Whittlesea Secondary College

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Purpose:

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

- Whittlesea Secondary Colleges commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students
- Whittlesea Secondary Colleges expectations for positive student behaviour
- Whittlesea Secondary Colleges support available to students and families
- Whittlesea Secondary Colleges policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Whittlesea 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.

In accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET, May 2017) guidelines and the State-wide priorities of the Victorian Government, the College aims to provide:

- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Professional leadership
- A Positive Climate for learning
- Community engagement in learning
- An environment that nurtures strong learning, personal growth and self-esteem while developing positive relationships between students and teachers, therefore knowing that our students will learn better in a friendly and respectful environment.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Whittlesea Secondary College activities, including camps and excursions.

Contents:

1. Whittlesea Secondary College School Profile
2. Whittlesea Secondary College Vision and Values
3. Whittlesea Secondary College wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

Policy:

1. Whittlesea Secondary College School Profile

Established in 1977, Whittlesea Secondary College has been educating young people in the community for over 40 years. Since its roots as a Technical School, Whittlesea Secondary College has continued to develop an outstanding Trade Training Centre facility on-site to deliver Allied Health, Automotive, Engineering, Construction Pathways and Hospitality VET courses. With a diverse and innovative curriculum, that's not all Whittlesea Secondary College offers.

In traditional schooling models, students must study all areas of the curriculum, whether they are interested in those areas or not. It assumes a 'one size fits all' and that all students will need, and should have, the same knowledge and skills for the future. Whittlesea Secondary Colleges model gives control back to our students by allowing them to choose the learning areas they wish to focus on.

Whittlesea Secondary College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our College. 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.

2. Whittlesea Secondary College Vision and Values

At Whittlesea Secondary College, our Vision is to empower students to become successful, confident, and responsible contributors in a 21st century community.

Application
- Trying your best at all tasks and aiming to improve yourself and being willing to give things a go and put knowledge into action.
- Having a growth mindset and realising practice makes progress, nothing is ever perfect, everything can be improved.

Attitude
- Taking pride in our College and respecting the spaces created for us.
- Being respectful to one another and valuing that individuals have differences (cultural and personal) which enrich a community.
- Celebrating our differences and learning from one another.
- Being a team player and learning to collaborate. Life and learning are easier when we support one another.
- Praise don't criticise, value feedback and learn from it. Empathise, forgive and be supportive of others.

Achievement
- Setting high expectations for ourselves and others and always striving to do our best, while supporting others to do their best.
- Valuing group and individual successes.
- Setting goals to help us get to where we want to go.
- Celebrating our success and those of our community.

3. <u>Whittlesea Secondary College Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies</u>

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

Universal

- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents/carers/guardians
- Prioritise positive relationships between College staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- Creating a College culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- Welcoming all parents/carers/guardians and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- Analysing and being responsive to a range of College 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 VCE VM to ensure that students can choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- Teachers at Whittlesea 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 College Values: Attitude, Application and Achievement, are incorporated into the 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/carers/guardians
- Monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- Students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including House group meetings, Student Leadership meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their Check-in teachers, Heads of House, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Provide programs that encourage and foster cross-age connections amongst students through Vertical Curriculum, Activities, House Activities, School Production and Plays, Athletics, Music Programs and Peer Support Programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Social Worker, Mental Health Practitioner, First Aid Officer, Youth Worker, Psychologist, Check-in Teacher, Heads of House, Assistant Principals and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind.

Universal continued:

- 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 College staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

Targeted

- All students will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and supports to plan for their future
- Connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- All students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- College 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 College staff each year
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

Whittlesea Secondary College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement.

- Student Support Groups: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy
- Individual Education Plans: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/individual-education-plans-ieps/policy
- Behaviour – Students: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/policy
- Behaviour Support Plans: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/guidance/behaviour-support-plans
- Student Support Services: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-services/policy

We also implement Department programs and services such as:

- Student Disability Support Programs: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy
- Student Mental Health Toolkits: https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-mental-health-toolkit
- EMHSS- Headspace: https://www.vic.gov.au/enhancing-mental-health-support-schools
- Navigator Program: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/navigator-program/policy
- Lookout Program: https://www.vic.gov.au/lookout-education-support-centres

Individual continued:

- 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 Education Plan, Student Support 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:

    o school-based wellbeing supports
    o Student Support Services
    o Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other Allied health professionals, Headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Orange Door
    o Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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 an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- hosting regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    o with a disability
    o in Out of Home Care
    o with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

4. Whittlesea Secondary College Identifying Students in need of support

- Personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- Attendance records
- Academic performance
- Engagement records such as Compass Chronicles
- 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
- Wellbeing referrals
- Wellbeing and Heads of House meetings

5. Whittlesea Secondary College 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. Whittlesea Secondary College Student Behavioural Expectations and Management

The values of Whittlesea Secondary College underpin its cultural and moral framework, enabling it to set clear and resolute behavioural codes.

These codes, once adhered to, enable the members of the school college community to function in a safe, highly energised learning community and uphold the right of all to be respected by others, the right to learn and teach and the right to feel safe and secure in our environment.

Personal attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others reinforce essential life skills to assist building strong relationships.

This will be achieved through clearly articulated behavioural expectations based on a set of principles that acknowledge students' rights and responsibilities.

Restorative Practice

The College employs the principles of restorative practices to maintain positive relations between all members of the College community.

- Enable students to develop awareness about the effects of their behaviour on others by using effective questions
- Students are held accountable and responsible for their actions while their dignity is recognised and maintained
- Actively involve students in the disciplinary process by encouraging students to speak about their actions
- Give students the opportunity to restore any harm caused in their negotiation of appropriate actions and consequences

Procedures

The procedures for this policy are detailed in the following Appendices.

- Refer to Appendix A for the principles of classroom management
- Refer to Appendix B for the School wide positive approach to encourage expected behaviours

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

- Suspensions: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy
- Expulsions: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy
- Restraint and Seclusion: 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 Whittlesea 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. Whittlesea Secondary College Engagement with Families

Whittlesea 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. Whittlesea Secondary College Evaluation Process

Whittlesea 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:

- Wellbeing referrals
- Student survey data
- Incidents data
- School reports
- Parent survey
- Compass chronicles
- Attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

Whittlesea Secondary College school 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: https://whittleseasc.vic.edu.au/about-us/plans-reports-policies/
- Included in staff induction processes
- 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: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/guidance/1-suspension-process

Expulsions Process: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/guidance/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:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Communicating with School Staff Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Appendices

- Appendix A: Principles of Classroom Management Procedures
- Appendix B: School wide positive approach to encourage expected behaviours

Evaluation Period

The following data will be collected and analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices, approaches and intervention strategies for improving student outcomes

- Attitudes to school survey
- Student reports
- Attendance data
- Suspension data
- Respite data
- Parent survey
- Staff survey
- Compass chronicles

Policy last reviewed	December 2024
Consultation	Consultation with staff, school council and the leadership team Feb 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	December 2026

STUDENT WELLBEING

AND ENGAGEMENT

APPENDIX A
Principles of Classroom Management Procedures

At Whittlesea Secondary College our approach to student and classroom management is based on the values of mutual respect, personal and collective responsibility and School Wide Positive Behaviour principles. We hope to encourage teachers and their classes to develop positive and productive relationships, in which issues may be identified and resolved collectively and in which individuals recognise their responsibilities.

Have Agreed Behaviour Expectations
It may take time with each class, but if expectations of conduct are agreed on, poor behaviour can always be referred back to these and the effect on everyone else, promoting ownership and group responsibility. These behaviours should protect students' rights (e.g. the right to learn).

Be a Calm Adult
Situations in the classroom can be stressful. Acknowledge that you are not at the most rational when stressed and will not make decisions that promote the most effective results. Follow a standard system and be consistent. Stressed teachers upset the learning of the whole class.

Separate the Behaviour from the Individual
If an adolescent feels personally rejected by their teacher, they may not have the emotional maturity to avoid antagonism. All students will make mistakes that teachers may need to address. Try to ensure that the language used focuses on what is wrong or what has happened. Avoid the implication that the student is 'defective'. Issues should be about the behaviour, not the individual.

Rewards Work Better than Punishment
Poor behaviour makes us angry and propagates a desire to punish. This is understandable, but less productive than rewarding effort (not the behaviour). Effort-Reward system e.g. when challenging students say something nice, promote better behaviour patterns and greater levels of responsibility than punitive measures. Effort-reward systems take time to devise and implement but save time throughout the year. They also save stress. It should, however, be the aim to reduce the need to reward-for-effort.

The Best 'Technique' is a Strong Relationship
A productive and cooperative classroom environment relies on positive relationships. Adolescents learn best from an adult whom they recognise as having positive feelings towards them. Recognising positive effort and minimising the attention paid to negative behaviours has an overall effect on the whole class and particularly on more challenging students. Learning about your students' personal lives builds goodwill which can, when required, be drawn upon. No-one outside your classroom can solve your student management issues – they can only draw on their own relationship with each student you send to them, which doesn't alter the situation for you.

What is School Wide Positive Behaviour Support?

The goal of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support at Whittlesea Secondary College is to create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment that enhances our school culture where we maximise individual academic and social growth.

What Does SWPBS Look Like at Whittlesea Secondary College?

1. Create an environment of receptive students who can acquire the skills and knowledge enabling them to become lifelong learners in the global economy.

2. Create an environment where teachers feel empowered to teach effectively.

3. Create an environment based on mutual respect between all members of the school community where students develop the interpersonal skills needed to work cooperatively with others and can resolve problems or conflict in daily life.

4. Create an environment where students are empowered. They take ownership of their own learning, they set personal targets, and they take responsibility for their own actions.

5. Create an environment where parents are empowered. They actively support the teaching and learning policies of the school and embrace the concept of lifelong learners.

6. Create an environment of kindness and caring, a community in which students, parents and teachers feel valued and have an important role in promoting positive behaviour.

Why Do We Explicitly Teach Our Expected Behaviours?

Introducing, modelling and reinforcing positive social behaviour is an important step of a student's educational experience. Explicitly teaching our behavioural expectations and acknowledging students for demonstrating them is key to our success.

How Do We Teach Social Behaviours?

The school community uses a full range of positive acknowledgement and reinforcement including nonverbal, verbal, tangible or intrinsic. Staff continue to develop appropriate strategies and review positive acknowledgement and reinforcement that may become outdated and considered inappropriate to age groupings or social groupings.

Examples of Positive Acknowledgement and Reinforcement include:

• Positive affirmation by all teachers in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities, including

   positive reinforcement and encouragement, the regular display of work and marking for improvement.

• Positive and encouraging comments on Learning Tasks.

• Awards and prizes distributed, as well as formal recognition at all House assemblies.

• Articles in the school magazine and the school social media accounts.

• A system across the entire College which encourages merits and House points.

• Certificates for academic results and improving academic performance.

• Use of the 4:1 ratio.

• Consistent Positive Recognition on Compass.

Where Do We Teach Our Expected Behaviours?

• Everywhere in the school.

• It is embedded in our school culture.

APPENDIX B
School Wide Positive Approach to encourage expected behaviours

OUT OF UNIFORM

- Each staff member to request uniform pass from student at the start of class.
- Staff to make initial request with student to confiscate item of uniform. If student does not comply, staff not to enter into argument with student. Staff to log on Compass if student refuses to follow instruction. Head of House to follow up at next available opportunity.
- Any out of uniform headwear to be removed and confiscated by teacher.
- Hoodies to be removed and confiscated.
- Students out of uniform could be sent home from College. If parents unable to pick up, student to be withdrawn for remainder of day.

OCCASION   OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

1st   Present to Head of House on arrival to school, uniform pass issued

(With valid reason and timeline for amended uniform).

2nd   Uniform pass issued; parents contacted by Check-in teacher.

3rd   Uniform pass issued; parents contacted by Head of House.

4th   Case managed to individual by Head of House.

MOBILE PHONES

- Student given the opportunity to lock phones securely in House locker/storage area at the beginning of the School day.
- Staff to make initial request with student to confiscate phone. If student does not comply, staff not to enter into an argument with student. Staff to log on Compass if student refuses to follow instruction. Head of House to follow up at next available opportunity.
- Phone to be confiscated.
- Students refusing to hand phone over to be sent home from College. If parents are unable to pick up, student to be withdrawn for remainder of day.

OCCASION   OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

1st   Taken, stored in house lockers/storage area, and collected at the end of
          the school day. Student issued a warning from the Head of House.

2nd   Taken, stored in house lockers/storage area, and collected at the end of
          the school day. Student issued a warning from the Head of House.

3rd   Taken, stored in House lockers. Parents contacted by Head of House.
          Phone to be stored in Head of House locker throughout the school day for
          the agreed time frame.

4th   Taken, stored in House lockers. Parent/Guardian contacted and made
          aware they will need to collect phone from the College. Parent meeting to
          occur with Head of House to discuss College expectations.

STUDENT ATTENDS CLASS WITHOUT REQUIRED MATERIALS (WITHOUT REASONABLE EXCUSE)

OCCASION   OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

1st   Warning and parent notification by classroom teacher via Compass. Materials
          (pens/paper) on loan from classroom teacher. (We are trying not to encourage this
          as students are not bringing their own because we have some at school.)

2nd   Parent notification arranged by classroom teacher. Materials (pens/paper) on loan
          from teacher. Laptop loaned from Resource Centre if necessary. Parent meetings
          arranged by classroom teacher if required.

3rd   Parent notification arranged by classroom teacher. Materials (pens/paper) on loan
          from teacher. Laptop loaned from Resource Centre if available. Parent meetings
          arranged by classroom teacher if required.

4th   Case managed to individual by Head of House.

STUDENTS OUT OF BOUNDS

OCCASION   OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

1st   Students escorted back to College grounds. Teacher to log on Compass. Parents
          notified by Head of House. Students to complete community service supervised by
          Head of House during break time.

2nd   Students escorted back to College grounds. Teacher to log on Compass. Parents
          notified by Head of House. Students to complete community service supervised by
          Head of House during break time.

| 3rd | Students escorted back to College grounds. Teacher to log on Compass. Parents notified by Head of House. Students to complete Principal Detention supervised by Assistant Principal during break time. |
| 4th | Parent meeting to discuss safety concerns and College expectations. Escalated Consequences. |

PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

Suspension via Principal consultation

- At any time, a serious breach of College rules may result in a Behaviour Review Conference where expulsion will be considered.

OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

- Referral to College Wellbeing Team for mediation and/or other alternative programs.

ILLICIT SUBSTANCES/WEAPONS AT SCHOOL

Suspension via Principal consultation

- At any time, a serious breach of College rules may result in a Behaviour Review Conference where expulsion will be considered

OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE TOWARDS A STAFF MEMBER

- Individuals case managed by Head of House. Parents to be contacted.

LATE TO CLASS

- Classroom teachers record on Compass. Classroom teacher to contact home via email or phone call. Students stay back with classroom teacher to make up time.

STUDENTS LEAVING THE LEARNING SPACE WITHOUT PERMISSION

- Classroom teachers record on Compass. Classroom teacher to contact home via email or phone call. Student to make up time with the classroom teacher at a later agreed time.

BUS NETWORK INCIDENTS

OCCASION   OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

1st   Case managed by Assistant Principal in consultation with the Head of House.

SMOKING/VAPING

OCCASION   OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

1st   Educational referral to the Secondary School Nurse (SSN). Head of House to contact parents/guardians.

2nd   Parent meeting required. Possible Internal Suspension via Principal Consultation

3rd   Parent meeting required. Possible External Suspension via Principal Consultation.

TRUANCY

OCCASION   OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

1st   Classroom Teacher completes 'Stage 1 – Truancy' Chronicle (email home). Student receives a warning from the classroom teacher.

2nd   Classroom Teacher completes 'Stage 2 – Truancy' Chronicle (email home). Student makes up time during break completing missed classwork with classroom teacher.

3rd   Classroom Teacher completes 'Stage 3 – Truancy' Chronicle and contacts. parent/guardian *via phone call*. Student completes a community service supervised by classroom teacher.

4th   Classroom Teacher completes 'Chronic Truancy' Chronicle. HOH intervention occurs, Student Support Group Meeting occurs with escalating consequences or further supports implemented.

*Students that are Truant for multiple classes across an individual day are at risk of immediate escalated consequences and further intervention from Head of House or Leadership.

SWPBS Matrix – Appendix C- Classroom
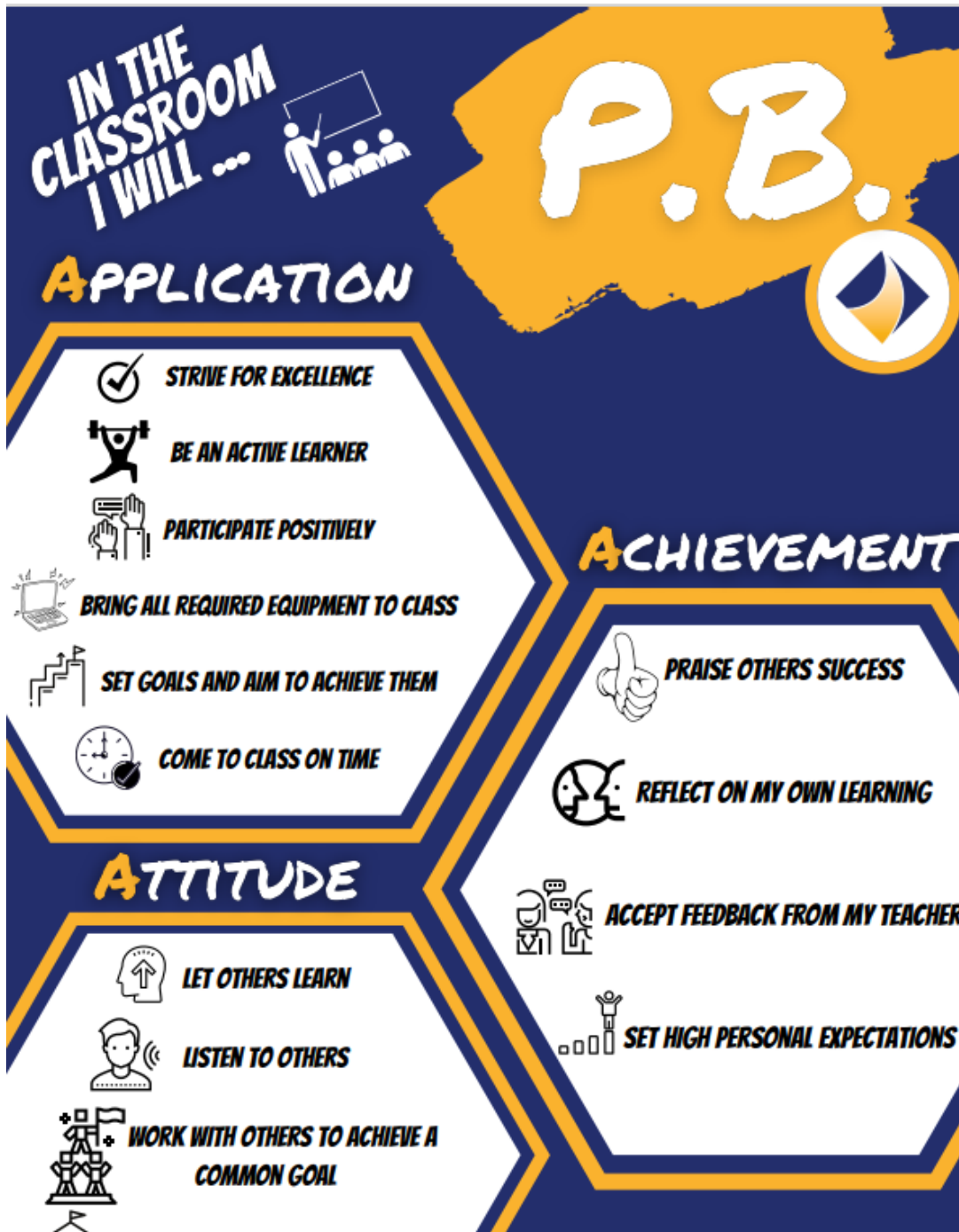
SWPBS Matrix – Appendix D- Community

SWPBS Matrix – Appendix E- School Grounds