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School logo

Wantirna College

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

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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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
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POLICY

1. School profile

Wantirna College is a large, single campus secondary school in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs. The 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 and Later Years. 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. 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

The Student Engagement policy is an umbrella policy for other more specific and detailed policies that are formulated to allow us to work proactively in supporting our students in fully engaging with their learning. This includes the:

- Student Behaviour Management Policy
- Student Attendance Policy • Drug Education Policy
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy

The Student Engagement Policy provides a clear direction for these policies and ensures they all align with each other in terms of responsibilities and expectations of the College, staff, students and parents. Each policy is firmly embedded in the Principles for Health and Wellbeing including:

- a) Maximising access and inclusion
- b) Focusing on outcomes
- c) Evidence informed and reflective practice
- d) Having a holistic approach to education
- e) Person-centred and family sensitive practices
- f) Partnerships with families and communities
- g) Cultural competence
- h) Commitment to excellence

Universal

- High and consistent expectations of all 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 etc.
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- School data related to student engagement is analysed at regular intervals throughout the year and responded to in order to ensure 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VM to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations

- teachers at Wantirna College use a Student centred learning framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- *teachers at Wantirna College adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching*
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Level Leaders, Assistant Principal 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 engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Sticks and Stones
 - Safe Schools
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted

- each year group has two Year Level Leaders, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Specific strategies to support Koorie students are identified against the Marrung education plan and include significant cultural events including NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week, as well as Semester SSG’s with support of the KESO and the College’s Koorie Engagement liaison teacher. Year 7 families are welcomed to country through a smoking ceremony at the start of the year.
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school.
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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. The College has two leading teachers who oversee teaching and learning in

supporting adjustments by teachers for students who fall outside the range of disabilities but still require modification of work and assessments to be successful.

- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Wantirna College *assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan*

Individual

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

- 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 Year Level Leader will meet with the student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school.
- Individual Learning Plans, Attendance Improvement Plans and Behaviour Support Plans will be developed in consultation with the student and parent/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 re engagement with learning and school including but not limited to:
 - Program for Students with Disabilities
 - Referral to Student Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services
 - Referral to ChildFirst, Headspace, Orange Door and DFFH
 - Lookout
 - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, child and adolescent mental health services such CYHMS

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Wantirna College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Wantirna College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- 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 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. Student's can also report concerns confidentially using the College's Community Call out through Microsoft teams.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Wantirna College has clear expectations of students, staff and families which are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

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.

Breaches of behaviour standards will be dealt with using an educative approach. If required, disciplinary measures may form part of a staged response along with other engagement and support strategies. When used 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*
- *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.

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 and Compass
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff,
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making. 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 and COMPASS
- included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs

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 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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	April 2024
Consultation	CPEC April 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	April 2026