



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand: our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students, expectations for positive student behaviour support available to students and families and our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Alexandra 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 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.

Policy

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1. School profile

Our College is the centre of a large catchment, taking students from the towns of Molesworth, Yarck, Merton, Eildon, Thornton, Taggerty, Buxton, Narbethong, Marysville and Alexandra.

Years 7 and 8 have a core curriculum. Year 9 curriculum is a mix of core and elective units (4 periods a week) featuring an extended unit (6 periods a week) each semester in activity-based learning. We offer a wide range of VCE and VET subjects. Year 10 students have access to these studies. Our co-curricular activities include music, skiing, in car driver education at Year 10, Alice Sloan Expedition (for Year 11 girls). This school has 313 students and its equivalent full-time staff is 2 Principal staff, 25.5 teachers and 12.3 Education Support staff.

2. School values philosophy and vision

Our College values are Respect, Personal Best and Integrity and we use a Positive Behaviour Support approach to assist the students to develop these.

Our teaching and learning philosophy is focussed on improving student outcomes – academic, physical social and emotional. We aim to do this by ensuring:

- The teaching and learning is relevant to each student's interests, lives and aspirations
- The teaching and learning is rigorous, and each teacher will be committed to appropriately support, build and challenge every student
- Relationships are an essential component of effective learning and teaching
- Our practices are based on what research and data has shown to be effective.

Our vision for Alexandra Secondary College is to provide our community with a school where:

- Students feel safe, supported and engaged in their education
- the needs and aspirations of each student are catered for by offering a wide range of curriculum choices and extra curriculum activities
- each student is provided with a structured and supported pathway which leads to successful study, employment or training choices
- the special individual strengths and talents of every student, parent and member of staff are valued and developed.

3. Engagement Strategies

Our College promotes active 'student participation' as an avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating school change. Student participation ranges from young people sharing their opinions of problems and potential solutions through Student Representative Council (SRC) or in focus groups associated with school strategic planning. It also includes our students sharing their 'voice' by collaborating with teachers to improve their own educational outcomes, including helping to improve teaching, curriculum and teacher-student relationships and leading to changes in student assessment.

Student voice/student participation is about valuing people and valuing the learning that results when we engage the capacities and multiple voices in the school. It focuses on realising the leadership potential inherent within all learners.

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

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing

- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- 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 VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Alexandra Secondary College use the e⁵ instructional framework 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 Alexandra 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 are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Year Group Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs that teach:
 - Respectful relationships
 - Anti-bullying
 - Safety at school
- 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)
- peers support programs

Targeted

- each year group has a Year Level Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year level, 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

- 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
- 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 a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Alexandra Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- 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

Individual

Alexandra 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 modifying learning program
- 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 ChildFirst
 - 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
- running regular Student Support Group contact for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

The school will use coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. The school will provide the following support structures:

- monitoring of, and responding to, protracted student absences
- student management plans
- protocol for mandatory reporting
- Student Support Group's for children in need

Longitudinal data will be collected regarding frequency and types of welfare issues, so as to measure the success or otherwise of school-based strategies and approaches. Some sources of data are:

- the Attitudes to School Survey data
- Panorama report data
- Parent Opinion survey data
- data from case management work with students

Sentral – the data mapping system we use – will assist us to identify students at risk. It will include attendance data, On Demand & NAPLAN data, information about positive and negative behaviour incidents, and details of communication between home and school. The aim is to facilitate school, parent and student communication by enabling access by parents and students to certain areas of their student data.

5. Student rights and responsibilities

It is the right of all members of the Alexandra Secondary College community to experience a safe, pleasant and supportive learning and teaching environment. Staff, students and parents/ carers have a right to be treated with respect and enjoy an environment free from bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation. Teachers also have the rights to be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that may impact on their teaching and learning for that student.

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, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have a responsibility to contribute positively to the educational experience for themselves and other students, to participate fully in the school's educational program, and to ensure that their behaviours demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

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.

Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Alexandra Secondary College's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Alexandra Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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 reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

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

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

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

The Principal of Alexandra Secondary College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

6. Engaging with Families

Alexandra 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, where possible, 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.

7. Evaluation

Alexandra Secondary College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data on Sentral
- school reports
- parent survey
- CASES21

Communication

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed and approved at School Council Meeting

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

[Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)
[Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
[Child Safe Standards](#)

Review Cycle

Date Implemented	October 2021
Consultation	School leadership team, Student Representative Council, School Council, student surveys, parent meetings.
Approved By	Principal
Date Reviewed 2 Years	October 2023