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STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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.

Wangaratta High School 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 school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

Wangaratta High School is situated about 230kms from Melbourne in North East Victoria.
Our school has an enrolment of around 670 students from Years 7 to 12 and 72 staff members, including integration aides, a school nurse, two counsellors and a wellbeing Leading Teacher.

At Wangaratta High School we place each child at the centre of our thinking. Our focus is to ensure that every child becomes a confident, curious, creative and independent thinker and learner who is able to achieve their personal best. We model and nurture respectful relationships to create a positive environment in which every child can thrive. Our school is a vibrant, innovative learning community based on the principles of quality learning. Our highly skilled teachers design and activate a broad range of programs to engage and challenge, excite and inspire every young person to pursue their unique pathway. Through structured and flexible learning opportunities we empower students to explore and negotiate their learning so that they can make a difference in their school, local and global communities.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

The vision for Wangaratta High School is to empower all students to grow academically, socially and emotionally. An outstanding learning environment built on high expectations for success will enable all students, with support, to experience quality teaching within a positive climate for learning. Our graduates will be independent, lifelong learners who are equipped to make a positive impact on the world around them.

Wangaratta High School's mission is to provide students with the best possible foundation in life through a well-rounded education.

Wangaratta High School's values are Respect, Ready to Learn, Safe and Personal Best. We respect ourselves, our school and each another, and understand that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on the people around us.

We model and demonstrate being ready to learn by ensuring we regularly attend, arrive on time and come prepared with all the necessary materials to make the most of the learning opportunities available.

We strive for excellence, which means trying our hardest and doing our personal best.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Wangaratta High School 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 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

3.1 School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS), which is known as STRIVE at Wangaratta High School has been implemented as a process for supporting student, staff and parent wellbeing.

Our mission is to build a positive culture of learning and teaching across our school community. Collecting and using data to inform our practice is a major element of applying expected behaviours and actions within our school community. SWPB is a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviour. SWPB relies on the use of data analysis in all decision making and the practices used by staff both in classroom and Non classroom settings. Preferred behaviour is recognized, acknowledged and reinforced. The most common reward used should be verbal praise. In SWPB there should be 6 positive comments to 1 corrective comment.

3.2 Wellbeing Team The School's Wellbeing Team is available to students from all levels, to offer assistance with any difficulties they may be experiencing. These problems may result from home, conflicts with peers or teachers or financial problems. At all times the information of both parents and students is treated confidentially. Some problems can be dealt with by offering practical information whilst others may need referral to someone with specialist training. Students may self-refer to the Wellbeing Team or be referred by a teacher. Our School Nurse is provided to the School by the Department of Human Services for to assist in the delivery of health and wellbeing programs for students.

3.3 Sensory room and therapy dogs Located in the Wellbeing Centre is a sensory room which is specially designed to combine a range of stimuli, providing a therapeutic environment for students with autism and other special education needs. The room also provides a "sensory break" for students to gain the sensory input they need in their bodies to stay alert, on task and focussed. The role of the therapy dog is to react and respond to people in the school environment. The aim is to facilitate emotional and physical mental health and wellbeing through the presence of a therapy dog. Therapy dogs can also support students with social and emotional learning needs. Research into the effects of therapy dogs in schools shows a range of benefits.

3.4 Transition Co-ordinator The Transition Co-ordinator is the direct link between the High School and a child's Primary School. It is their role to ensure that each child's transition from Primary to Secondary School is a successful and happy experience. The Transition Co-ordinator will visit Primary Schools to discuss transition issues with Grade 6 Teachers.

3.5 SPD/Homeroom Teachers Every student at Wangaratta High School is placed with a SPD/Homeroom Group and teacher who, at Year 7, usually has a number of lessons with the group each week. SPD/Homeroom Teachers undertake the pastoral care associated with this role meets daily with his/her mentor group and is usually your child's first point of contact if they are experiencing any problems. They will be able to talk with the student and ascertain if the problem or query needs to be addressed further.

3.6 Learning at Wangaratta High School The School is committed to achieving the highest level of learning for each student at our School. To achieve this, the school conducted extensive research into the key factors that impact a student's learning with a clear vision to implement a consistent style of learning across our school in areas of curriculum and learning. We support teachers and students to incorporate the models of 'best practice pedagogy' into normal everyday classroom teaching and learning practice. We adopt a best practice instruction model that aligns with our school values. Wangaratta High School delivers 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 Wangaratta High School use the LEARN 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 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.

3.7 Macqlit Program Students are selected for this program if they have difficulty with decoding and accessing print to read, and if they are significantly behind in reading as demonstrated on reading assessments. Once selected for the program, students participate in a placement test to see what stage of the program is appropriate for them to start on. Macqlit is delivered to small groups of students and is based on mastery of reading skills.

3.8 LGBTQI The LGBTQI group meets one lunchtime each week and are supported in a safe environment in the Wellbeing Centre with support from the wellbeing team.

3.9 Student Voice and Agency- student leadership Students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council which comprises Year 11 and 12 prefects, and student leaders from Years 7 to 10 . Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.

3.10 Respectful Relationships Program This program promotes and models respect and equality, and teachers students how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. A whole school approach to embed a culture of respect and equality within the school community.

3.11 Attendance Student attendance is monitored, and attendance improvement strategies are implemented at a whole-school, cohort and individual level. Where necessary, referral to department or outside support services are engaged.

Targeted:

- Each year group has two Year Level Coordinators and a Leading Teacher responsible for their sub-school, 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. Assists student to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan.
- Connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer and provide opportunities for cultural learning and pathways to further education.
- All students in Out of Home Care will be supported by their Year level Leaders and have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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, such as the Berry Street Model, to work with students who have experienced trauma.

Individual

- Student Support Groups see: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx
- Individual Education Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities • Referral to Wellbeing Team.
- Referral to Student Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services
- Referral to outside support services: ChildFirst, Headspace, NECAMHS, NESAY, North East Health, CASA, DHHS, SSR, Upper Murray Family Care.
- Referral to DEET support services: Navigator, Lookout
- Build 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. 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

Wangaratta High School 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Wangaratta High School 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
- SWPBS Behaviour Referral data.
- Engagement with families.
- Self-referrals or referrals from peers and teachers.
- Students who are Out of Home Care, or have been referred to DHHS.

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. 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, Wangaratta High School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, 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.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

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 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 Wangaratta High School 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

Wangaratta High School 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

Wangaratta High School 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
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Wangaratta High School 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 our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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

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

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	February 2025
Endorsement date:	3rd February 2025
Consultation	School Community
Approved by	Executive Principal, David Armstrong
Next scheduled review date	3rd February 2027