STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Principal.

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.

Heywood Consolidated 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.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Heywood Consolidated School was established in 1951 and is located approximately 336 kilometres west-southwest of Melbourne CBD. We have 103 students enrolled from Grade Foundation to 6 and 18 school staff members including a school chaplain.

Our school grounds are located on Gunditjmara Country. Most students that attend our school live locally and tend to walk or ride their bike to school, however there are still 3 bus routes that operate to collect and transport some students. Heywood Consolidated School has developed close ties to the local community, and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Our school is culturally diverse with 9.6% of families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the LOTE groups being Arabic, Vietnamese, Malayalam, Philippian and Indo-aryan. Our school also has strong representation from the Koorie community, which is 29% of our student population. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

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

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Heywood Consolidated School'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 gratitude, kindness, resilience and respect at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to create a nurturing and inclusive environment where everyone is supported to reach their full potential—academically, socially and emotionally.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: heywoodconsolidatedschool.com.au

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Heywood Consolidated 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

Our whole of school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion are:

- maintaining high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising 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 and 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
- teachers adopting 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
- incorporating our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promoting it to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planning transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling

- acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- providing students the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, year level coordinator, assistant principal and principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through buddy sessions and book week events
- welcoming all students to self-refer to the student wellbeing coordinator, school chaplain, 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
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Respectful Relationships
    - Bully Stoppers
- creating opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- encouraging buddy programs
- putting measures 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

Our targeted strategies to address particular groups of students or concerns in certain age groups or friendship circles include:

- supporting Koorie students 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 Heywood Consolidated School Action Plan – Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety for further information
- supporting our English as a second language students through our English as an Additional Language (EAL) program, and supporting all cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) students to feel safe and included in our school
- supporting learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through
- providing a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and following the Department of Education (the department) policy on LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- supporting all students in Out of Home Care 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
- supporting students with a disability 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
- ensuring wellbeing and health staff 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 applying a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

Heywood Consolidated School 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 students and their parents/carers to talk about how best to help the students engage with school
- 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:
    - school-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 The Orange Door

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
- 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

Heywood Consolidated 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Heywood Consolidated 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
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- Student Support Groups and Individual Education Plans

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 and School Philosophy 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

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy/Student Code of Conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination is not 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, Heywood Consolidated School will institute a staged response, consistent with the department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents and carers 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 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
- restorative practices
- 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:

- Suspensions Policy
- Expulsions Policy
- Restraint and 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 Heywood Consolidated 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

Heywood Consolidated School values the input of parents and carers, and we 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/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff Policy.
- providing parent/carer volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with 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

Heywood Consolidated School collects 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 are assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

Heywood Consolidated School also regularly monitors 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 is communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- 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 policies and resources are relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Attendance
- Behaviour - Students
- Child Safe Standards
- Expulsions
- Koorie Education
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Student Engagement
- Students with Disability
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Suspensions

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Action Plan - Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2026
Consultation	School council – 24/08/26 Parent community – 18/8/26
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2028