

Alkira Secondary College

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the school directly

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.

Alkira 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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1. School profile
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

Alkira Secondary College, the school on the hill, is proud to be the school of choice for our community. Our colourful buildings reflect a vibrant and exciting culture where students and their families feel welcome, safe and cared for. The sizeable campus comprises shaded and green areas for our students to gather as well as ample sporting fields and courts to encourage health, wellbeing and play.

Located in Cranbourne North, the heart of the south east growth corridor, 2019 was our 11th year of operation. Our tenth anniversary in 2018 provided an opportunity to reflect on our growth and development. Our willingness to embrace the concept of continuous improvement has seen the implementation of new programs and consolidation of the tried and tested.

Alkira structures its operations under two main areas of focus: Excellence in Teaching and Learning and a Positive Climate for Learning. Under the Positive Climate for Learning banner, we aim to maintain a school environment where every child feels safe and supported and where their learning needs are catered for so that they can achieve their full potential. Excellence in Teaching and Learning focuses on what effective classrooms look like and how effective teachers teach.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Alkira 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. As a school in and of the community, we continue to provide personalised learning in a positive and productive environment, encouraging our community to live our shared values of respect, integrity, care and excellence. We exist to 'secure the entitlements of every student' meaning that every child should progress through their years of learning feeling challenged, supported and equipped to face the future. Our aim is to enable students to be contributing, responsible citizens who are lifelong learners.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <http://www.alkirasecondarycollege.com.au/>

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Alkira 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

- 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
- 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 Alkira Secondary College use the Alkira Model of Instruction as a 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 Alkira 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 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 whole school, House and Year Level based assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level – inclusive of an appointment of a designated attendance officer
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through targeted Student Leadership positions in multiple areas of decision making at the school. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, House Leaders, members of the ES and Wellbeing Teams, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through productions/plays, athletics, music programs and other student groups such as the 'cultural diversity group' etc.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to Student Wellbeing, School Nurse, House 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, via our 'positive climate for learning approach' with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Safe Schools
 - Use of various other Pathways and Wellbeing programs embedded within the schools pastoral care program
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs, connection/social support, engagement in school etc.)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams/clubs, student leadership opportunities, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs and other 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 student belong to a pastoral care group/homegroup which then are associated to a vertical House system with each House having a House Leader, a VCE and VCAL Senior School Leading teacher(s) that oversee and support House Leaders for students in the senior school year. All these roles have staff 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 – refer to our Aboriginal learning wellbeing and safety Policy for further information
- 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 including through [insert any specific strategies you have in place to support CALD students]
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through our Refugee Education Support Program developed in conjunction with Foundation House and CMY
- 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](#) [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students]
- 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
- 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
- Alkira Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout
- Student Support Service Officers (SSSO)
- Visiting Teacher Service

- DHHS case managers and support workers
- Casey Youth Services
- Out of Home Care agencies e.g. OzChild, Wesley Mission, Berry Street
- Community agencies e.g.: Windermere, Connections
- S.E.C.A.S.A. [South East Centre Against Sexual Assault]
- ELMHS [Early in Life Mental Health Service]

Alkira 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
- 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Alkira 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. Alkira 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

- information which is historical in nature where consent has been provided for parent / guardian

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 and accept that we are a multicultural school that brings with it further tolerance and understanding to drive a learning community. 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, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns in an appropriate manner

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
- respect the cultural differences between members of our community

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

developed and supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices, and clearly communicated behavioural expectations. Some students exhibit challenging behaviour and require additional support and interventions to address this behaviour and to develop positive behaviours.

Challenging behaviour interferes with the safety or learning of the student/s or safety of school staff;

including:

- **Withdrawn behaviours** (e.g. anxiety, school phobia, truancy, social isolation)
- **Disruptive behaviours** (e.g. tantrums, swearing, screaming or refusing to follow instructions)
- **Violent and/or unsafe behaviours** (e.g. kicking, biting, punching, fighting, running away)
- **Inappropriate social behaviours** (e.g. inappropriate conversations, stealing, property damage)

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, Alkira 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 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 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: (note-these are a selection of what is available and not an exhaustive list)

- Alkira Four Stage Engagement process – inclusive of restorative conversations, warnings, students being moved and further follow-up
- 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 Alkira 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

Alkira 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

Alkira 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

Alkira 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 in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers 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

Policy last reviewed	September 2022
Consultation	School Council 8 th September Online News (Compass) October 2022 Student Leadership 1 st September 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2024