



# Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

## INTRODUCTION

All staff members of Bairnsdale Secondary College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children. Our College values of 'respect for self', 'respect for others' and 'be the best you can be' provide a strong foundation for this policy.

## 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
- supports that are 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 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 the College 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. The policy is available on the College website.

## POLICY

### School Profile

Bairnsdale Secondary College is sited on Gunai Kurnai land and has approximately 1200 students enrolled, drawing on local communities. Over 60% of these students travel to school by bus.

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

10% of the school population are Koorie.

The three learning Hubs at the College 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).

Each Hub is supported by an Assistant Principal, Leading Teachers, Coordinators, Education Support Staff, Integration Aides and the Student Wellbeing Team. 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 school values and emphasising the strong link between education and wellbeing.

BSC also has a satellite site providing an alternative VCAL study centre (Changing Lanes) for regional youth disengaged from mainstream education and potentially at risk.

### **School Values and Beliefs**

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 for self
- Respect for others
- Respect for the environment
- Be the best you can be.

Additional staff values are:

- Students are the focus
- Working together
- Honour and celebrate diversity.

College Beliefs:

- All people can learn, grow and make a difference to the quality of our environment and others' lives
- Knowledge is constantly evolving and we have a collective responsibility to equip all learners with skills that enable them to access this knowledge
- The learning environment needs to be safe for learners to take risks, feel included and endorsed
- Everyone is different and will have different beginning and end points, so learning must be customised.

The College Vision is 'To create a learning community with a focus on improving teaching practice through ongoing performance development so that students' outcomes improve'.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Engagement Strategies**

Bairnsdale Secondary College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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 engagement strategies used by our school, is included below:

### **Universal Engagement Strategies**

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

- 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 are able to 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 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
  - Pastoral teachers
  - Student Mentors
  - School Doctor
  - Student Wellbeing Staff members
  - School Nurse
  - School Chaplain
  - Hub staff
  - School Leaders.

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

Students in Years 7 to 10 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

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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.

Students 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.

### **Targeted Engagement Strategies**

Targeted strategies to promote positive behaviour 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 Koorie 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 10 and above to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and identification of supports to plan for their future.

### **Individual Engagement 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 the Hub Leader and Assistant Principal of the student's year level who will work closely with teachers and support staff to ensure a coordinated response.

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
- Classroom aides
- Reading comprehension programs
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Understanding Student Behaviour Document,
- Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)
- Student Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services
- Lookout (Living Out of Home Care support group)
- Doctors in Secondary Schools Program (DISS)
- Referral to external agencies.

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.

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

- SAFEMinds Framework,
- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled,
- attendance records,
- The College's Learning Management System (Compass), to monitor attendance and academic outcomes,
- 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.

### **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 teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

### **Student behavioural expectations**

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 *Whole School Approach to Behaviour Management*, 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 the Hub
- Implementing restorative practices
- Implementing detentions, suspensions or expulsions.

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

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

### **Engaging with families**

Bairnsdale Secondary College values the input of parents and carers. We seek to form positive relationships with all students, parents and carers.

We work to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- Using our school values to guide us in partnerships and valuing opportunities to form partnerships with them
- 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.

### **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
- School reports
- Compass Chronicle reports
- Parent surveys

### **RELATED DOCUMENTS / KEY REFERENCES**

Bairnsdale Secondary College:

- Attendance Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Other resources:

- 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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