HIGHVALE SECONDARY COLLEGE

Child Safety Policy

Updated from former: *Student Engagement*
& Well-Being Policy

To be read in conjunction with

Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance
And
Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools. Ministerial Order 870.

June, 2016

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1 School profile statement

Highvale Secondary College provides a range of challenging and stimulating curriculum and co-curricular opportunities for students as they pursue excellence and success through their individual learning pathways. Our culture empowers students to be active, motivated and independent learners working cooperatively and individually in order to prepare them for a changing society.

Highvale Secondary College is a medium size, single campus, coeducational Year 7-12 College with a current student population of approximately 1000 students drawn from a wide geographic area. Situated in the eastern Melbourne metropolitan suburb of Glen Waverley, the College serves the areas of Glen Waverley, Nunawading and Knox with a specific bus service providing ready access to students to and from the Knox area.

The Highvale Secondary College physical environment comprises of landscaped gardens and courtyards, with modern buildings and plenty of open space. The school is currently undergoing a building program which is due to be completed in 2018.

The College population is becoming more multi-cultural with 15% of the school population representing over 30 different countries. The majority of our student population come from middle class families within the area. At present we have a gender balance. There is a significant representation of Asian cultures. This diversity adds cultural richness, a global perspective and understanding to the students' learning and the learning environment.

The very experienced teaching staff working with Educational Support Staff provides high quality education in a safe, supportive environment. Our educational philosophy is that students are individuals with differing learning needs. This philosophy is reflected by the student-centred vertical curriculum structure, where individual student placement into classes is based on previous experience, ability/interest rather than chronological age. We actively promote academic excellence with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy and aim to develop student initiative, self esteem, social competencies and leadership skills. A Leading Teacher oversees student wellbeing in the college, focusing on prevention and early intervention to improve student engagement.

The College has excellent retention and attendance rates relevant to State benchmarks and over the past Strategic plans embarked on an intensive teaching and learning professional development program to further challenge the students and enable them to achieve their academic and vocational potential. The College has achieved high academic results and provided successful educational pathways for all students. The College recognises that it must continually strive to improve learning outcomes for all students and that we must continually strive to improve our performance in all domains.

2 Whole-school prevention statement

Highvale Secondary College's underpinning philosophy is to regard each student was an individual and has, over the past developed programs to support this. Each week students are grouped into focus group sessions to enable a program of careers education, student wellbeing, personal development and study skills to be presented. The Year 11 Business Management Market Day and student free dress days provide a carnival atmosphere where staff and students work together to raise money for charity. Lunchtime activities such as debating practice and sporting activities, camps, excursions, themed dress up days for Literacy Week, International Cultural Harmony Day have all assisted students to feel connected to the school. Other programs which support our students include peer support, restorative practices, child safety awareness, outdoor education, and driver education all support the general wellbeing of our students and provide preventative strategies to support student development across the college.

The provision of interactive whiteboards, LCD TVs, ClickView and the introduction of a bring Your Own Device Program has been aimed at improving the engagement of students in the classroom.

The College's COMPASS system has enabled parents and the school to be informed of students' absence. It is an efficient system that enhances our high attendance rates in the college.

3 Rights and responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

Highvale Secondary College has a culture of 'no tolerance' for Child Abuse.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

Under the act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of the following attributes:
- age
- breastfeeding
- gender identity
- impairment
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status or status as carer
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association (with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes).

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:
- Freedom
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural Rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights.

All DET employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:
- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights

Part of the monitoring of Human Rights will be to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist on the School Compliance web site.

3.4 Students with disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- Any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- Any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

3.5 Child Safe Standards

Ministerial Order No. 870 sets out the specific actions that registered schools need to take to meet the **child safe standards**. The Ministerial Order places accountability for managing the risk of child abuse with school governing authorities.
To create and maintain a child safe organisation, organisations must have:

Standard 1 - strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

Standard 2 - a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3 - a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with

children

Standard 4 - screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk

of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Standard 5 - processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Standard 6 - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Standard 7 - strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

In complying with the child safe standards organisations must include the following principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability.

3.6 Definitions

Child abuse includes—

(a) any act committed against a child involving—

  (i) a sexual offence; or

  (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming); and

(b) the infliction, on a child, of—

  (i) physical violence; or

  (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and

(c) serious neglect of a child.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school council for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

  (a) the campus of the school;

  (b) online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and

  (c) other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings)

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include
- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable. Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle: (The most common)
They include:
• Offensive staring and leering.
• Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
• Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
• Questions about another's sexual activity.
• Persistent comments about a person's private life or family.
• Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body.
• Offensive name calling.

Explicit: (obvious)

They include:
- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
- Displays of sexually graphic material– pornography.
- Requests for sexual favours.
Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

Bullying can involve such things as
- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person's property
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyberbullying

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (eg copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information (we used to call it 'stranger danger')
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something is 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
Students have a right to: • work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition • participate fully in the school's educational program	Students have a responsibility to: • Participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community. • Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. • As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals. • Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Rights	Responsibilities
• parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged	Parents/carers have a responsibility to: • Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours. • Ensure their child's regular attendance • Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding

	their child's learning.
	• Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
Teachers have a right to • expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment • be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student •	Teachers have a responsibility to • Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy. • Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively. • Know the content they teach. • Know their students. • Plan and assess for effective learning. • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments. • Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning. • Refer students who they believe are at risk to the relevant year level coordinator, Head of School and Leading Teacher: Director of Student Well Being. • The year level coordinator and Head of School and Leading Teacher: Student Wellbeing will liaise with parents, support students and implement appropriate strategies of support. • The Leading Teacher: Director of Student Well Being may make a referral to an outside agency or DET Guidance Officer.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Principal

Rights	Responsibilities
The Principal has the right to • Expect that all members of the Highvale Secondary College community comply with the Rights and Responsibilities as outlined in the Child Safety Policy	• The Principal has the overall responsibility to ensure that the Child Safety Policy is fully implemented

Rights and Responsibilities of all members of the school community

Rights	Responsibilities
All members of the school community should be free from bullying and harassment and have a zero tolerance for child abuse.	If you are being **harassed or bullied** you should: • Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop. • Discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with. If you observe or are the recipient of **Child Abuse** you should: • Report the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with. If you have any concerns about **Child Safety** you should: • Report the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with. Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

4. Shared expectations

Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Highvale Secondary College has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

The Highvale Secondary College values are based on the Australian Government's nine values, for Australian schools, which are:

- **Care and Compassion**
  Care for self and others
- **Integrity**
  Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
- **Doing Your Best**
  Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
- **Respect** Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view
- **Fair Go**
  Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
- **Responsibility**
  Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment

- **Freedom**
  Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
- **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion**
  Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others
- **Honesty and Trustworthiness**
  Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

Highvale Secondary College Values

The College have five values that underpin all codes of practices, policies, programs and procedures.

VALUE	QUALITIES
Respect	- Self esteem - Courtesy - Pride - Having regard for yourself, others & property *Listening with understanding and empathy*
Responsibility	- Cooperation - Accountability for actions and words - Trust *Managing impulsivity*
Excellence	- Commitment - Motivation - Striving for excellence to achieve one's potential *Thinking and communicating with clarity & precision* *Striving for accuracy*
Resilience	- Persistence *Open to continuous learning*
Integrity	- Being honest, just and fair *Thinking independently*

School expectations include:

- inclusive teaching practices
- accessible educational provision for all students
- parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success
- provision of appropriate student services
- development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.

Restorative Practices
The school is currently investigating the use of restorative practices with students and implementing its use with some classes. Staff are currently staff are receiving Restorative Practices:
- are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness (Bond et al. 2001, Fuller 1999)
- promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy (Hopkins 2002)
- involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution (Braithwaite 2001b)
- promote relationship management rather than behavior management (Cameron & Thorsborne 2001)
- separate the deed from the doer (Marshall et al. 2002)
- are systematic, not situational (Armstrong 2004)

- are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied (Morrison 2002).

Diversity in the school community

The school aims to address diversity by:

- maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community
- attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer
- increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce
- enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs
- Creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems.

5. School actions and consequences

5.1   Child Safety

School staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they should take immediate action.

Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to police.

Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of safety to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, school staff can discharge this duty of care by following the reporting child abuse procedures, as listed.

Reporting Child Abuse

The following describes how to make a mandatory report, to report child abuse or child protection concerns.

In case of emergency or if a child is in immediate danger contact Triple Zero (000) or the Glen Waverley police station 9565 1555. Alternatively, to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection, call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78
Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information: ▪   information that has led to concerns about the child's safety (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour) ▪   the source of this information (e.g. observation of behaviour, report from child or another person) ▪   the actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with principal, report to DHHS Child Protection etc.).
Discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the principal or a member of the school leadership team. The individual staff member should then make their own

assessment about whether they should make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.

Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following information:

- full name, date of birth, and residential address of the child or young person

- the details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns

- the individual staff member's involvement with the child and young person

- details of any other agencies who may be involved with the child or young person, if known.

Make a report to the relevant agency

To report concerns that are life threatening phone 000 or the local police station 95651555.

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHS Child Protection, call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hrs 7 days, toll free)

To report concerns to DHHS Child Protection, contact the local child protection office 1300 360 391.

Make a written record of the report which includes the following information:

- the date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported

- the name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report.

Notify relevant school staff and/or Department staff of a report to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST. For Victorian government schools, the allegations must be reported to the:

- principal or member of the school leadership team

- Department's Security Services Unit on (03) 9589 6266

- North Eastern Regional Office 9265 2400

- Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit on (03) 9637 2934 or (03) 9637 2487.
In the case of international students, the principal must notify the International Education Division on (03) 9637 2990 to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for the student.

In the case of Koorie students, the principal must notify the Regional Office to ensure that the regional Koorie support officer can arrange appropriate support for the student.

5.2 General Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. The school does not permit the use of corporal punishment under any circumstances. Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- understanding the student's background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- Scaffolding the student's learning program.

Broader support strategies will include:

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators
- tutoring/peer tutoring
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts
- Involving community support agencies.

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in section 4.3 of the DEECD guidelines published in **Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines**. Please see link below,

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges

- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time.

  Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.

- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a

reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.

The principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship (for example, where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.

• Convening of a support group (See Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for process required).

References

Student Engagement and inclusion Guidance	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx
Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority – Child Safe Standards	http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/default.html
School Accountability and Improvement Framework	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/profdev/Pages/satopics.aspx
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/legislation.aspx
Safe Schools	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/health/Pages/respectfulsch.aspx
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/multirightchart.aspx
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/the-law/equal-opportunity-act
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/legislation/pages/act2006.aspx
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/conduct/victorian-teaching-profession-code-of-conduct/Pages/ReadtheCode.aspx