

Equity Policy

I. Rationale / Background

Policy Statement

Montrose Bay High School attempts to ensure all students have equitable access to education. Without this policy, over time, differences in culture, race, creed, linguistic background, location, socio-economic status or disability would create disparities in the educational performance of such potentially disadvantaged students. Our Equity policy, therefore, goes beyond equal opportunity.

Background

In any large group of students performances will vary widely but the performance is demonstrably and unacceptably lower for some groups than for the total population of students. The groups listed below experience educational disadvantages:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students with disabilities
- students with language backgrounds other than English
- students with backgrounds of poverty
- students with backgrounds of low social status
- geographically isolated students
- students with lack of access to digital technologies
- gifted students¹

Some students belong to more than one group and multiple and cumulative disadvantage can exist.

Rationale

- All people are considered to have equal worth and equal rights.
- All students have the right to an education that meets their needs.
- Government schools must educate all students, not just those groups which form the majority.
- Education is a major means of achieving a just and equitable society and a commitment to educational equity is fundamental to a democracy. Equity is an essential requirement in education.
- Montrose Bay High is therefore committed to ensuring equity in education.

Definitions

Equity: The concept of equal access to school education and the fair and just distribution of benefits from the school education system.

Curriculum: All the provisions that schools make for students' learning and development: the content of courses, activities involved, teaching methods, learning environment, values espoused, relationships within the educational community, the way teachers and classes are organised, and the use of resources.

Principles

Montrose Bay High School will educate all students from the local community who are enrolled. Every student at Montrose Bay High school is entitled to the educational opportunities that lead to satisfying, responsible and productive lives. We pursue equity for all students but especially focus on students who are known to gain significantly less from their education than the general population of students. Some students need a greater share of resources than others in order to have the opportunity for equality of outcomes and participation. Everyone in our school has some responsibility for contributing to equity in education. The principle of equity permeates all our policies and practices.

¹ Gifted students may be an equity target group even though their educational outcomes are not lower than the general population of students.

2. Requirements / Outcomes

Our overall goal is for all groups of students to achieve the levels of participation and performance of the student population as a whole. So that, consequently, significant differences in ethnicity, socio-economic status, race, sex, creed, physical or sensory ability, isolation or geographic location (or any other variable irrelevant to education participation and achievement) do not effect student's participation or their outcome. Our specific goals are to ensure that:

GOAL 1: Access and attendance

All Montrose Bay students have access to education and attend school regularly.

GOAL 2: Access and participation in the curriculum

All Montrose Bay students have access to — and participate in — a full, relevant and challenging curriculum.

GOAL 3: Access to digital technologies

All Montrose Bay students have access to digital technologies appropriate for aiding their learning.

GOAL 4: Retention at school

All Montrose Bay students complete year 12, find employment or other further education.

GOAL 5: Parent participation

Parent's participation in the school will be increased.

GOAL 6: Attainment and success at school

The attainment and success of all student groups at all levels in our school improves.

3. Responsibilities

Teachers' responsibilities

A curriculum is not value-neutral. The content, language and methodology of our education programs should be flexible in order to meet the educational needs of all students.

- Teachers should respond to diversity of need and experience, respect distinctive cultural and racial identities, and value contributions from students of all abilities.
- Teachers should provide a learning environment that is free from harassment, bias and discriminatory practices and one that promotes personal respect and physical and emotional safety.
- Ensure that Programs are tailored to match the capabilities and needs of all students.
- Teachers (and Parents) often make assumptions about student capability. Such assumptions, often disguised within theories of individual differences, have meant that some students have been denied access to a comprehensive and inclusive curriculum.
- Some students have been denied the chance of successful performance in the curriculum.

Montrose Bay High School monitors the educational experiences of our identified groups.

Students' Responsibilities

In addition to participation at Montrose Bay High School, students need to experience success. If you are not succeeding, students should speak to their teacher.

- Students can aid in the equity policy by providing a school environment that is free from harassment, bias and discriminatory practices
- Students can aid in the equity policy by promoting personal respect and physical and emotional safety.

Parents' responsibilities

Students need to have access to school and attend it regularly to get maximum benefit from education. Poor attendance leads to inability to participate in the curriculum and lower attainment. This in turn leads to decreased attendance. Students who attend irregularly are unlikely to remain at school until the end of year 12. A close relationship between teachers, parents and students improves student success at school. Students are disadvantaged if their parents are unable to participate in decisions about their children's education. The Parent Participation Policy (1994) acknowledges the importance of parents in the education of their children. The policy encourages parent participation in a range of ways in the life of the school and in the education of their children.

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