

Students Under the Legal Age of 18 Years Policy

Purpose

This Policy facilitates the successful entry, transition, learning, and support of Macedon Ranges Education students under the legal age of 18 years (underage students).

Scope

This Policy applies to domestic students seeking enrolment and/or students enrolled in a unit or course offered by Macedon Ranges Education who will be or are, under 18 at the date of commencement with particular emphasis on those aged under 17.

This Policy ceases to apply to students once they reach 18.

Policy

Enrolment and admission

Macedon Ranges Education welcomes applications from candidates of all ages, including those who are under the age of 18. All applications are considered on their respective merits and Macedon Ranges Education may grant places to underage students where:

- it determines that they are academically qualified to successfully complete the relevant program of study.
- there are places available.
- Macedon Ranges Education has received the completed Parental Consent Form for applicants who will be under the age of 18 at the commencement of their course.

Macedon Ranges Education is an adult learning environment.

Macedon Ranges Education offers its students an adult environment and treats them as mature, independent individuals. All students (including underage students) are to behave in an appropriate mature manner and abide by Macedon Ranges Education policies and legislation. Macedon Ranges Education will provide information to parents/legal guardians and underage applicants explaining the key elements of an adult learning environment and the requirements and expectations that flow from this.

Parental responsibility

Macedon Ranges Education is not able to take on the usual rights, responsibilities, and authority that parents/guardians have in relation to a child, and it will not act in the place of parents/guardians in relation to students who are under the age of 18 years.

Support for underage students

Macedon Ranges Education recognises that underage students may have an additional need for support and require the appropriate involvement of their parent/legal guardian.

Support for underage students is as follows:

- The Education and Training Administrator / or Assistant will advise the Chief Executive Officer of students who are under 17 years of age at the time when the students have been approved for enrolment.
- The Education and Training Administrator / or Assistant will then assign a staff member as the key contact point between Macedon Ranges Education and that student and their parents/guardian and subject to put in place a mutually agreed communication strategy.
- The assigned staff member will consult with the Education and Training Administrator / or Assistant on the communication strategy and confirm the role of Academic staff.

The age and maturity of the student will impact on the level of support needed. As a minimum for students under 17 years of age the assigned staff member:

- will meet or communicate directly with the student weekly for the first four weeks of the study period in which they enrol and every four weeks thereafter to check on the student's successful transition to the learning environment and study.
- will ensure that to support progression in their course the student is not enrolled in more than 2 units at a time.
- be available to respond to queries from the student and their parents/guardian with the limits of privacy requirements.

Any member of staff can facilitate access to support services once made aware of the particular needs of students under 18 years of age.

The particular support provided to students under 17 years of age will be provided until the student is satisfactorily acclimatized to the learning environment after consultation with the student and the parent/guardian or once the student reaches the age of 17.

Students aged 17 will be treated as independent, mature individuals. Students who are aged 17 and over will not be provided with additional support, service, or welfare monitoring unless specifically requested by the parent/guardian of the underage student or the underage student and agreed to by Macedon Ranges Education.

Student protection and wellbeing

If any staff member is concerned about the well-being of an underage student, they must raise these concerns with the Education and Training Administrator / or Assistant to instigate an appropriate intervention. This may include assisting the student to access Counselling Services. If a staff member, associate, or student believes that an underage student has suffered or is at risk of child abuse, they must report their concerns in accordance with the laws of the state of Victoria.

In cases of a medical emergency (for example, where emergency medical treatment is required for the underage student), action may need to be taken in the best interests of the student before parents or guardians can be contacted. In such cases, parents are deemed (by virtue of having signed the Parental Consent Form for applicants who will be under the age of 18 on commencement of their course) to permit a senior member of Macedon Ranges Education (acting in accordance with medical advice, as appropriate) to do whatever is necessary in the student's best interests.

Alcohol

Serving alcohol to people under 18 is illegal. Staff responsible for managing Macedon Ranges Education events must ensure that alcohol is not served to underage students. At any event at which alcohol is provided, an adequate supply of non-alcoholic drinks and food should also be served.

Contracts

The normal relationship between Macedon Ranges Education and the student has contractual elements. Where contracts are required, for example for tuition fees or accommodation, Macedon Ranges Education requires parents or legal guardians to act as guarantors and to honour all obligations under any contracts with Macedon Ranges Education that the student enters into prior to their 18th birthday.

Privacy

Macedon Ranges Education is required to comply with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic), and the Privacy policy in relation to all students' personal information, such as for example their academic progress and related matters. It is Macedon Ranges Education's usual policy to communicate with students and not with parents or legal guardians. This approach will also apply to students who are under the age of 18 years unless consented to by the student or unless there is an imminent risk to the safety and well-being of the student.

Off-campus activities

As part of their programs of study, students may be required (or offered the opportunity) to attend field trips, excursions, or other off-site study activities. Macedon Ranges Education is not able to make any special arrangements for underage students in this regard.

Arrangements shall be as follows:

- the parent or legal guardian gives consent for the student 17 years of age to take part in these activities by signing the Consent Form for applicants who will be under the age of 18 on commencement of their course.
- a student who is under the age of 17 will not be permitted to attend any overnight activity unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Working with Children Checks

All Macedon Ranges Education staff and associates will be required to hold a valid Working with Children Check in accordance with relevant legislation, including the Working with Children Act 2005, and Macedon Ranges Education's Child Safety policy.

Insurance

All underage students are covered by Macedon Ranges Education's insurance policies.

Information Management

The assigned staff member will record the agreed communication strategy and subsequent routine interactions with the student and parent/guardian utilising Macedon Ranges Education Student Management System. More complex or lengthy records including correspondence from parents/guardians will be recorded using the Macedon Ranges Education records management system.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy:

Underage student: A student enrolled or enrolling in a course at Macedon Ranges Education who is or will be under 18 years of age on commencement of their course, which includes any pre-teaching orientation or other activity.

Related Documents:

- Students under the Legal Age of 18 Years Process Flow
- Parent Guardian Consent Form

Version Control

This document is under version control.

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