

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact
8311-5200

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.

Sunshine 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.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Sunshine College is a three site, multi-campus, 7-12 co-educational school in Melbourne's Inner West serving the educational needs of approximately 1000 young people. The College community is diverse, with a strong sense of pride and identity despite considerable socio-economic disadvantage. We are a harmonious school of over 60 different nationalities and prides ourselves on creating futures for all students by valuing learning, growth, relationships, and well-being in a

culture of collaboration, inclusion, and aspiration. The College operates a 7-10 Campus at Sunshine North Campus, the Harvester Technical College offers integrated Vocational Major and pre-apprenticeship courses from Yr 10 to 12, and a 7-12 Campus at West Sunshine Campus.

2. School values, philosophy, and vision

Sunshine 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 Growth, Learning, Relationships and Well-being. Sunshine College is a Safe School.

Our vision as a school community is to take pride in Creating Futures through a caring environment that enhances academic learning, personal growth and wellbeing for all students and staff.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: www.sunshine.vic.edu.au

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Sunshine 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 or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

Whole of school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion:

- 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 aspirational, inclusive and collaborative
- 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, Vocational Major and VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Sunshine College use the instructional model to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction ensuring evidenced-informed, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Sunshine 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, coordinators, engagement leaders and principals whenever they have questions or concerns.

- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school sport, music programs, school clubs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Leader, School Nurse, Coordinators, Engagement Leaders and Principals 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
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions are developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- peer 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 Coordinators 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
- Sunshine 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
- 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 – refer to our [insert name of any other school documentation you have in place outlining the school strategies to support Koorie students] for further information
- 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 including through [insert any specific strategies you have in place to support CALD students]
- 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 \[insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students\]](#)
- 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

- 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](#)

Individual

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plans, and Behaviour Support Plans and Safety Plans
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Wellbeing Coordinators and Student Support Services
- referral to School Psychologist
- referral to Child First, Headspace
- Navigator

Sunshine 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, Behaviour Support Plan or Safety 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
 - School Psychologist
 - 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,
- 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

4. Identifying students in need of support

Sunshine 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. Sunshine 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,
- attendance, detention, and suspension data,
- engagement with families,
- self-referrals or referrals from peers,
- record of external referrals.

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,
- 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

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

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Sunshine 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 Engagement Coordinator / Engagement Leader,
- restorative practices,
- detentions,
- behaviour reviews,
- suspension,
- expulsion.

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular 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 Sunshine 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.

7. Engaging with families

Sunshine 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 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.

8. Evaluation

Sunshine 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:

- Attitudes to School Survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

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 and child safety training processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in our staff handbook
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs

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

Related policies including Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards, Student Management Policy, etc. These can be found at:

www.sunshine.vic.edu.au

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2025
Consultation	student representative groups, parent groups, school council (Feb 2023)
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Feb 2027

