

Student Wellbeing and Engagement

Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the front office on 9744 0500.

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

Sunbury Downs 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, helping to engage students and support them in their continuous learning journey. Our school acknowledges that positive student wellbeing and high 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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POLICY

1. School profile

Sunbury Downs College was established in 1988 and is situated approximately 40 kilometres northwest of Melbourne in the semi-rural town of Sunbury. We have approximately 710 students enrolled from Grade 7 to 12, and 120 school staff members including, a Student Services Coordinator, Mental Health Practitioner, Careers Coordinator, and a School Nurse. Our College is an inclusive school offering a wide range of programs that cater for all students. There is a strong emphasis on developing individual student wellbeing and positive interpersonal relationships. Students are at the centre of our teaching and learning.

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Sunbury Downs College is the only secondary school in the area that offers an Accelerated Curriculum and Enrichment (ACE) program, extending students through a challenging curriculum including early commencement of VCE. The ACE program is a select entry course with enrolment from the feeder primary schools for students in Years 7-9. New enrolments are welcome to make enquiries about the suitability of this program for their children. We also offer a Scholars Program for students in Years 10 to provide students with a range of opportunities.

Our College is an accredited International Student Program provider. This program has enabled the College to work closely with the Department of Education and Training and the local community to engage in cultural immersion and promote diversity. The College has students and families from 45 different nationalities enrolled at our school, supporting a culturally and linguistically diverse learning environment.

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

Sunbury Downs College's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Our College values of **Respect**, **Resilience**, **Ambition** and **Community** are embedded within our teaching and learning practice. These core values support a culture of participation and excellence based on the development of positive relationships and personal growth by all community members.

We have a reputation for helping students achieve outstanding VCE and VCE-VM results, further reinforcing to our students the school motto '**Confidence to Achieve**'.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Sunbury Downs 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 additional social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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

Universal

- School-wide positive behaviour support (SWPBS) is a framework that brings together school communities to develop positive, safe, supportive learning cultures. SWPBS assists our students to improve their social, emotional, behavioural and academic outcomes
- 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 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

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- 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 Vocational Education Training in Schools (VETiS) programs, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Education – Vocational Major (VCE-VM) and Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- Teachers at Sunbury Downs College use the LEMAR instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidence based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- Teachers at Sunbury Downs 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
- Staff will endeavour to apply a holistic, strengths-based approach to working with all students
- Our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents / carers 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 via the Compass platform
- 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 Voice and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Sub School Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- Create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the College Production, Swimming and Athletics Carnivals, music programs, early commencement programs, and sports days
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Services (via their Sub School), School Nurse, Level Coordinators, Sub School Leaders, 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 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:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Party Safe
 - Love Bites
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. managing stress and mental wellbeing)
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

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- 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 Year Level Coordinators responsible for their year, who monitor the health, wellbeing and academic progress of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Connect all First Nation students with the Inclusion Leader
- All students in Out of Home Care will have an Individual Education Plan, a Student Support Group (SSG) meeting and will be supported by the Inclusion Leader or Learning Support Team
- Sunbury Downs College assists students to plan their Year 10 Work Experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- Students with a physical or intellectual 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
- Students enrolled under the Department's International Student Program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and provide an opportunity for these students to come together in a supportive and nurturing environment through Glitter Club. The College also follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#).
- All cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school by:
 - (i) Actively nurturing and promoting a culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity
 - (ii) Ensuring that students are not discriminated against (directly or indirectly) and where necessary, are reasonably accommodated to participate in their education and school activities (e.g. schools sports and College Production), on the same basis as their peers
 - (iii) Acknowledging and responding to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students
 - (iv) Encourage empathy and fairness towards others
 - (v) Challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices
 - (vi) Contribute to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students
 - (vii) Respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that students are not victimised.

The College conducts programs and activities that promote inclusion and diversity such as International Women's Day, Harmony Day, Wear It Purple Day, IDAHOBIT Day, R U Ok Day, and Love Bites.

Bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification and other forms of inappropriate behaviour targeting individuals or groups because of their personal attributes will not be tolerated at Sunbury

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Downs College. We will take appropriate measures, consistent with *Bullying Prevention* policies to respond to students who demonstrate these behaviours at our school.

Individual

Sunbury Downs 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 the student and their parent / guardian to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- Develop, implement, and monitor 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 or utilising sensory supports for students
- Referring the student to:
 - School-based wellbeing supports
 - Student Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, Headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or The Orange Door
 - 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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- Engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Office (KESO)
- 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
 - With Individual Education Plans
 - To develop strategies to support their engagement, behavioural, emotional and cognitive growth.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Sunbury Downs College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Management Team and Student Services Team play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies that help to identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Sunbury Downs College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

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- Personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- Individual Education Plans
- Attendance records
- Academic performance
- 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 and Sunbury Downs College staff.

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.

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
- Freely 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 / carers and approach a trusted staff member or a member of the student management team or 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, Sunbury Downs College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour,

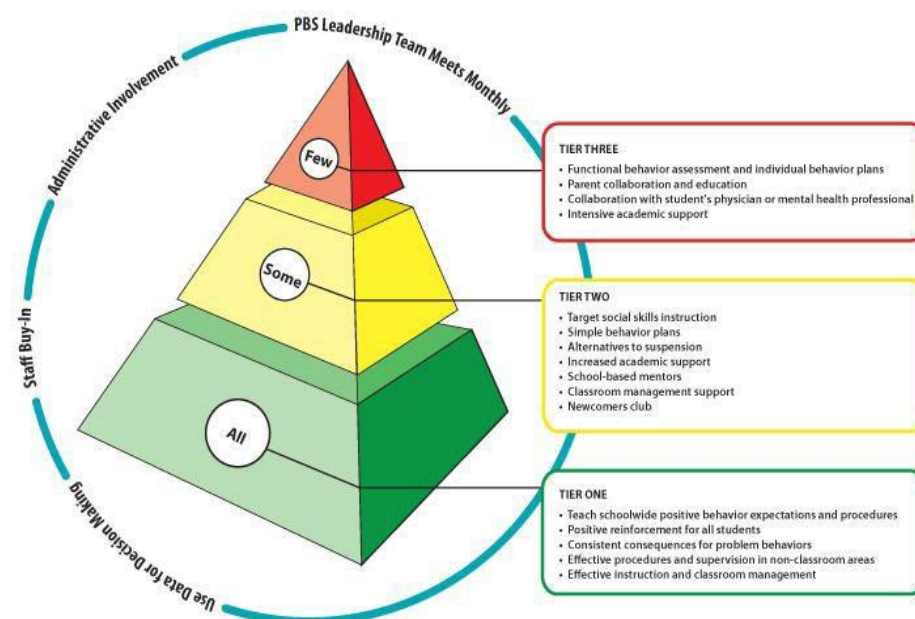
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discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

The College considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, restorative conversations, withdrawal of privileges, withdrawal from class, or suspensions.

All members of The College community are expected to model appropriate behaviours as set out by the College Values and the School Wide Positive Behaviour Expectations as outlined in our locations matrix and learning tasks matrix. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.



Our Values:

Respect is demonstrated through our positive interactions with one another.

Resilience is demonstrated when we respond positively to challenges.

Ambition is demonstrated through positive actions towards achieving goals.

Community is demonstrated when we positively engage in our community and include others.

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.

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 or 'removal' from class

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- Community service
- Payment for broken items
- Communication with parent / guardian via phone or email
- 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.

The Principal of Sunbury Downs 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

Sunbury Downs 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
- Using Compass to communicate student progress, attendance, academic progress including progress reports, College and community events / activities, careers information, and matters pertaining to Student Management
- Involving families in school decision making
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- Including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Sunbury Downs College regularly 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:

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- Student survey data
- Incidents data
- Removal from class data
- School reports
- Suspension data
- Parent survey
- Case management
- Student Services cases data
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Sunbury Downs 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 school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on the College website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents / guardians and students
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent / guardian 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](#)

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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	May 2025
Consultation	School Council June 2025 School Community – ongoing consultation with the school community via an offer to provide feedback on child safety policies and procedures as outlined on our website
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2027