



Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



Help for non-English speakers [Interpreting and Translation Services.](#)

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact
Whittlesea Secondary College General Office Ph. (03) 9719-1200.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our Whittlesea Secondary College Community understand:

- a) Whittlesea Secondary College's commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students
- b) Whittlesea Secondary College's expectations for positive student behaviour
- c) Whittlesea Secondary College's support available to students and families
- d) Whittlesea Secondary College's 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 College culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our College acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our College to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive College environment consistent with our Colleges values. Whittlesea Secondary 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 College activities, including camps and excursions.



Contents:

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Policy:

Whittlesea Secondary College Profile

Whittlesea Secondary College places the development of the whole child at the centre of our educational philosophy. Guided by our shared commitment to Excellence, we strive to provide every student with access to high-quality learning that supports them to achieve their full potential.

We believe learning is most powerful when students are active participants in their education. Through student-centred learning, personalised pathways, and strong relationships, we empower students to take ownership of their learning and their future. Student voice plays a vital role in this work. Even when students may not yet recognise its value, we intentionally build their confidence, agency, and capacity to contribute, knowing these skills are essential for lifelong learning and success.

Our programs are designed to nurture curiosity, creativity, imagination, compassion, self-knowledge, social capability, and emotional wellbeing. We work alongside students to help them discover their strengths, explore their interests, and develop the resilience and skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

In the junior years, our curriculum is deliberately broad, allowing students to experience a wide range of learning areas while beginning to identify interests and strengths. As students' progress through the College, increased choice and flexibility within the curriculum ensure learning is engaging, appropriately challenging, and responsive to individual needs. We recognise that learning progression is based on a student's stage of development, not age.

Our Vision

At Whittlesea Secondary College, our vision is to provide the best possible education that empowers every student to become a capable, confident, and resilient twenty-first century learner, prepared to navigate future challenges, contribute positively to their community, and thrive in a changing world.



Our Values

Application

We encourage effort, curiosity, and persistence in learning.

Students are supported to take *positive risks*, apply their learning, and embrace a growth mindset, understanding that progress comes through practice and reflection.

Attitude

We show pride in our College and respect for each other and our learning environments.

We value diversity, kindness, collaboration, and empathy, recognising that strong relationships and inclusive behaviours support learning and wellbeing for all.

Achievement

We hold high expectations for ourselves and others and celebrate both individual and collective success. Students are supported to set goals, monitor their progress, and strive for continuous improvement.

Together, these values support safe, inclusive learning environments, maximise learning growth, and empower students to become confident, capable twenty-first century learners.

Our Philosophy

We believe every student can learn and succeed when they experience high expectations, consistent teaching practice, and strong relationships within a safe and inclusive environment.

We place the development of the whole child at the centre of our work, recognising that learning, wellbeing, and student voice are interconnected. We are committed to delivering a coherent, developmental curriculum that supports students to grow as learners over time, while ensuring teaching practice is evidence-informed and responsive to individual need.

We actively empower students to develop agency, resilience, and a growth mindset, understanding that learning is a journey and that progress is achieved through effort, reflection, and support.

Whittlesea Secondary College is committed to the Victorian Child Safe Standards. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and are dedicated to creating a culture where students feel safe, are safe, and are supported to speak up and be heard.

Our Mission

Our mission is to deliver high-quality education in a safe, orderly, and inclusive learning environment that optimises learning growth and supports the wellbeing of all students.

Through a guaranteed and viable curriculum, consistent high-quality instructional practice, and the effective use of assessment and data, we ensure all students can access learning and achieve their full potential.

We work in partnership with students, families, and the broader community to implement a multi-tiered system of support, strengthen student voice and connectedness, and provide meaningful career education and pathways planning that prepares students for life beyond school.



Whittlesea Secondary College Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

Whittlesea 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 College. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at the College and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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 an inclusive, engaging and supportive culture that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued.
- Welcoming all parents/carers/guardians and being responsive to them as partners in learning.
- Analysing and responding to College data (attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent feedback, Compass and 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 use an instructional framework FIFO 2.0 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 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 (VIT).
- Our College'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 College community.
- Carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling.
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in College 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 and provide feedback on decisions about College operations through Student Representative Council and other forums including House group meetings and Peer support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers,



College leadership, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.

- Provide programs that encourage and foster cross-age connections amongst students through 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.
- We engage in College wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
- Measures to identify, prevent and address harmful behaviours including bullying, racism, homophobia and other discrimination; our Child Safety and Bullying Prevention policies apply across the College.
- We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning.
- 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

- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education in a culturally safe environment, with access to a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) and targeted programs developed in partnership with students, families and community
- Supporting our English as a second language students through our English as an Additional Language (EAL) program, and supporting all cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) students to feel safe and included in our College.
- Supporting learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds
- supporting students enrolled under the department's international student program in accordance with our legal obligations and department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)
- 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



- 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](#)
- Wellbeing staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student well-being data, classroom teachers or other College staff each year
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- 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
- The College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Where required, Whittlesea Secondary College refer families to other Department programs and services such as:

[Student Support Groups](#)

[Individual Education Plan](#)

[Behaviour – students](#)

[Behaviour Support Plans](#)

[Student Support Services](#)

[Navigator](#)

[Program for students with disabilities](#)

[Mental health toolkit](#)

[LOOKOUT](#)

Whittlesea 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, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First
- Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary Whittlesea Secondary College 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:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

Whittlesea Secondary College Identifying Students in need of support

Whittlesea 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Whittlesea 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
- 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 Student Manager meetings



Whittlesea Secondary College Student Rights and Responsibilities

All members of our College community have a right to experience a safe and supportive College environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our College'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 the College
- 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 College community
- respect the right of others to learn.

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

Whittlesea Secondary College Student Behavioural Expectations and Management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our College'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 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 College community, Whittlesea 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 College staff.

Our College 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 College 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, reteaching expected behaviours
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at Whittlesea Secondary College.

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

- [Department of Education Suspension Policy](#)
- [Department of Education Expulsions Policy](#)
- [Department of Education Restraint and Seclusion Policy](#)

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
- CASE21 Attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

Whittlesea 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 College community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our College's website: [Whittlesea Secondary College Policies](#)
- Included in staff induction processes
- Made available in hard copy from College Office Administration upon request
- Included in transition packs
- Included in annual COMPASS posts

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 College policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- [Bullying and Prevention Policy](#)
- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Communicating with School Staff Policy](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)



- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)
- Student Code of Conduct Policy

Evaluation:

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

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