources – Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/multicultural/Pages/koorieculture.aspx>

Standing up to racism – Collective Assessment

<https://www.cmy.net.au/schools-standing-up-to-racism/collective-assessment/>

For staff, please see the Department's [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy](#), [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Workplace Bullying Policy](#) which apply to all staff working at our school.

Other relevant Department policies and resources in the Department's Policy and Advisory Library are:

- [Students with Disability](#)
- [Koorie Education](#)
- [Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- [Supports and Services](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

REVIEW

This policy should be reviewed every *three* years.

Date Endorsed: 15/06/22

Executive Officer

Eltham High School Council

CONSULTATION PROCESS AND WORKING PARTY INFORMATION:

This policy was written by: Fran Mullins

Consultation has taken place with the relevant group(s) in the following list:

Group	Consultation ✓
School Operations Committee	
Staff	✓
Students (randomly selected group)	✓
Parents (randomly selected group)	
Members of the Community	

Other (where relevant please specify)	
Planning and Policy Review Team of Council (Mandatory)	✓
School Council (Mandatory)	✓

