

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

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.

Northcote High 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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2. School Vision and Values
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

Northcote High School is a large, vibrant and highly successful co-educational school. Since it was established in 1926, the school has developed strong traditions and a rich intellectual culture, manifesting through a record of consistently positive student achievement and high



levels of participation in the school’s comprehensive co-curricular program. The school has currently 1780 students from a diverse range of backgrounds.

A feature of the school has been an outward-facing perspective regarding contemporary education trends and an elevated focus on internationalisation through partnerships and experiences of all students. The school encourages active citizenship and aims to prepare young people for a fast-changing world through participation in challenging learning – both in the classroom and through learning that fosters curiosity and student agency.

2. School Vision and Values

Northcote High equips young people to realise and enhance their talents. We know that learning is for us all. We are a community whose positive relationships allow us to challenge ourselves and each other. The paths we each follow will take us out into the world changed and confident.

That’s why we value Achievement, Curiosity, Humanity and Fairness.

	AS A TEACHER...	AS A STUDENT...
<p>ACHIEVEMENT We challenge ourselves. We are passionate about and take responsibility for our learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I believe that all students can learn and should be challenged ▪ I connect learning to student interests, experiences & strengths ▪ I provide clear learning intentions for every lesson and opportunity to review and reflect ▪ I use data to reflect, plan and understand my students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I collaborate and learn from others through feedback ▪ I engage in tasks positively and can direct my own learning ▪ I come to class on time, organised and ready to learn ▪ I persist to achieve my learning goals
<p>CURIOSITY We challenge ourselves. We are passionate about and take responsibility for our learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I am open to innovation and integrating new ideas ▪ I promote creative and imaginative solutions to problems ▪ I encourage students to ask questions and develop new ideas ▪ I plan learning that provides opportunities for student choice and independent learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I ask questions and remain open to new learning ▪ I reflect on my learning to seek development ▪ I challenge my existing ideas
<p>HUMANITY We learn in and with our community. We are generous and strive for justice in the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I learn with my colleagues and students, embracing opportunities to collaborate with others ▪ I am accepting of others and celebrate diversity in our community ▪ I take responsibility for implementing shared understandings, eg. implementing school rules consistently ▪ I demonstrate leadership and create a caring learning environment for students and peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I embrace diversity in my community and connect with others ▪ I take appropriate action when I see someone in need ▪ I demonstrate leadership and act as a role model for others ▪ I care for our classrooms and common spaces
<p>FAIRNESS We are open and honest. We treat each other with respect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I build positive relationships with students, colleagues and families ▪ I share knowledge and resources with others ▪ I am consistent & fair, treating everyone with dignity & respect ▪ I connect feedback to data and provide direction on how to improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I listen to others and communicate my ideas respectfully ▪ I recognise the work of others and encourage them in their learning

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <https://www.nhs.vic.edu.au/about-us/vision-values>

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Northcote High 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

- 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 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 Northcote High School use a LENAR instructional 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 Northcote High School 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 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 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 Captains 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 performing arts, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Level Program 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 with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - 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

- each year group has a Year Level Program Leader and Head of Subschool responsible for their year, 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
- 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 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
- Northcote High School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Northcote High 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 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



Northcote High 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. Northcote High 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

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

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

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, Northcote High School 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 community service, 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 Program Leader
- 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 Northcote High School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

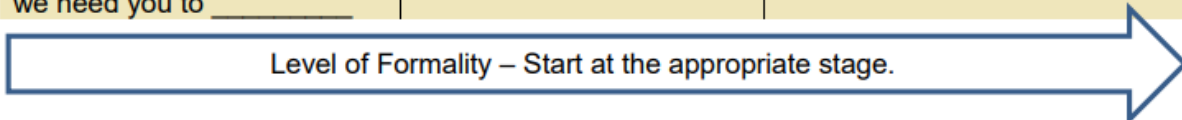
Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

In applying a Restorative Practices Approach, teachers will apply the following continuum:

THE CONTINUUM OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES: TEACHERS' GUIDE

<p>OUR AIM FOR RESTORATIVE PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an opportunity to reinforce school values • All participants have a sense of justice and fairness. • Participants gain an insight into the impact of their behaviours on others. • A healing of hurt and a repairing of the damaged relationship. • Continue to offer support and a sense of belonging. • A sense of community is heightened when students, teachers and parents are equally valued as participants at a conference. <p>TEACHERS may begin their interventions at any of Stages 1-3.</p>
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STAGE 1: Teacher AFFECTIVE RESPONSE	STAGE 2: Teacher REMIND & REDIRECT	STAGE 3: Teacher RELOCATION/RESTORATIVE CHAT
<p>What / How: Nonverbal interventions + Verbal Interventions such as 'I' or 'we' statements made quietly to the student</p> <p>Example: Make eye contact in order to gesture to the task at hand.</p> <p>Example: When you _____ I feel _____ I need you to _____</p> <p>Or: By _____ the learning of others is interrupted and we need you to _____</p>	<p>What / How: Remind student of expectation or agreements and assist them to reengage in the task.</p> <p>Example: Remember (we spoke about / agreed / it is expected that) _____.</p> <p>Can you see what is next in this task? Do you need any assistance to re-engage in this task?</p>	<p>What / How: To provide reflection time either: calmly move the student to a new seat, or advise that they will stay back for a chat</p> <p>Example: "I'd like you to come and sit here and in a minute we can chat about what's happened and what can help you refocus." "We will need to have a quick chat after the bell about what's happened today and how next lesson can be better."</p>



STAGE 4: Teacher & Member of the Leadership Team if required	STAGE 5:
<p>Small Group Conference: If behaviour has continued after Stage 3.</p> <p>What / How:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group conference: Teacher/s and student/s. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the problem is between <u>two students</u>, any teacher could facilitate this Small Group Conference. ○ If the problem is between a <u>teacher and student</u> then sub-school or another teacher can facilitate • Students should write a 'Reflection on Behaviour' prior to this conversation 	<p>Community Conference with a member of the Leadership Team and parents / students</p> <p>What / How:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Stage 4. • Member of the leadership team co-ordinates conference. • May require a learning agreement to be formalised.

7. Engaging with families

Northcote High School 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

Northcote High School 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
- Compass, including attendance and absence data

Northcote High School 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 and on Compass School Documentation
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	August 2022 – School Council and Governance Committee
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2024