

HIGHVALE SECONDARY COLLEGE STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Highvale Secondary College front office.

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.

Highvale 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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2. School values, philosophy, and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Established in 1977, Highvale is a successful secondary college with an excellent academic record. It is located east of Melbourne in the Glen Waverley area. We have approximately 1130 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12 and 100 school staff members including a Director of Wellbeing, Mental Health Practitioner, and Psychologist. The school specialises in Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and, as a result, an extremely high percentage of students gain entrance to tertiary studies. Highvale has a strong record of curriculum innovation, provided in a safe, caring environment, and has developed a positive sense of community through staff commitment and parent participation.

There are fully equipped specialist rooms for the arts, science, information technology, media, food technology, library, and robotics. Building upgrades have been undertaken in science, information technology, technology materials, visual arts, media, food technology and administration, as well as a Senior Study Student Centre, canteen, tennis courts, indoor sports gymnasium, multi-purpose basketball courts, music laboratories, all situated in a native garden setting.

Our school is culturally diverse with most families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE groups being Chinese (Mandarin) and Hindi. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Highvale Secondary College's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff, and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, and excellence at every opportunity.

Highvale Secondary College's vision is for all students to achieve and grow as learners, and to generate their own course for lifelong learning. Students will be empowered to take ownership of their learning, to make purposeful contributions to their learning environments, and to tackle issues arising in the world around them.

Highvale Secondary College's mission is to provide an inclusive, encouraging, caring, safe and secure learning environment where we develop responsible behaviours through clear expectations and high levels of consistency and accountability.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Highvale 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.

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- Focus on establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers and students, and establishing a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to achieve success.
- 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 VCE Vocational Major to ensure that students can choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- teachers at Highvale Secondary College use an Instructional Model that provides teachers with a holistic, consistent, and strategic framework for classroom practice and acts as a scaffold for the implementation of High Impact Teaching Strategies, literacy practices and Amplify (Student Voice and Agency)
- teachers at Highvale 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.
- Acknowledge positive behaviour i.e. Upholding the 5 College values of respect, responsibility, resilience integrity and excellence and student achievement through the School Wide Positive Behaviour Program in the classroom via Green Chronicles, and formally in school assemblies, College newsletters, communication to parents and the college awards evening.
- Monitor, promote and maintain high levels of student attendance and participation through:
 - o Articulating high expectations to all members of the school community.
 - o Adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absences
 - o Following up student absences promptly and consistently
 - o Implementing data-driven improvement strategies
 - o Providing early identification of monitoring and supportive intervention for students at risk of nonattendance
- students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Heads of Sub school, Year Level Coordinators, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through our vertical structure, school plays, swimming, athletics, music programs and peer support programs.

- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Sub school teams or our wellbeing team, if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Resilience project
 - Man Cave
 - Tomorrow's Woman
- 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 and lunchtime activities) peers support programs
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted

- each year group has a Year level Coordinator, 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, supported by the Marrung lead in the school.
- 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 support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background.
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported by a designated teacher, 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.
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported by the international team, in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future. They will participate in a Focus Group

Careers Education Program, including Morrisby Testing (at Year 9) and Career Action Plans with targeted goals and support to plan for their future.

- Highvale Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Highvale 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 Education 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 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
- 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

Highvale 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. Highvale 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
- School Wide Positive Behaviour data and suspension data
- attendance, detention, and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

Issues such as suicide risk, new self-harm, homelessness, family violence incidents, abuse and mandatory reporting matters must be reported to Wellbeing or a Principal Class Officer as soon as possible.

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.

All members have an obligation to ensure the school property and resources are appropriately used and maintained. It is the right of all members of the Highvale Secondary College community to experience a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment.

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 sub schools or the school leadership team. 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/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 school community, Highvale Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement and the SWPB Continuum of Response for minor and major behaviours. 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 implements 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 of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

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

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

When the principal determines that a suspension is justified, a student support group meeting will be convened to provide a notice of suspension, explain the reasons, detail the school days on which the suspension will occur and where the suspensions will occur, provide contact details for additional support services, and develop a student absence learning plan that outlines school work to be undertaken during the period of suspension. In the case of a student putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, staff or other students at significant risk, the principal may suspend a student immediately. When a student is suspended it will be the shortest time necessary. A post-suspension student support group meeting may also be scheduled. This is optional but recommended at Highvale Secondary College.

In determining whether to implement an in-school suspension or an out-of-school- suspension, we will consider the educational, social, and emotional impacts on the student and the school community.

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- Suspension process
- Expulsions – Decision

The Principal of Highvale 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

Highvale 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 and Compass
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Highvale 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, parent and staff surveys
- SWPBS data and Compass data
- School academic reports
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data.

Highvale Secondary College will also regularly monitor available data dashboards such as Panorama to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website and Compass
- Included in staff induction processes.
- 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](#)
- [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:

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	10/10/2023
Consultation	School Council 18/10/23 Principal
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2025