



## MATURE MINORS POLICY

### 1. BACKGROUND

Apollo Bay P-12 College will ordinarily engage with a student's parents/carers about a student's education and welfare unless the principal (or their nominee) decides it is not in the best interests of the student to do so.

The Department recognises that parents, guardians and carers play an invaluable role in boosting a child's learning and wellbeing through being actively informed and involved from the early years through adolescence. For this reason, schools continue to engage parents in schooling matters even after the student has turned 18 and are legally recognised as adults.

Notwithstanding this, for a variety of reasons students under the age of 18 sometimes ask to make decisions on their own behalf, without involvement of their parents. Circumstances in which a principal should make an assessment as to whether a child is sufficiently mature to make their own decision about a particular issue include when:

- there is dispute about a schooling matter between a student and their parents
- there is a dispute about a schooling matter between the student's parents
- the school cannot contact the student's parent about a decision to be made
- a student is living independently from their parents
- the principal considers that refusing a student's request to make their own decision would have an adverse impact on the student.

Applying this policy is a balancing exercise between the evolving capacity of a child to make decisions in his or her own best interests and the Department's strategy to encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's learning.

This policy also reflects the Department's obligations to act compatibly with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic) to protect children and families. The Charter expressly provides that all children have the right to protection that is in his or her best interests and needed by them because they are a child.

### 2. PURPOSE & AIMS

To explain to members of our school community the circumstances in which Apollo Bay P-12 College may decide to treat a student as a mature minor to enable them to independently make decisions about their education, health and welfare.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy may be applied to some or all decisions involving a student's education, health and welfare.

- The principal (or their nominee) is responsible for determining whether a student is a mature minor for the purpose of making a particular decision about their education or welfare. A student may be treated as a mature minor for some decisions and not for others. The principal (or their nominee) will decide whether a student should be treated as a mature minor on a case by case basis and may consult with school staff including identified teachers, the school

leadership team, Head of Junior and/or Senior School, wellbeing staff and Student Support Services where appropriate.

- When assessing whether a student should be treated as a mature minor for the purposes of a particular decision, the principal (or their nominee) will consider (amongst other matters):
  - o the best interests of the student
  - o the student's age, maturity level, understanding of the issues and consequences associated with the decision
  - o their living arrangements (independence)
  - o the student's academic results, attendance and engagement at school.

The principal must be satisfied that the student has sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to comprehend the nature and effect of the particular decision.

**\*\*\* Information and resources form the School Policy and Advisory Guide should be consulted for detailed guidance on this matter: [Mature Minors](#)**

## 4. EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed as part of the College's ANNUAL review Cycle.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**NA**

**REFERENCES:**

School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Mature Minors](#)

**DATE RATIFIED:**

Term 3 2019 - 30/07/19

**DATE FOR REVIEW:**

Term 3 2020

Tiffany Holt

**Principal**

Tamara Gorrie

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