



North Geelong Secondary College

STUDENT WELBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact North Geelong Secondary College on 03 5240 5800 or north.geelong.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our college 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 college policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

North Geelong 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 college culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our college acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our college to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive college environment consistent with our college values.

SCOPE

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

POLICY

College Profile

North Geelong Secondary College was established in 1966 and is a single Year 7-12 campus. It is a creative, caring, and diverse college, where students grow into diverse learners by engaging in our imaginative and intellectually rigorous learner. We are a 'school of choice' and have approximately 950 students enrolled and 130 college staff.

Our college values “Respect, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity (READ), are the bedrock of all college activities and are continuously promoted in the wider college community.

Our college is culturally diverse with 22% of families having English as an additional language (EAL), 33.3% are from a LBOTE background, 8% from a refugee background and 3% from ASTI background.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

College values, philosophy and vision

North Geelong Secondary College’s Statement of Values and College Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our college community. Students, staff and members of our college community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, excellence, achievement and diversity.

Our college vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

North Geelong 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 college. 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 college, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents/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
- analysing and being responsive to a range of college data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent/carer survey data, student management data and college level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE, VM and Pathways to ensure that students can choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at North Geelong Secondary College use the NGSC 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 at North Geelong Secondary 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 college Statement of Values and College 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 college community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their education
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, on Compass and formally in college assemblies and communication to parents/carers
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-college, cohort and individual level
- students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about college operations through the Student Representative Council and via surveys. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through lunchtime clubs, college plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing, college Doctor, college Nurse, Mental Health Practitioner, Year Group Leaders, Assistant Principal 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 college wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - School Wide Positive Behaviour
 - Berry Street
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (ie. emotional intelligence programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (ie. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- Cultural Club/Committee
- measures are in place to empower our college 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 a Sub School Manager, Year Level Coordinator, Year Level Assistant and Home Room Teachers, 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
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of First Nations culture. They are supported by the college First Nations Representative and Koorie Liaison Officer
- 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 college including through the Multicultural Committee and Cultural club
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through the Multicultural Committee and Catholic Care Programs

- 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
- 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 college 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 college staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- 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](#)
- 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
- North Geelong Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual:

Students may be engaged and supported with the following measures:

- Student Support Group Meetings
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- Headspace
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

North Geelong Secondary 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 college
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up

- referring the student to:
 - college-based wellbeing supports
 - Student Support Services
 - 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 college 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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- 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.

Identifying students in need of support

North Geelong Secondary 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. North Geelong Secondary 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 college 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

Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our college community have a right to experience a safe and supportive college environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents/carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our college 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 college
- 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 college community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at college are encouraged to speak to their parents/carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the college leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our college 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.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our college community, North Geelong Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other college staff.

Our college considers, explores and implements 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 college 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

The Principal of North Geelong 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 college.

Engaging with families

North Geelong Secondary College values the input of parents/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 college community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents/carers by:

- ensuring that all parents/carers have access to our college policies and procedures, available on our college website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff
- providing parent/carer volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to college activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in college decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

Evaluation

North Geelong 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 college-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
- college reports
- parent/carer survey

- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

North Geelong 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.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our college community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our college website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in college newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from college administration upon request

Our college 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 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 college 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 College Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2023
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Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	By November 2025