

**WELLINGTON SECONDARY COLLEGE**



# **Student Engagement & Well-Being Policy**

**Produced in consultation  
with the school community**

**To be read in conjunction with**

*Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance  
and Attendance and Enrolment Guidelines*

**July 2014**

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School Council President: Mrs Merih Acar**

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## 1. School profile statement

Wellington Secondary College is a large co-educational state secondary college located in the City of Monash, approximately 24 kilometres to the south east of the CBD of Melbourne. It provides programs for secondary school aged students from Years 7-12. The College has maintained a strong student enrolment of over 1000 students since 1992. In the last three years the enrolments have increased to over 1500 students, and continue to increase with a predicted enrolment of 1735 by 2018. The ethnic mix of students reflects the multicultural nature of the surrounding area, one of the most diverse in Melbourne. Additional to the local enrolment, the College has a strong international student program of over 80 students, largely from China, Vietnam Cambodia and Thailand. The College provides a quality educational program to the Mulgrave, Springvale, Noble Park, Dandenong North, Keysborough, Westall and surrounding communities. Wellington SC enjoys a very positive reputation in this local community. It has well established traditions, the students and their families are generally aspiring and students are inculcated with the culture of the school's motto, the "Wellington Way". Retention of students at WSC is very strong. Academic success is expected and high standards of behaviour required. Students usually remain enrolled for the duration of their secondary education, except where the family relocates. The school opened in 1973 with 5 permanent brick wings set around two large courtyards with a central library. The facilities are well maintained and in recent years the school has completed the first stage of its architectural Master plan upgrade. Stage One includes the Junior School Centre, two new gymnasiums, a performing Arts Centre, a Science wing, upgraded Technology centres (food and wood), an upgraded Visual Arts centre and a new canteen. Two further buildings have been added in the last two years, namely the Wellbeing Centre, which houses both the Student Welfare and Careers areas, and the International Centre. Due to expanded enrolments, the permanent facilities are supplemented with several relocatable classrooms. The College employs approximately 140 staff with an effective full time teaching staff of over 100 and a large support staff of 40, including 5 multicultural aides, a college nurse, a welfare coordinator and a careers counsellor.

## 2. Whole-school statement

The College motto "**Caring, Striving and Learning**" describes our key purpose and values:

**Caring** for others

**Striving** for excellence

**Learning** for Life

Our Student Engagement and Wellbeing Goal, as documented in the Strategic Plan (2010 to 2014) is:

*To maintain broad learning options to meet diverse student needs at each year level and ensure every student has a realistic and positive pathway.*

In particular our annual foci have been centred around:

- Improvement of parent and community communication,
- Further development of student leadership and voice and
- Improvement to peer connectedness.

Our overall student engagement policy documents how we:

- Create and maintain a positive and engaging school culture
- Create and maintain environments that are safe and supportive
- Value diversity and promote pro-social behaviour
- Adopt a staged approach to promote positive behaviours
- Apply disciplinary measures
- Promote school attendance

### 3. Rights and responsibilities

#### 3.1 Guiding principles

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

This is encapsulated in the spirit of the Wellington Way and the school motto, Caring Striving and Learning:

- Parents/Carers have the right to be fully informed of and engaged in their child's education.
- Students have the right to learn in a safe and stimulating environment.
- Teachers have a right to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment within the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching

Wellington Secondary College has procedurally fair processes for managing student behaviour. Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must not be used at this school under any circumstance.

#### 3.2 Equal Opportunity

The objectives of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* are to encourage the identification and elimination of discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation and their causes, and to promote and facilitate the progressive realisation of equality.

In Victoria it is against the law for someone to discriminate against you because of a characteristic that you have, or that someone assumes you have. These personal characteristics include:

- age
- carer and parental status
- disability (including physical, sensory and intellectual disability, work related injury, medical conditions, and mental, psychological and learning disabilities)
- employment activity
- gender identity, lawful sexual activity and sexual orientation
- industrial activity
- marital status
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy and breastfeeding
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity and ethnic origin)
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these personal characteristics.

It is also against the law to sexually harass or victimise someone, or to vilify someone because of their race or religion.

#### 3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- Freedom
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all

people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural Rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights.

All DEECD employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:

- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights

### 3.4 Students with disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

### 3.5 Bullying and harassment

#### Definitions:

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

**Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

**Cyberbullying** is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings, etc)

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to a teacher, a coordinator or another trusted adult. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully

Further information about bullying is contained in the WSC Student Planner/Diary

**Harassment** is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

#### **Subtle: (The most common)**

They include:

- Offensive staring and leering.
- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
- Questions about another's sexual activity.
- Persistent comments about a person's private life or family.

- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body.
- Offensive name calling.

### **Explicit: (obvious)**

They include:

- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
- Displays of sexually graphic material– pornography.
- Requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

**Bullying** can involve such things as

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person's property
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

**Cyberbullying** - being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly.

This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (e.g. copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information
- selecting appropriate spaces to work in and contribute to
- protecting the privacy of others (not sharing personal information and images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school it would be a teacher.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- Discuss the matter with a teacher, a coordinator or another trusted adult.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

On enrolment, all students at Wellington Secondary College are required to sign an agreement committing to responsible digital citizenship.

Wellington Secondary College is accredited as an *eSmart School*. For further details consult [www.esmartschools.org.au](http://www.esmartschools.org.au)

## 4. Expectations and Responsibilities

Schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

The school's values are based on the Australian Government's nine values, for Australian schools, which are:

1. Care and Compassion - Care for self and others
2. Doing Your Best - Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
3. Fair Go - Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
4. Freedom - Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
5. Honesty and Trustworthiness - Be honest, sincere and seek the truth
6. Integrity - Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
7. Respect - Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view
8. Responsibility - Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
9. Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion - Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

### **Expectations of the Wellington Secondary College Community:**

The **School** will ensure provision of:

- Inclusive teaching practices
- Accessible educational provision for all students
- Parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- Community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success
- Appropriate student services
- Development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning

The **Principal** will:

- Provide Leadership, to school staff as well as to students
- Ensure staff, students and the wider school community understand their roles and expectations
- Resource staff and students with the necessary equipment to assist them in the process of teaching and learning
- Ensure the curriculum of the school takes into account the needs of specific students (such as EAL, students with disabilities etc)
- Encourage parent participation in appropriate aspects of school life

**Teachers** will:

- Create engaging learning programs
- Provide an enjoyable classroom
- Make sure every student has the opportunity to participate

- Ask for student input into the curriculum and class environment
- Listen to students and value their contribution
- Listen to parents' insights into their children's learning and provide appropriate feedback
- Provide a wide range of resources to engage students
- Understand the needs of students and accommodate their needs

In accordance with "*The Wellington Way*", **Students** will:

- Be punctual
- Enter and leave rooms in an orderly manner
- Bring all required equipment
- Follow teacher's directions
- Support "*Zero Tolerance*" of *bullying*, especially computer and phone "*cyberbullying*"
- Respect student and staff privacy at all times
- Work productively to complete all class tasks
- Allow others to work without interruption
- Speak and act in a polite, positive manner
- Respect and value school and personal property

The **Student Programs Team** will be:

- Available, accessible and supportive at any time of the school day
- Non-judgemental in attitude
- Trustworthy and respectful of confidentiality where appropriate
- Understanding and caring
- Consistent in approach to student management

**Parents/Carers** will:

- Provide support for their children attending school
- Cooperate with requests from the school
- Promote positive educational outcomes for their children
- Ensure their children attend school
- Communicate clearly with the school about the needs of their children.

### **Diversity in the school community**

Please refer to:

***Wellington Secondary College Multicultural Diversity Policy***

#### **Rationale:**

Ours is a multicultural school located within a multicultural community. In order for our school to truly reflect the needs and aspirations of our students and their families, we need to ensure that their multiculturally rich backgrounds are recognised, catered for, celebrated and valued.

#### **Aims:**

To develop a school ethos that reflects, responds to and values multiculturalism. Where possible, the school will acknowledge and respect/celebrate culturally significant events, and where possible use them as teaching/learning opportunities.

#### **Implementation:**

- Racial diversity enriches our school community.

- Our school curriculum, leadership and management practices promote and affirm principles of multicultural diversity.
- We will ensure that learning experiences recognise, value and build on students' backgrounds and experiences.
- Our school code of conduct, discipline policy and dress code, and our school charter will all acknowledge and cater for our cultural diversity
- Our school will ensure that all groups who are affected by decision-making outcomes are consulted, will be represented as members of decision-making bodies, will have their input treated fairly, and decision-making processes and outcomes will be meritorious and non-racist.
- All staff will participate in professional development relating to racial diversity and discrimination.
- All staff will model culturally inclusive behaviour, and report to the principal any behaviour that appears racist, discriminatory, prejudiced or culturally biased.
- Multiculturalism will be celebrated in our school community. Whole school multicultural days will showcase our various community cultures. Visiting artists from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds will be invited to the school. Parents of all students will be invited to participate in school activities, including camps, excursions and committees.
- Students from non-English speaking backgrounds will have access to EAL (English as an Additional Language) programs.
- Essential notices, newsletters, student reports, permission forms etc will be provided in languages consistent with the needs of community members. Interpreters will be arranged where required.

### **Evaluation:**

This policy was originally formed, and will be reviewed in consultation with all members of the wider community (all staff, parents, students, and interested members of the community) as part of the school's four-year review cycle.

## **5. School actions and consequences**

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- understanding the student's background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

Broader support strategies will include:

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators
- tutoring/peer tutoring

- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts
- involving community support agencies.

### **Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion**

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in the **Ministerial Order 625** and in the DEECD guidelines published in **Student and Engagement and Inclusion Guidance and Attendance and Enrolment Guidelines**.

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time.

Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.

- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.

Where students are required to undertake school work after school, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes.

The Principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship (for example, where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.

- Convening of a support group.
- Please note that Wellington SC has procedurally fair processes for managing student behaviour. Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must not be used at this school under any circumstance.

## **6. Attendance**

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged 6 – 17 years unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted.

Daily school attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they don't fall behind both socially and developmentally. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes and higher incomes across their lives.

School participation is important as it maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. Schools help people to develop important skills, knowledge and values which set them up for future learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend our College during normal school hours every day of each term unless there is an approved exemption. Class Rolls are marked electronically using the COMPASS management system. These rolls are marked for each of the 6 periods within the school day. Attendance data via the COMPASS system is 'live' and can be accessed at any time by all staff and parents/carers alike.

All students at our College are provided with a COMPASS ID Card. This card can be used to access the COMPASS Kiosk to check on individual student learning schedules as well as to register 'late arrival' or 'early departure'. Each 'late arrival' and/or 'early departure' requires a 'note of explanation' from the parent/carer. This 'note of explanation' can be provided in written form or electronically via COMPASS.

The College employs a full time Attendance Officer who is located adjacent to the COMPASS Kiosk, thus students are carefully monitored re any 'late arrival' or 'early departure' registration. A back-up 'paper system' is available if/when a student does not have a card (lost or awaiting a replacement) or if/when there is a power failure.

For administrative purposes, our College is divided into three Sub-Schools. A Secondary Teacher Assistant (STA) is employed for each Sub-School. The primary role for these three STAs is *student attendance*. Each STA is responsible for tracking, monitoring, documenting and contacting families for all issues relating to student absence and/or inaccuracies in roll marking.

At Wellington Secondary College *student attendance* is a priority as we recognise that poor attendance levels can have later implications for employment, a range of health risk behaviours, homelessness, poverty, welfare dependence and involvement in the justice system. The College is proud to report that our attendance levels are consistently better than both region and state means.

Further information can be obtained from ***Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts***.

Wellington Secondary College acknowledges that the ***School Attendance Guidelines 2014*** outline our responsibilities and duties under the ***Education and Training Reform Act 2006***, ***Education and Training reform regulations 2007*** and ***Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013***.

## References

Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx</a>
Ministerial Order 625	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/participation/minorder625.PDF">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/participation/minorder625.PDF</a>
Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance – Student Engagement Policy	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/engagepol.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/engagepol.aspx</a>
Forms/flowcharts/templates (public)	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/resources.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/resources.aspx</a>
Forms/flowcharts/templates (secure)	<a href="http://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/collaboration/attendanceengagementparentbehaviour/suspexp/default.aspx">http://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/collaboration/attendanceengagementparentbehaviour/suspexp/default.aspx</a>
Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance – Responding to Challenging Behaviours	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/respondingtobehaviour.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/respondingtobehaviour.aspx</a>
Attendance and Enrolment Guidelines	<a href="http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/attendance.aspx">http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/attendance.aspx</a>
Resources for Schools and Parents	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/studentattendance.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/studentattendance.aspx</a>
Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts	<a href="http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/everyday.aspx">http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/everyday.aspx</a>
Disability Standards for Education	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm</a>
Safe Schools	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm</a> <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm</a> <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningssupportservices/www/default.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningssupportservices/www/default.htm</a>
Charter of Human Rights	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm</a> <a href="http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/">http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/</a>
Equal Opportunity Act	<a href="http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eo/eoact.htm">http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eo/eoact.htm</a>
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm</a>
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	<a href="http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf">http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf</a>