

WALCOM NGARRWA SECONDARY COLLEGE

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact a member of the administrative team at the office.

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.

Walcom Ngarrwa 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. Our school also understands that our values of Achievement, Belonging and Curiosity support both the learning and wellbeing of our students.

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

Walcom Ngarrrwa Secondary College is a new school being built to open on the first day of the 2024 school year. It is located in the Harpley Estate in Frome Cr, Werribee, which is 31km west of the Melbourne CBD. Walcom Ngarrrwa Secondary College has a current enrolment of 450 students across Years 7 and 8. The school opened for enrolments for students in Year 7 from the beginning of 2024 and added an additional year level in 2025 and will continue to add a new year level every subsequent year.

Our school grounds are set within an establishing residential estate and nearby train lines, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Most students that attend our school live locally walk or ride their bike to school. Walcom Ngarrrwa Secondary College is developing close ties to the local community. In addition, the local community is supported by an education precinct, with our school sharing a site with the specialist school and the local government primary school being within walking distance.

At Walcom Ngarrrwa Secondary College we are on a mission to provide the best education we can for our students, by delivering high impact, evidence-based practices in learning and wellbeing, within a culture of high expectations for success. Healthy, happy and curious students and staff bring our vision and values to life.

Achievement, Belonging and Curiosity underpin the development of an aspirational and inclusive school community, that supports each student on their learning journey, to a pathway through and beyond school. We foster strong connections with community to ensure today's learners can thrive as generous, active and informed citizens.

An innovative and rich curriculum, combined with a culture of success and challenge, encourages each student to achieve their best. A 21st century curriculum enables our students to develop deep understandings, through a lens of learning and application. Our broad curriculum is planned and taught sequentially and allows students to have ownership of their learning, building engagement whilst extending critical and creative thinking. Digital technologies and community engagement enrich the opportunities provided to students both within and beyond the classroom

Our school is culturally diverse with approximately 50% of families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE groups being Punjabi, Hindi and Chinese (Mandarin). We value and celebrate the diversity of our students and school community, striving to create an environment where students feel safe, respected, valued and are treated as an equal.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Walcom Ngarrrwa Secondary 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 achievement, belonging and curiosity at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to build bright futures for the young people of the local communities. **Achievement, Belonging and Curiosity** underpin the development of an aspirational and inclusive school community that supports each student on their learning journey to a pathway through and

beyond school. We foster strong connections with community to ensure today's learners can thrive as generous, active and informed citizens.

We're on a mission to provide the best education we can for our students by delivering high impact, evidence-based practices in learning and wellbeing, within a culture of high expectations for success. Healthy, happy and curious students and staff bring our vision and values to life.

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available online on our school website.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Walcom Ngarrrwa 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 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

- 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 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 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, VCE, 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 Walcom Ngarrrwa Secondary College use a gradual release of responsibility 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 Walcom Ngarrrwa 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 school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy 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 as part of our Belonging and Curiosity programs delivered to all students in Years 7-10.

- 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, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Leader, Year Level Leaders, Sub-School 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 school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers 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 a Year Group Leader, a senior teacher responsible for their year, 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through the support of KESO’s and a Koorie Support Group.
- 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 through a range of inclusion events, including Harmony Day and the recognition of culturally significant events for these cohorts.
- Cultural and linguistically diverse students are connected and supported by the school’s Multicultural Support Officers to engage fully in their education. Our Multicultural Support Officers work closely with these students and their families as well as offer Professional Learning to school staff to further develop their understanding of their student’s cultures and backgrounds.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through Harmony Day and support groups.
- 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 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 from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Walcom Ngarrwa Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Walcom Ngarrwa 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 school
- student participation in mediation and restorative practices to restore and rebuild relationships
- establishing a [Student Support Groups](#) and developing an [Individual Education Plans](#)
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- 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](#)
- Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, [headspace](#), and child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
- Re-engagement programs such as Navigator and [LOOKOUT](#).

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

- 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Walcom Ngarrwa 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. Walcom Ngarrwa 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 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
- referrals from parents/carers

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.

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 school community, Walcom Ngarrrwa Secondary College 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 Walcom Ngarrrwa 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.

7. Engaging with families

Walcom Ngarrrwa 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:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website and COMPASS
- 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
- providing families with opportunities to come together as part of a larger school community
- 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.
- Supporting our LBOTE families with access to translators and translations (where possible).
- Multicultural Education Aides will be utilised where required.

8. Evaluation

Walcom Ngarrrwa 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
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS.

Walcom Ngarrrwa 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 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 as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available for students, staff and parents/carers on COMPASS
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request
- Interpreter services will be made available for families requiring language support

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	September 2025
Consultation	This policy will be consulted upon broadly with the school community in 2027.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2027 - to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 1-2 years thereafter. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

