

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the College on 5979 1577 or at western.port.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

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.

Western Port Secondary 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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POLICY

1. School profile

Western Port Secondary College is a dynamic learning community located in a beautiful rural setting on the Mornington Peninsula. It is a smaller sized secondary school with approximately

680 students. The College has recently been granted \$11.6M for major refurbishments which will include a dedicated wellbeing centre.

The College ethos is based upon the commitment of staff, students and parents working cooperatively to provide the best possible curriculum in a safe and welcoming environment. The College's Core Values are Community, Achievement, Respect, Engagement (CARE), which are embedded into programs and practices within the College community. Our college places a great emphasis on pastoral care and a very positive approach to student wellbeing. We believe the best environment for students to learn is one that is safe, inclusive, respectful, caring and purposeful, and one where personalised and individual learning programs can be achieved. Each and every student is known and has a place in our school.

The current strategic plan focusses on our core business of Teaching and Learning and Accountability. We have initiated a 21st Century Education approach which ensures our students complete their schooling and leave equipped with the skills and knowledge to be successful in their futures and careers. We have implemented a number of changes so all students are accurately mapped on the Victorian Continuum in all learning areas, and then explicitly taught at the level they are at in order to progress along the continuum. This growth is then measured, recorded and reported on. We have developed similar measures for our senior VCE, VCAL and VM programs. We have shifted from solely relying on Teacher Judgments for assessment and instead using a range of tools to more accurately and independently measure and map students learning growth and academic outcomes. Teachers continue to work hard developing differentiated curriculum and associated assessment. To better facilitate our new approach to Teaching and Learning, we have a dedicated Year 7 Learning Centre and a Year 8 Learning Centre. Our Year 9 Program 'Project 9' continues to go from strength to strength providing a stimulating and engaging experiential learning program alongside core subjects.

The College was selected as a Department of Education STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Catalyst school and our specially trained staff are delivering a core STEM program including digital technologies, coding and robotics to Year 7 and 8 students, elective program to Year 9 and 10 and a cluster initiative project with students in Grade 5 and 6 from feeder primary schools.

The College is recognised for its excellence in pathway provision and is an Alumni member of Beacon, supporting young people in exposure to further education, training and employment.

The College is a top partner school with Monash University and is part of the Schools Access Monash (SAM) program promoting and facilitating tertiary pathways for our students.

The College is a key leader in the Western Port Learning Guarantee which is an academic and wellbeing 'Wrap Around Care' model. This is another example of how the school has been involved in implementing a number of projects and policies across the College that support vulnerable youth and keep young people retained and engaged in educational pathways. The College is working to reinstate its 5 Star Sustainability Accreditation, receiving numerous environmental awards over the last few years. This supports the work of the student led Environmental Action Group.

The school maintains a strong music and performing arts program and regularly holds concerts and our annual production.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Mission

To provide a supportive and dynamic learning environment that challenges all members of the college community to perform to their personal best. We will promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance, understanding and cooperation. This will enable our students to thrive in a diverse and changing world.

Core Values

The four core values for Western Port Secondary College are:

- ◆ *Community*

- ◆ Achievement
- ◆ Respect
- ◆ Engagement.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Western Port Secondary 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:

Hands on Learning, Mental Health programs, LGBTIQA support groups, Canine therapy, Headspace, Anger Management and the WILD program, Elevate program and Outreach program.

Universal

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, parents and carers*
- *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*
- *analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment 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 Western Port Secondary College use the Western Port instructional model to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *staff at Western Port Secondary College utilise the Berry Street Education Model strategies as our approach to supporting students who have experienced trauma*
- *staff at Western Port Secondary 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*
- *our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community*
- *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 CARE captains meeting. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Learning Level Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *from 2023 students will have access to a consistent adult as their Homegroup teacher*
- *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, School Chaplain, Year Group 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 (SWPBS) with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:*
 - *Respectful Relationships*
 - *R U OK*
 - *Safe Schools*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess, lunchtime and after school activities)*
- *CARE captaincy and student leadership*
- *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 a Learning Level Leader and Coordinator, 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 – refer to our Marrung action plan for further information*
- *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](#). Our school nurse hosts a weekly support group for any students wanting to connect with school and external supports*
- *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

- *wellbeing and health staff 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*
- *staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma through Berry St training*
- *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 9 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future*
- *Western Port Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan*

Individual

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

- *building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances*
- *meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school*
- *developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan*
- *considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up*
- *referring the student to:*
 - *school-based wellbeing supports*
 - *Student Support Services*
 - *Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, Orange door, Headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst*
 - *Re-engagement programs such as Navigator*
 - *Elevate and Outreach program to assist students at Western Port Secondary College to stop disengaging from school*
 - *Intervention programs to assist students who are identified as behind in their learning such as Sounds Write, Tutor Learning Initiative, Learning Guarantee and MYLNS*

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*
- *collaborating, 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*
- *monitoring individual student attendance and developing Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family*
- *engaging with our regional Koorie Education 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

Western Port Secondary 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Western Port Secondary 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 to and from community agencies*

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 Coordinator, Learning Level Leader or Assistant Principal. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and 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 Western Port Secondary College students code of conduct and 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, Western Port Secondary 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 implement 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 to the Community Meeting Room following the school Safe and Orderly Learning process.*
- *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 and Training.

The Principal of Western Port Secondary 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

Western Port Secondary 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
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Western Port Secondary 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
- SWPBS data
- Compass wellbeing data

Western Port Secondary 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
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers 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 and are located on the College website [here](#):

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2022
Consultation	School Council 8 November 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before Term 4, 2024