

INTRODUCTION

All staff members of Bairnsdale Secondary College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children. At Bairnsdale Secondary College our values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

AIM

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
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Bairnsdale 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 College values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. This policy applies to all staff and students at the Main Campus and Ngooloo Campus.

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POLICY

School profile

The Bairnsdale Secondary College main campus is located on Gunai Kurnai land, spread across a large site adjoining an open vegetated wetland area. The College has approximately 1200 students, with over 60% travelling to school by bus. A small number of students attend the Ngooloo campus which is based in The Hub located at 27 Dalmohoy Street, Bairnsdale, a council-run community centre.

The College's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage is below the average school in Australia.

Approximately 10% of the school population is from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background.

The College is structured around three Learning Hubs and one Wellbeing Hub (Yenella), which are named in the Gunai Kurnai language, symbolising students' journeys through the College:

- Year 7 - Wargomerrin (morning)
- Year 8/9 - Wurrin (day)
- Year 10/11/12 - Malgobila (night)
- Wellbeing Hub - Yenella (to lift or raise up).

Each Learning Hub is supported by an Assistant Principal, a Hub Leader, Coordinators, Education Support Staff and Learning Support Assistants. The Malgobila Hub also integrates VCAL staff and a Careers Counsellor. This structure enables a holistic approach to the needs of individual students, encompassing our College values and recognising the strong link between education and wellbeing.

Yenella coordinates a range of wellbeing programs and activities offered in the College, supporting students across all year levels. These include the Wellbeing counselling group, Girls at the Centre (Smith Family) program, Clontarf Academy, Learning Support Assistants and the Doctors in Secondary Schools program.

The College has a satellite site providing an alternative VCAL study centre (Ngooloo) for regional youth disengaged from mainstream education and potentially at risk. Ngooloo provides students with a VCAL pathway in an alternative setting other than the main campus. The Yenella and Malgobila Hubs, along with the VCAL Coordinator, is in regular contact with Ngooloo to provide support for the College's off-site VCAL program.

School values, philosophy and vision

Bairnsdale Secondary College's Statement of Values is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

Bairnsdale Secondary College embraces the entire school community and the following values:

- **Respect:** Showing that we care for, understand, accept and appreciate ourselves and others.
- **Responsibility:** Owning our actions and words and being accountable for them.
- **Resilience:** Having the ability to face and recover from challenges, including trying hard and not giving up easily.

The College adopted a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) approach and in 2021 has implemented a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Plan with a tiered intervention framework to support positive behaviour.

IMPLEMENTATION

Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

Bairnsdale 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 and/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 student engagement strategies used by our College is included below.

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Universal strategies

Whole-school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- implementation of a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support program (SWPBS)
- developing a strong organisational culture that focuses on teaching and learning and promotes student wellbeing as part of the core business of the College community
- teachers utilising our Effective Teaching and Learning Framework 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
- having high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising positive relationships between staff and students, and recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- 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
- delivering a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students can choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- using an explicit instructional model with a clear and shared method of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- incorporating our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into the curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- committing to early intervention with ongoing supports for students requiring additional support
- acknowledging and celebrating examples of student engagement with the College's values in the classroom, assemblies and communication to the home
- empowering students to openly communicate any concerns they may have with a trusted member of staff. School staff can guide students to access a range of support services, including:
 - Staff members
 - School Doctor
 - School Chaplain
 - Student Wellbeing Staff members
 - School Nurse
 - Hub staff / School Leaders.
- 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.

Students are welcome to self-refer to access the College's support services. Learning Hubs are often a first option for students requiring support.

Targeted strategies

Students in Years 7 and 8 participate in the College's Pastoral Program. This program is centred on the specific teaching of Social and Emotional Learning skills. We believe that students who experience explicit teaching of these skills show improved academic outcomes, demonstrate critical thinking in their decision making processes and as a result are less likely to engage in risky and disruptive behaviour. This long-term program focuses on:

- ensuring students feel cared for at school and connected to the goals of the school
- increasing students' self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management with the aim to develop the building blocks of resilience and self-regulation
- developing social and mental wellbeing for all students
- teachers having a role in building the personal and social capabilities of all students through explicit point of need teaching and role modelling.
- 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.
- 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](#).

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- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment.
- 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
- all students in Year 9 participate in the Morrisby Career Investigator program.
- all students from Year 7 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Bairnsdale Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan and Morrisby Career Investigator.

Bairnsdale Secondary College supports a safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal students and their families by ensuring:

- a student’s ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
- staff, students, volunteers, and the school community are equipped to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students
- measures are in place to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences, such as a clearly worded Bullying Policy and
- active support for the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and students and their families

Students at all year levels at the College have opportunities to further develop their levels of participation, engagement and leadership skills through the Leadership Program. This program supports students to become stronger leaders and team participants. Outcomes for students include:

- increased self-confidence
- a stronger self-identity
- more effective communication skills (including public speaking)
- stronger decision-making skills
- opportunities for student agency within the school community.

Other targeted strategies to promote engagement and inclusion include:

- attaching each year group to a Learning Hub. Hub staff monitor the health and wellbeing of students and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- connecting all ATSI students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)
- appointing a Learning Mentor, developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and identifying specific educational needs for all students in Out of Home Care (OOHC)
- providing targeted health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified
- assisting students in Year 9 and above to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and identification of supports to plan for their future.

Individual strategies

The College has a strong organisational culture centred on teaching and learning. This is essential to meeting the needs of all students, particularly Students Requiring Additional Support (SRAS). The responsibility for overseeing the learning program of a student requiring additional support resides with Hub Leaders and Assistant Principals, who work closely with teachers and support staff to ensure a coordinated response.

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The College has an Effective Teaching Framework which is followed closely when evaluating and designing learning programs for students requiring additional support. Central to the success of any program is knowledge about a student which will inform planning.

Teachers understand that building relationships is integral to develop effective learning plans and will utilise a range of strategies appropriate to each individual student to maximise engagement.

Early intervention with ongoing supports is important to provide the best opportunities for young people requiring additional support. The College is committed to practices and systems that support early intervention and this intervention should lead to Individual Education Plans (IEPS) where programs, implementation and review is cyclical. The IEP is documented and published on students' Compass Profiles.

The network of additional supports available for students includes:

- Student Support Groups (SSG)
- Learning Mentors
- Learning Support Assistants
- reading comprehension programs
- referral to external agencies
- Girls at the Centre / Clontarf
- Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)
- Student Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services
- Doctors in Secondary Schools Program (DISS)
- Lookout (Living Out of Home Care support group)
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Understanding Student Behaviour Document.

Staff apply an individual approach to working with students who have experienced trauma, in line with our beliefs around support for students requiring additional support.

At risk students may be referred to the College's alternative campus, Ngooloo, to improve engagement with the College's educational programs and better access other wellbeing and community supports.

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 meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Identifying students in need of support

Bairnsdale Secondary College is committed to supporting our students intellectually, emotionally and socially. All staff help identify students requiring additional support. The College's three Learning Hubs and the Student Wellbeing Team coordinate with staff to develop and implement strategies to enhance student wellbeing.

Staff members at Bairnsdale Secondary College utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- SAFEMinds Framework
- TRUST (Trauma informed practice)
- attendance records
- personal, health and learning information gathered on enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- observations about students by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation.
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- Compass attendance and academic data

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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 and School Philosophy* 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 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 staff member, Hub staff or Wellbeing Team member. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our [BSC Complaints Policy](#).

Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*. If a student acts outside of our College Values, a response consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines is instigated.

Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and/or other school staff.

Student bullying behaviour will be managed consistent with Bairnsdale Secondary College's *Bullying Prevention Policy*. Teachers apply consistently used core practices and develop established expectations around student behaviour in each of their classes. These are based on the College's *SWPBS*, which incorporates key beliefs about:

- managing behaviour in a calm, confident and assertive way
- using positive and corrective language and encouraging students
- avoiding over-servicing by ignoring secondary behaviours, allowing take up time and providing all students with attention
- avoiding confrontation without accepting disrespectful behaviour towards any person
- clarifying consequences for students
- developing the least intrusive approach
- following up
- respecting and encouraging students to respect the learning environment.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies, ensuring contributing factors are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at the College will be applied fairly and consistently and in line with our College Values. 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
- applying a teacher-controlled consequence such as moving a student within a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate response to misbehaviour
- withdrawing privileges
- referring to a Learning Hub
- implementing restorative practices and sometimes also detentions, suspensions or expulsions.

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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>

The Principal of Bairnsdale 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.

Engaging with families

Bairnsdale 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:

- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school 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
- ensuring that parents have access to relevant school policies and procedures via our school website, information sessions, enrolment packs and newsletters.

Ngooloo Campus

Bairnsdale Secondary College's goals are to maximise the engagement of all students in our educational and wellbeing programs. We recognise that for some students, despite the range of supports offered, engagement may still be difficult. Our alternative campus, Ngooloo, is a small campus and provides alternative VCAL programs for Year 10-12 students. Teaching staff work closely with students and their parents / carers, supporting students to maintain engagement at secondary school and improve opportunities for employment in our community.

Referrals to Ngooloo campus may take place after the following supports have been provided at the McKean Street campus:

- Modified timetables
- Student Support Groups (SSG) meetings
- Learning Mentors / Learning Support Assistants
- Parent / carer meetings
- Referral to external agencies
- Reengagement programs
- Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)
- Student Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services
- Lookout (Living Out of Home Care support group)
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Understanding Student Behaviour Document.

Referrals to Ngooloo will only occur in consultation with the student, the student's parents / carers, teachers, Hub staff, Ngooloo teachers and other staff involved in the support of the student. Ngooloo referrals are restricted to students 15 years or older.

Evaluation

Bairnsdale 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
- Compass Chronicle reports
- Compass attendance data
- parent/carer survey data
- case management
- CASES 21 including attendance and absence data
- school progress and semester reports.

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

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

RELATED DOCUMENTS / KEY REFERENCES

BSC:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations (including mandatory reporting) Policy
- Acceptable Use for Internet, Social Media & Digital Technologies Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Attendance Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework
- School Staff Selection, Supervision and Management Practices for a Child Safe Environment
- The PROTECT Portal
- Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools
- Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations
- Ministerial Order 625: Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion
- Department Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines
- Reg 23, Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).

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