THE LAKES SOUTH MORANG COLLEGE
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Rationale:
The Lakes South Morang College aims to provide a welcoming, supportive, emotionally and physically secure learning and working environment for every member of the school community. The Lakes South Morang College recognises and promotes human rights, and values the diversity of culture, beliefs, practices, customs, physical and intellectual abilities and life experience of the whole school community.

Aims:
The Lakes South Morang College aims to create an inclusive school culture that fosters acceptance and respect for diversity. In doing so, we seek to deepen understanding and knowledge, promote student and staff wellbeing and help everyone achieve their full potential. The School is enriched by and celebrates the diversity of our whole school community. That is why discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation will not be tolerated at The Lakes South Morang College under any circumstances.

Implementation:
The Lakes South Morang College is committed to ensuring that the working environment is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation. The School acknowledges that in society some people are treated unfairly or unfavourably because of irrelevant personal characteristics such as their sex or race. The School supports the Charter of Human Rights and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), which says that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone, including students and school staff, because of their actual or assumed:

- age
- breastfeeding
- carer status
- disability/impairment
- gender identity
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these personal characteristics.

No member of the school community will be treated less favourably because they possess any of these personal characteristics nor will such characteristics affect access to benefits and services The Lakes South Morang College provides.

On behalf of the whole school community, the Principal, the School Council President, the Parent Association and the Student Representative Council support this policy, and the human rights principles and practice of equal opportunity, inclusion and respect for diversity that it articulates.
Discrimination is unacceptable at The Lakes South Morang College.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect – both are against the law. Direct discrimination means treating someone unfairly or less favourably because of one of the personal characteristics listed above or because of their association with someone identified with one of those characteristics. Indirect discrimination happens when a rule, policy or requirement unnecessarily or unreasonably disadvantages a person or group of people because of a protected personal characteristic they share.

Harassment is unacceptable at The Lakes South Morang College.

Harassment is behaviour (through words or actions) based on the personal characteristics listed above that are unwanted, unasked for, unreturned and likely to make school an unfriendly or uncomfortable place by:

- humiliating (putting someone down)
- seriously embarrassing
- offending (hurting someone’s feelings) or
- intimidating (threatening someone so they behave in a certain way)

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, request for sex or any other sexual behaviour that a reasonable person would know or expect would offend, seriously embarrass or humiliate another.

Racial and religious vilification is unacceptable at The Lakes South Morang College.

Vilification is behaviour (through words or actions) that incites hatred, serious contempt or ridicule of another person or group of people because of their race or religious belief.

Bullying is unacceptable at The Lakes South Morang College.

Bullying is unreasonable behaviour that is intimidating, threatening or humiliating and repeated over time or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour. Bullying can be physical, verbal or indirect, and creates an unfriendly, threatening or offensive environment.

Victimising is unacceptable at The Lakes South Morang College.

Victimising means treating someone unfairly or otherwise disadvantaging them because they have made an Equal Opportunity complaint or might do so in the future. The Lakes South Morang College will take appropriate action to:

- prevent discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation and to promote a safe and inclusive school.
- address and resolve EO issues and complaints.
- promote human rights both in terms of school policy and practice and within its educational activities and culture.

This policy covers the whole school community, including staff, students, parents, school council members, contractors and volunteers. This policy applies to:

- education - teaching and learning, enrolment, student management, student services, curriculum development and delivery
- the provision of goods and services - extracurricular activities, camps, parent–teacher interviews, access to facilities
- school sport
• employment at the school - recruitment, allocation of duties, employment conditions, access to benefits such as training, promotion and leave

Policy framework and relevant information
The Lakes South Morang College Equal Opportunity policy is one component of the Department’s broader policy framework for the promotion of safe and inclusive schools and protection of human rights.
Other relevant policy may include:
• Managing Diversity and Inclusive Workplaces
• Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment
• Complaint Resolution Procedures
• Health, Safety and WorkSafe
• Building Respectful and Safe Schools
• School codes of conduct
• School anti-bullying policy
• Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 including any relevant Department policies

Rights and Responsibilities
• Under this policy, every member of The Lakes South Morang College has the right to learn and work in a safe and inclusive environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation. Along with this right comes the responsibility to respect and promote human rights and responsibilities by behaving according to this policy. The Principal of The Lakes South Morang College is accountable for implementation of this policy and may appoint an Equal Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Co-ordinator to support implementation of this policy. This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Education Sub-committee of School Council and ratified by the School Council.

Complaints Procedure
• The Lakes South Morang College encourages all members of the school community to attempt to resolve complaints and concerns through the school as stated in The Concerns and Complaints policy. All complaints will be treated confidentially, fairly and consistently, and resolved as speedily as possible.

If you are a member of staff:
Please refer to the Department’s Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct guidelines.

If you are a parent or guardian:
Please refer to DET’s Parent Complaints guidelines or The Concerns and Complaints policy

If you are a student:
You have the right to be part of a safe and inclusive school that is free from discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation. If you believe someone is discriminating, harassing, bullying, vilifying or victimising you and it is safe for you to do so, tell the other person to stop their behaviour. Let them know that their behaviour offends you. They may not realise this. If the behaviour doesn’t stop or you are not sure what to do, report it to a trusted adult, such as a teacher, the Year Level Co-ordinator, the Principal or the Student Welfare Coordinator. Remember, you are not alone. If you have a problem or complaint, talking to someone, especially your parents can help. If you do not want to talk to anyone about it, you could contact the Kids Help Line, telephone 1800 55 1800.

Evaluation:
• This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review
The Lakes South Morang College Child Safety Statement:
To thrive, children need a safe and supportive environment at school, at home and in the broader community; no exceptions. At The Lakes South Morang College, we believe meeting the physical and emotional needs of our students is paramount in laying the foundations for a fulfilling future. We pledge to provide an environment that has zero tolerance to child abuse and will strive to work in partnership with our parents and community members to keep our students safe every day, in every way.