

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Reception 9842 2244

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.

East Doncaster 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.

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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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
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POLICY

1. School profile

At East Doncaster Secondary College, we have a strong tradition of academic excellence and we aim to promote and sustain a reflective learning culture. We want students to experience a sense of achievement and growth in their academic, personal, social and emotional development. We have high expectations of our students' commitment to being mutually supportive and striving for success as learners. We are a multicultural community with a student population from more than 43 nationalities including a number of International Students and a high percentage of our schools speak a language

other than English at home.

Our students are vibrant, energetic, and talented young people. East Doncaster Secondary College life is full of opportunities, with a rich and varied range of co-curricular activities particularly in sport, music, debating, lunchtime clubs, school productions, student leadership, and access to academic competitions. There are many student leadership opportunities, and we aim to continue to increase student access to decision-making and self-determination as learners. There are further opportunities to develop personal goals and relationships, which are supported and facilitated with numerous camps and international experiences. Along with the standard Victorian curriculum, East Doncaster Secondary College provides Health and Personal Development, Sport, Music and Drama as compulsory studies across Years 7 to 9. For some senior students in years 10- 12, the alternative pathway option of Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) now provides access to a wide range of Vocational Education and Training (VET) studies to maximise the opportunities of success for all students.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

College Purpose & Philosophy

At East Doncaster Secondary College we have a strong tradition of academic excellence, and we aim to promote and sustain a reflective learning culture. We want students to experience a sense of achievement and growth in their academic, personal, social, and emotional development. We have high expectations of our students' commitment to being mutually supportive and striving for success as learners. We are proudly multicultural with a student population from 43 nationalities including a number of International Students 68% of our students speak a language other than English at home.

A student's life at school is full of opportunities, being rich and varied with a range of co-curricular activities in music, sport, productions, debating, clubs as well as camps and international experiences for the educational and personal development of students. Our students are vibrant, energetic, and talented young people. There are many student leadership opportunities, and we aim to continue to increase student access to decision-making and self-determination as learners.

We endeavour to create a "Culture of Curiosity" with goals of ensuring learning improvement for every student – every student, every period, every day. Care and Compassion, Curiosity, Excellence, Fairness, Resilience, Respect and Teamwork are the core values that underpin the culture of our school as we embrace the challenges of 21st Century learning. We aim to sustain a learning culture that provides every student with a sense of achievement and of being their best in their academic, personal, social and emotional development.

College Vision for the Future

It is our intention through being explicit in the use of aspirational language as we strive to embed the concepts of reflective practice and teaching the "whole child" into every element of school life so that this philosophy permeates every classroom for every student every period of every day.

Having capacity within each classroom to adapt practices that enable each student, regardless of background, to access the learning and maximise their development requires us to commit to being a highly collaborative, improvement focused teaching force. It requires us to take collective as well as individual responsibility for student development; and also enables us equally to draw satisfaction and celebrate our collective successes as a community.

They can be encapsulated under the East Doncaster Secondary College "Educating the Whole Child" model.

Our **Statement of Values** is available online at: https://www.eastdonsc.vic.edu.au/our_school/school-values

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

East Doncaster Secondary College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students. 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. This includes the Respectful Relationships program and restorative practices
- 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 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 East Doncaster Secondary College use an instructional model 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 East Doncaster 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
- 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 Coordinators, Mental Health

Practitioner, Year Level Coordinators, 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
 - Anti-bullying (Brainstorm)
 - BullyStoppers
 - Safe Schools
- 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

- Year Level Coordinators monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their allocated year level, 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
- our English as an Additional Language and cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported through our EAL and LOTE programs, and all are supported to feel safe and included within our school.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds.
- 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 Education Plan (IEP) and a Student Support Group (SSG) and are referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment where required.
- 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
- 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
- East Doncaster Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

East Doncaster 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
- 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 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 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 Education 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

East Doncaster 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. East Doncaster 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
- connecting students to re-engagement pathway programs including ReNew, Refresh, and The Pines Living & Learning Program.

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, East Doncaster 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 East Doncaster 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

East Doncaster 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, 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

East Doncaster 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

East Doncaster 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
- Compass parent portal
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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 Policy](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Statement of Values](#) and [School Philosophy](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Created date	February 2023
Consultation	School Council – 8 February 2023 School Community 14 February 2023 – College Newsletter, College Website and Compass Newsfeed
Endorsed by	John Roberts, Principal – 8 February 2023 School Council – 8 February 2023
Endorsed on	8 February 2023
Next scheduled review date	August 2024