



SWINBURNE
SENIOR SECONDARY COLLEGE

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

This policy reflects the *DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance* and was produced in consultation with the school community

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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) our expectations for positive student behavior and engagement
- (c) the support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Swinburne Senior 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 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. Additionally this policy also applies to Swinburne students who leave the school grounds during the normal school day.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Swinburne Senior Secondary College (Swinburne) is a single campus, stand-alone coeducation Year 11 and 12 school located in the North Eastern Victoria Region, on the Belgrave/Lilydale/Alamein train line. It provides a unique young adult learning environment that accommodates and accepts individual needs. It offers a broad range of curriculum choices with flexible and safe learning spaces. The school community encourages every student to aspire to and reach their full potential.

The student population commute from many local government areas across Melbourne and country Victoria. They come from varied socioeconomic backgrounds with approximately one third receiving Youth Allowance and a small percentage living independently of their parents.

The school has over 400 students enrolled and provides both VCE, VCAL, and off campus Community VCAL programs. A broad range of VET certificate courses and ASBA enrolments are also offered as a component of VCE/VCAL.

Swinburne Senior Secondary College has an extensive student social and emotional support structure that assists students to become self-reflective, resilient and confident lifelong learners.

The school recognises that emotional wellness and intelligence is important in achieving academic goals, as one in four young Australians experience a mental health condition, with anxiety and depression being the most common presentations. Half of all adult mental health

illnesses emerge by age 14, and three quarters by 24¹.

It is important for young people to seek help early and to feel comfortable to talk about what's going on. The school's wellbeing structure offers confidential and non-judgemental direct access to support during school hours and works collaboratively with many outside agencies that can offer professional support.

SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Swinburne Senior Secondary College's vision is to enable independent, critical thinking that challenges and enriches learners' lives, creating citizens who contribute positively to the global community through intellectual endeavour, cultural acceptance and action. Students are encouraged to develop their individual identities through the pursuit of their learning goals and future career ambitions. The college fosters students' creative, analytical and critical thinking through delivery of the VCE, VET and VCAL programs, offering a broad range subjects for senior students to make appropriate choices regarding their areas of interest and expertise.

MISSION

Swinburne Senior Secondary College's mission is to develop lifelong learners with enquiring minds and a keen sense of curiosity. We encourage young adults to take risks, be responsible for their actions, and value the importance of respect, responsibility and commitment. As a senior-only college, the teachers at Swinburne Senior work to empower students to make their own decisions about their learning. Supporting students' individual needs is a key focus of the college, which is engendered through the teachers' respectful interactions with the students, embracing individual differences and encouraging them to adopt a growth-mindset approach to their studies.

¹ www.beyondblue.org.au/home

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Swinburne Senior 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 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

Universal strategies are underpinned by a whole school approach to promote positive behaviour and inclusion and include the following:

- 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, supportive and respectful
- cooperative, proactive and open communication to parents/carers
- welcoming all parents/guardians 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 and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers use the High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidence-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
- our school's Statement of Values is 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 and orientation programs to support students starting and transitioning into Year 11 and 12
- 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 Mentor sessions. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Mentors, Year Level Manager, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns

- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team, Year Level Managers, 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.

Targeted

Swinburne Senior Secondary College implements a range of targeted strategies that support and promote specific cohorts or identified groups (particularly those at risk). These include:

- each year group has a senior teacher (Year Level Manager) responsible for their year and two Assistant Year Level Managers, 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 will be assisted to develop a 'Career Action Plan', with targeted goals and support to plan for their future and Year 11 and 12 Students will be supported with their post-secondary schooling pathways
- all students in Out of Home Care will be referred to Student Wellbeing to develop a Student Support Plan
- Student Wellbeing will support in the building of student social and emotional capacity through the development and implementation of Social Emotional Learning programs (SEL)² in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- Student Inclusion Manager will work with the Wellbeing Team, Year Level Managers and the Student Voice Manager, to identify cohorts of students at risk and develop relevant programs. For example, students who identify with the LGTBQI+ community are supported through the Rainbow Alliance Club.

Individual

Swinburne Senior Secondary College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with students and their parent/carers to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing a 'Performance Improvement Plan' and/or a 'Student Support Plan'
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports such as the Wellbeing Team, the visiting Department of Education Psychologist or the Adolescent Health Nurse

² SEL – Social Emotional Learning – is the process through which individuals acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Research has shown that students who experience opportunities for social and emotional learning participate more in class, demonstrate more pro-social behaviour and are more likely to complete school.

- study support
- appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
- 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, 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 Plan 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.

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Swinburne Senior 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing.

Swinburne Senior Secondary College acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked. Research evidence shows that students with high levels of wellbeing are more likely to have higher academic achievement and complete Year 12; better mental health, and a more pro-social and lawful lifestyle.³ The literature consistently identifies a number of elements that affect student wellbeing. These can broadly be grouped into the following: creating a safe environment; ensuring connectedness; engaging students in learning; promoting social and emotional learning; and a whole school approach⁴. To this end, the College is committed to a holistic, whole school approach and 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
- previous attendance records and academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation using the SAFEMinds 'NIP it in the Bud!' (Notice, Inquire, Plan)⁵ model

³ Australian Catholic University and Erebus international (2008) Scoping study into approaches to student wellbeing: Literature review. Report to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: Canberra

⁴ Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2015) Student Wellbeing: Literature Review. NSW Department of Education and Communities.

⁵ All classroom teachers are trained in the SAFEMinds early intervention model (NIP it in the bud!). This model skills teachers in the ability to 'N'otice mood and behavior changes in a young person that may indicate they are having difficulties managing

- attendance data
- chronicle posts including the use of 'digests'
- communication and engagement with students and families
- referrals from teachers, Mentors, Year Level Managers
- referrals from external agencies/health providers
- self-referrals or referrals from peers.

Students at the College are also supported through a tiered approach. This involves monitoring, identifying and referring students at risk to the appropriate support systems. This includes:

- Mentor Program:
A key focus in student wellbeing and engagement is the Mentor program. Each student is placed in a small Mentor group (approximately 15) where one teacher, who is also usually one of the student's classroom teachers, takes responsibility for the student's wellbeing and progress. This includes being the student's advocate in all matters, as well as assisting with school/subject concerns, monitoring attendance and connectedness to the College, liaising with home and being the person who is informed of any relevant issues concerning the student's schooling.

- Year Level Management:
At regular intervals, all teachers and Mentors meet together to review students at risk in each year level (behaviour, attendance and engagement). These students are then identified to the Year Level Managers who then work with the Mentors to liaise with parents/guardians with the aim of developing a Student Support Plan.

- Wellbeing Team:
The next level of support for students is the College Wellbeing Team. Students at risk are referred through the Mentor system and the regular Year Level Management meetings, as well as through individual teachers or student self-referral. This information is often supported by data from the Compass Student School Management System. The Wellbeing Team, consisting of the Wellbeing and Assistant Wellbeing Managers, VCE Manager, Year Level and Assistant Year Level Managers and the Careers and Pathways Advisor, also meet to further discuss students identified as having difficulty at school in order to maintain up-to-date information and develop strategies to support these students. Additionally, Department of Education staff including a psychologist, secondary school adolescent health nurse, social worker and speech pathologist are available for wellbeing support and secondary consultation.

- The College Transition Team:
The College Transition Team, consisting of the Careers and Pathways Advisor, Wellbeing and Year Level Managers and administration, also oversees the transition into appropriate pathways, of students leaving school.

- External Allied Agencies:
There are also a number of outside agencies that we utilise to support students. This includes the following:
 - Access Health Service is located adjacent to the College and students are encouraged to use this medical service (bulk billing for students) and provides access to Youth A&D Workers including outreach workers.
 - Headspace Hawthorn offers youth mental health support and ancillary services.
 - Boroondara Youth Services (360) and Camberwell CamCare are two resource centres for young people that offer a range of services including counselling, advice on accommodation, legal issues and relationships, and material aid.
 - Foundation Boroondara provides scholarships to students to enhance their education.
 - Local Rotary Clubs provide financial assistance for students enduring hardship.
 - IELLEN (Inner East Local Learning and Employment Network) provides support for students who exit the school without an employment or education pathway.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Swinburne Senior Secondary College (Swinburne) endeavours to educate individuals through the provision of innovative and relevant post-compulsory programs in response to identified needs. These programs take into account the spectrum of individual differences that exist among young people and strive to assist students in achieving growth, both academically and on a personal level.

The College makes it explicit that every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive, and that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

Students are supported on how to respond to, and cope with, instances of bullying, cyberbullying, or any form of harassment or mistreatment, as well as the negative affects these behaviours have on both perpetrators and victims.

Part of the enrolment process involves both students and parents reading and signing an Enrolment Agreement. These agreements outline the student's responsibilities to attend classes regularly and punctually, complete required coursework, act in a courteous and cooperative manner and refrain from anti-social behaviour. The parents'/guardians' responsibilities also outline the importance of communication, monitoring and support of student learning, health, and wellbeing, and overall engagement. At this point of the enrolment process it is explained to the enrolling student and their family that all students who enrol in Year 11 are new to the school, as are approximately one third of Year 12 enrolments. As a consequence, it is imperative that students quickly feel safe and accepted at Swinburne.

In some cases where a young person's expression of their individuality can lead to social and disciplinary issues in other schools, Swinburne lives up to its motto of 'Educating Individuals' by supporting diversity and individuality in our student cohort. There is no official school uniform or dress code and this serves to encourage some students to express themselves through their appearance. Similarly, social diversity in terms of sexual orientation and religious beliefs is accepted at Swinburne and is not a cause for discrimination or bullying.

A fundamental requirement for the effective implementation of the College's purpose to educate individuals is that students feel socially, emotionally and physically safe in expressing themselves and accepting others' differences.

The key members of the College community are students, school staff and parents. The responsibilities of these separate cohorts are outlined below.

- Students:
Students have a responsibility to participate fully in the College educational program and to attend regularly. Students are expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the College community. Students are also encouraged and supported in taking greater responsibility for their own learning and participating as members of the whole College community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals. 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.
- Parents/Guardians:
Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours. Parents/Guardians are also responsible for engaging in constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning and supporting the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Furthermore, parents are expected to act in a respectful and constructive manner when dealing with the school.
- School Staff:
In implementing this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, all staff have a responsibility to interact positively with students and their families. This involves acting fairly, reasonably and consistently, as well as role-modelling a respectful attitude and a preparedness to listen and learn. For example, rather than reacting to an issue such as chronic lateness or absenteeism by focusing on how this can be dealt with and/or rectified, the initial focus could be on exploring why the student is late/absent. It is important that teachers know their students as people and as learners, and actively create and maintain a safe learning environment.

STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values; 'Respect, Responsibility and Commitment'.

Where feasible and appropriate, the College will employ Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices considers wrongdoing to be a violation of people and relationships, and involves shifting thinking away from retribution towards repair (Thorsborne, 2001). In contrast to traditional school punishment practices, Restorative Practices have enormous educative value. Mistakes and misbehaviour are viewed as opportunities for learning, and Restorative Practices teach accountability, responsibility, empathy, collaboration and commitment to relationships, to all members of the school community (Thorsborne, 2001).

Similarly, student misbehaviour will be dealt with by classroom teachers, according to Restorative Practice principles. Where further information, intervention and support are required, Mentor teachers will be utilised to support the classroom teachers. Depending on the misbehaviour and/or needs of a student, parents/guardians, the Careers and Pathways Advisor, Study Support

Teacher, Year Level Manager and Wellbeing Manager may be involved. Finally, the Principal or Assistant Principal will be involved on a needs basis.

Where a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards and expectations of the school community, the school will instigate a staged response, as outlined in the Department of Education Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance.

Discipline

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged-response to challenging behavior in combination with other engagement and support strategies to address the range of factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- Restorative approach (repairing damage caused)
- Behavioural Management Plan
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class activities for a specified period. Where appropriate parents/guardians will be informed of such withdrawals
- Detention
- Suspension (in-school and out of school)
- Expulsion

Disciplinary measures will be applied in a way that is proportionate to the behaviour and upholds procedural fairness.

Exclusion from attending school through suspension will only be utilised when the above process has been exhausted or the wellbeing or safety of another student or staff member is at risk. This includes the rare occasions when a student is engaging in drug or alcohol use or aggressive or violent behaviour. On these occasions parents/guardians will be contacted and required to attend the school.

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may 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 all Victorian school. Corporal punishment will not be used at Swinburne Senior Secondary College in any circumstance.

ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Swinburne Senior 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
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support meetings, and develop individual plans working with young people and their families.

EVALUATION

Swinburne Senior Secondary College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing and engagement 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:

- enrolment interview data
- student survey data
- SEW data (Annual Social Emotional Wellbeing survey)
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES₂₁
- SOCS
- VASS Reports, including VCE, VCAL and VET data sets

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 13/12/2018 and is scheduled for review every four years.

REFERENCES

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| DET – School Engagement Policy Guidelines | https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/engagepol.aspx (sighted Sept. 2018) |
| DET – Enrolment, Attendance and Behaviour | https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/default.aspx (sighted Sept. 2018) |
| DET - Restorative practices in schools | https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullyingstoppers/Pages/methodrestorative.aspx (sighted Sept. 2018) |
| DET– Disability standards for education | https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/legislation.aspx (sighted Sept. 2018) |
| DET – Inclusive Education Policy | https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spagparticipation/Pages/studentswithdisability.aspx (sighted Sept. 2018) |
| SafeSchools | https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/safeschools.aspx?Redirect=2 (sighted Sept. 2018) |

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| Charter of Human Rights | https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/human-rights/the-charter (sighted Sept 2018) |
| Equal Opportunity Act | https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/the-law/equal-opportunity-act (sighted Sept 2018) |
| VIT Teacher Code of Conduct | https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities/conduct-and-ethics (sighted Sept 2018) |

RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES:

The following policies are available on the school's website. They are regularly reviewed and updated.

- Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy
- Commitment to Child Safety
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Enrolment Agreement (Student/Parent)
- Special Provision Guidelines (internal and external exams)