

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact a member of the Principal Team at Wantirna College on 9801 9700.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Wantirna College is committed to providing a safe, secure, and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy, and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy, and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

Wantirna College is a large, single campus secondary school in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs. This student population is capped at 1500 students with students drawn from a wide range of feeder primary schools throughout the City of Knox. The College has a good reputation and places in Year 7 are sought after.

Our community is quite culturally diverse with approximately 1% of our students being of indigenous background and approximately 29% having a language background other than English. There are over 40 different languages spoken in the family homes of our students. We have an International Student Program that can cater for up to 50 full fee-paying students who are mainly in year 10-12. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is 1009 (2015) placing us just above average in terms of socio-educational advantage.

The student body is separated into two sub schools, Middle Years/School and Later Years/Senior School. The sub schools are overseen by an Assistant Principal, and each sub school has two Leading Teachers and a team of six Year Level Leaders. In 2023 there will 3 Leading Teachers in Senior School. Transition Support and Explore teachers have a significant role in getting to know the students and being the first port of call for parents who have enquiries or concerns about student progress.

2. School values, philosophy, and vision

We place a strong emphasis on values and emotional intelligence. Our core College value is respect with an emphasis on respect for self, respect for others and respect for the community and the environment. Our curriculum, programs and approaches are designed to allow us to educate our students to be inquiring learners with high levels of literacy and numeracy who are:

- Prepared to be global, ethical citizens in the 21st century.
- Capable of showing resilience and flexibility of thinking.
- Willing to show initiative and take on challenges throughout their lives.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Wantirna College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional, or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- Positive relationships between students and staff are prioritised. These are recognised as playing a fundamental role in building and sustaining student wellbeing.
- High and consistent expectations of staff, students, and parents and carers are communicated through a range of different forums including assemblies, staff meetings, curriculum programs, materials in class and staff rooms.
- Parents/carers are welcome, and we respond to them as partners in supporting student learning.
- School data related to student engagement is analysed at regular intervals throughout the year and responded in a timely manner. This ensures we are supporting all students. Data includes but is not limited to:
 - Attendance
 - Case Management/Student Behaviour
 - Student Attitudes to School Survey
 - Parent survey

- Learning progress data
- Students in year 7 and 8 have opportunities within a core curriculum to explore areas of interest. Our flexible elective program and timetable blockings allow students in year 9 and 10 to select from a broad range of electives across the two years.
- VET, VCE VM, VPC and VCE programs are offered to ensure students can choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- A consistent instructional framework ensures an explicit, common, and shared model of instruction to ensure evidence-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons.
- Teachers adopt a broad range of teaching and pedagogical approaches to effectively respond to the diverse needs of our students and follow the standards set out by the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- A developmental approach to assessment that engages students in discussions about growth and encourages students to set their own learning goals is utilised across the College.
- Carefully planned transition programs are implemented to fully support students moving into different stages of their schooling.
- Peer Support and other cross age buddy programs are run to encourage the development of positive relationships across the school.
- Extra-curricular programs such as Production, Music, Debating, SRC, etc. provide opportunities for students across year levels to develop connections.
- Whole school events such as the sports carnivals (athletics, cross country, and swimming) encourage cross age connections
- Lunchtime activities, sports and clubs are offered to promote student inclusion.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team, School Nurse, Year Level Leaders, Sub School Leaders, Assistant Principals and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning.
- We develop and run programs, incursions, and excursions to address specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs).
- The school is broken up into two sub schools, each with a team of teachers led by an Assistant Principal who are responsible for the students in the sub school.
- Year 7 and 8 students have a Transitional Support teacher who acts as the conduit between school and home. Explore teachers act as the conduit between school and home in years 9-12.
- Programs related to health promotion and social skills development will be delivered by classroom teachers through the core Health Curriculum and the Explore Program.
- The Sub School teams in consultation with the Student Wellbeing team will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year.

Targeted

- Students with individual needs will be supported with the development of an Individual Learning Plan.
- All Koorie students will be connected with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer.
- All Students in Out of Home Care will be linked with one of the Student Wellbeing Team, who advocate on their behalf. These students will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment.
- The Explore and Amplify/Enhancement programs provide targeted teaching in relation to age-appropriate students from year 9-12.

- All students from Year 10 onwards will be given support to develop their career action plan.
- Assistance will be provided to students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan.
- Each year level has a team of two-Year Level Leaders (YLL). The Year Level Leaders monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year level. They build positive relationships with families to support students in their learning and social development. The YLL's act as a point of contact for students when they need additional support.
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ support](#).
- Students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans

Individual

Wantirna College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.
- Student Support Groups will be implemented for students who have experienced difficulty with school engagement.
- Individual Learning Plans, Attendance Improvement Plans and Behaviour Support Plans will be developed in consultation with the student and parents/carers where needed.
- Environmental changes to support students will be considered, e.g. locker location, changing classroom set up, etc.
- Where appropriate, additional support services will be engaged to support reengagement with learning and school including, but not limited to:
 - [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
 - [headspace](#)
 - [LOOKOUT](#)
 - Referral to Student Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services.
 - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, child and adolescent mental health services, etc.

The Sub-School and/or Student Wellbeing team will work in partnership with parents/carers and students to support individual students and their engagement at school:

- The Sub School and Wellbeing teams will build constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances and their families or support people. They will be responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing.
- The YLL will meet with the student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help support the student engage with school.
- The team will collaborate where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student.
- The YLL will monitor individual student attendance and develop an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Wantirna College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional social or educational support. Data used could include:

- Personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- Attendance records
- Academic performance
- Observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness, and motivation
- Attendance, detention, and suspension data
- Engagement with families
- Self-referrals or referrals from peers
- Referrals from teachers or other family members

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- Participate fully in their education
- Feel safe, secure, and happy at school
- Learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination, or intimidation
- Express their ideas, feelings, and concerns

Students have the responsibility to:

- Participate fully in their educational program
- Display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers, and members of the school community
- Respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Wantirna College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and

student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores, and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- Warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- Teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- Restorative practices
- Detentions (in school and after school)
- Behaviour support and intervention meetings
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Suspension, expulsion, and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Wantirna College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

7. Engaging with families

Wantirna College values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- Ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website.
- Maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- Providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities.

- Family and information evenings are provided to enable families to contribute to the school activities.
- Involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities.
- Opportunities are provided for families to be involved in decision making at the whole school level through College Council, Parent's Association and Parents of Performing Arts and at the individual student level in consultation with the YLL.
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families.
- Including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Wantirna College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- Student survey data
- Incidents data
- School reports
- Parent survey
- Case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Wantirna College will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Available on Compass
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)

- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	11 th October 2022
Consultation	11 th October 2022 CPEC
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	11 th October 2024