



### 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.

Portland Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students can reach their full potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture 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. This Policy applies to both Campuses of Portland Secondary College.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. The College's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy is part of the suite of policies which are linked to the Child Safety Policy which mandates zero tolerance to child abuse.

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### POLICY

1. School profile

Portland Secondary College is a state secondary school set in a 11.12 hectare regenerated bushland setting, catering for approximately 620 students. The College is located in Portland, a coastal town of about 10,000 people situated about 4 hours from Melbourne towards the South Australian border. The rural city of Portland is growing and supports a range of professions and industries. Located on a peninsula with ocean on three sides, our student population consists of about 2/3 townfolk and 1/3 bus travellers. The student gender balance of the College is fairly even with slightly more males than females.



In addition, the College runs a re-engagement program for those students considered at risk of not completing their education. This campus is located in Victoria Parade overlooking the centre of town and is governed by the same policies and procedures as the main secondary campus.

The College employs approximately 53 teaching staff, some of whom work part time, and a number of Education Support staff. The staffing profile includes five Principal Class Officers and a number of other leadership positions and is strongly supported by an active College Council and various sub-committees including Finance, Physical Services and Curriculum & Student Services. The College Council works hard to improve school grounds and facilities located in permanent buildings. Since 1995 new facilities have been provided for Library, Gymnasium, Drama, Technology, Arts, Science and Technology Food and a great deal of refurbishment has occurred in a number of classrooms. A new Global Learning Centre has been established and a Trade Training Centre has recently been built on the College grounds. A major refurbishment of the Junior Wing has also been completed. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in all College activities, both in and out of the classroom and currently work with students in the school production, sport, and public speaking areas.

Portland Secondary College places a strong emphasis on welfare and wellbeing of its school community with excellent transition, pastoral care and mentoring programs established. The College works extensively with eight feeder primary schools to assist and support transition from Primary School into the College and a sub-school structure, consisting of Years 7, 8, Years 9 and 10, and the Senior School of Years 11 and 12 provides the basis for student management with Form Mentors in place for all Year 7-9 classes and Mentors for all 10/11/12 students.

## **2. School values, philosophy and vision**

Portland Secondary College's Mission Statement is to *Develop creative, articulate, respectful and resourceful young people able to contribute positively to the global community.* The mission of Portland Secondary College is to excel in the provision of broad, flexible and inclusive educational pathways for our students that highlight our strong sense of community and our continued tradition of excellence. This is achieved through a stimulating, comprehensive and challenging academic focus and is supported by specialist activities in sport, performing arts, debating, public speaking, student leadership, music and the arts that support and extend all students. There is an emphasis on developing optimistic, resourceful and resilient global citizens for the future. A wide range of studies is offered at senior level including VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education), VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning), VET (Vocational Education and Training) and School Based Apprenticeships. Supportive Leadership and high levels of staff morale and commitment leads to a quality education resulting in higher than normal academic results.

Student management is based on clear expectations, consistency and the development of self-discipline skills in students. These approaches contribute to students' self esteem and to their growing sense of the wider society.

College Council, in conjunction with the College staff, believe students should be challenged and extended, offered success in worthwhile learning and given the chance to take increasing responsibility for their own education. The College welcomes enrolments from students with diverse



racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds and prides itself on teaching students to respect and celebrate differences. The College supports a number of Koorie enrolments and staff work extensively on individualised programs with this cohort of students. Additionally the College extensively assists funded students who require Disability and Impairment support as well as providing additional Literacy and Numeracy to all students who require a little extra assistance. Extension and Enhancement and Co-curricula activities are offered at all levels.

### 3. Engagement strategies

Portland Secondary College and the wider community share a number of expectations in the areas of student engagement, attendance and behaviour. The College supports the rights and articulates the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment and acknowledges that social and emotional wellbeing underpin effective student learning and positive behaviour. The College aims to work with all students on academic, social and extra curricula achievements, their sense of belonging and connectedness to school and their investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation. 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
- prioritising positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- providing multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success
- 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
- delivering 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
- developing a fair, respectful and consistent whole school behaviour management system
- teachers at Portland Secondary College using the Learning Architecture instructional framework, the Gradual Release of Responsibility and the Pedagogical Toolbox 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 Portland Secondary College adopting a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values being 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



- gradually refurbishing all classrooms to create an environment conducive to learning
- inviting students to become active participants in their education
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement being acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students having 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 Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school productions, sport coaching and playing, music programs and Peer Support programs
- all students being welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Group Leaders, Assistant Principals and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an ‘open door’ policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Live4Life
  - Safe Schools
  - Peer Mentors
  - eSmart
  - Doctors in Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

### Targeted

- each year group has a Year Level Leader 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
- all students from Year 7 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment



- Portland Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- 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
- Out of hours programs to foster student engagement such as the Homework Program, Resit Program for VCE, VCAL and VETiS students, Holiday Revision Program for VCE, VCAL and VETiS students, Drama Production rehearsal, music practice
- Development of particular programs to address needs such as Literacy and numeracy support and MIPS supported pathways
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

### Individual

- Student Support Groups
- 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
- Re-Engagement Program
- Doctors in Schools
- Navigator program

Student Support Group meetings will:

- Develop an understanding of the young person
- Utilise data collection and monitoring systems that will inform decision making
- Identify the young person's learning, social, emotional, behavioural and environmental needs, and the support or resources the student requires for improvement
- Involve key specialist learning and wellbeing support staff, for example the literacy or numeracy coach, student welfare coordinator, primary welfare officer, and/or school psychologist and also Regional Educational Staff if appropriate
- Develop an Individual Learning Plan with the student's classroom teacher/s and ensure support to implement the plan
- Support referrals to community support agencies for specialist interventions

Portland 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
- Allowing for early identification of students at risk of disengagement at school.



- Establishing social/emotional/educational support for vulnerable students using the School Nurse and Student Services Coordinator with the assistance of community agencies such as Brophy, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service, Centre Against Sexual Assault and Portland District Health.
- Curriculum and Drug Education programs which aim to minimise harm, educate students in resilience to encourage an attitude of abstinence and strategies based on early intervention, special treatment and supply control.
- 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 program

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

Portland 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Portland 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, coping skills, stress management, mood, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families



- self-referrals or referrals from peers

Data on these issues will be collected and collated by the Student Services who will consult with parents, teachers, Principal Class Officers and outside agencies for ways to best support the student(s) involved. Data could be attendance figures, educational data such as Victorian Curriculum Teacher Judgments, NAPLAN results, On-demand testing results, PATs Testing results discipline and welfare incidents, the number of times a student has required welfare support, etc. Parent support and permission to access outside agencies will be sought in all cases expect in mitigating circumstances.

### 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.

All members of our school community have the right:

- To participate fully in their education
- To feel safe, secure and happy at school
- To learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- To express their ideas, feelings and concerns
- To be treated as an individual
- To be treated in a dignified and respectful manner
- To be able to work without unnecessary interruption
- To be involved in the decision making process in curriculum and discipline
- To be given individual care and attention
- To experience an educational environment which aims to develop fully the skills and abilities of all students such that they can function effectively in the wider community
- To be able to discuss any issues of concern in a non-threatening environment
- To be fully informed regarding all school policies and practices
- To be punctual, enthusiastic and well prepared

Students have the responsibility:

- To participate fully in their educational program
- To display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- To respect the right of others to learn
- To respect and care for others and for the school environment
- To be involved in the development of educational philosophy and principles
- To engage in a meaningful learning experience - interesting, relevant and with achievable goals
- To support the development of school facilities



- To exhibit positive relationships
- To value difference

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.

### 6. Student behavioural expectations

Portland Secondary College places a strong emphasis on the welfare and wellbeing of its school community. Its mission statement is to develop articulate, respectful and resourceful young people able to contribute positively to the global community. College Council, in conjunction with the College staff, believe students should be challenged and extended, offered success in worthwhile learning and given the chance to take increasing responsibility for their own education. The College promotes excellence in learning, positive relationships and personal growth. Our purpose is underpinned by the values of respect, success, resilience and creativity.

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Portland Secondary College's Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Portland Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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.

The whole College community is reminded of behaviour management and attendance expectations each year through the newsletter, Compass, College website and parent information sessions. Each year College staff undergo Professional Development about the care, safety and welfare of students. This school has procedurally fair processes for managing student behaviour. Corporal punishment is prohibited in all government schools. Corporal punishment is not used at this school under any circumstances.

The school is committed to the use of restorative practices with students who do not comply with College rules and expectations.

It is agreed that minor infringements of College rules are best dealt with by the individual classroom teacher who can make use of a range of approaches in order to reward and improve the classroom behaviour of students. All consequences are to be implemented calmly, respectfully and consistently with all students using the Agreed Restorative Practices Guidelines. Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- increased vigilance





- a reminder of the rules
- 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 Mentor or Year Level Leader
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy.

### 7. Student Attendance Expectations

Student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents and carers and the College has a number of strategies in place to promote and maintain high levels of student attendance and participation. These include:

- Articulating high expectations to all members of the school community
- Adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence
- Following up student absences promptly and consistently implementing data-driven attendance improvement strategies
- Creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- Providing early identification of and supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance
- Linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support
- Providing a staged response to student absenteeism including:
  - Clear written and verbal statements made regularly to parents/carers and students about school and community attendance expectations,
  - Promotion of awareness that absence results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities
  - Whole-school modelling of punctuality
  - Delegation of responsibilities to all staff, with a key member of staff leading attendance improvement initiatives
  - Regular discussions on student attendance in staff meetings
  - Understanding of the causal factors of absence, and the need for targeted interventions
  - Implementation of effective and supportive transition programs, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school, and pathways and Careers support programs
  - Class and Mentor Group structures and environments that enable opportunities for increased connectedness to individual teachers and peers
  - Individual Student Learning Plans, including attendance and punctuality goals
  - Provision of out-of-school programs, such as the Homework Program



- Providing structures and activities encouraging parents/carer's involvement in the life of the school
- Collaborating with other schools, community groups and agencies
- Organising attendance focused meetings with parents/carers and students
- Forming student support groups to enable a coordinated response to support for individual students and parents/carers
- Individual student attendance goal setting and data-driven improvement plans
- Transparent and immediate follow-up of any problems identified by students and parents/carers
- Formal procedures for supporting the learning of a student absent for an extended period
- Positive and flexible support and follow-up with students on their return to school, including the modification of learning outcomes where required
- Referring of individual students and parents/carers to community agencies for additional support
- Referral to the Navigator Program.

### 8. Engaging with families

Portland 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
- ensuring all families have access to Compass
- reporting events and information on Facebook

### 9. Evaluation

Portland 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:

- Attitude to School student survey
- Incidents data



- School reports
- Parent survey
- Case management
- CASES21 (Education Department Data)
- Student Online Case System
- Navigator referrals
- Suspension Data
- Compass Data
- Parent forums
- Mentor Survey data

### 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 as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request
- Available on Staff Knowledge Base

### FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

[Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)

[Bullying Prevention Policy](#)

[Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)

### REVIEW CYCLE

| DATE      | VERSION | CONSULTATION   | APPROVED BY          | NEXT REVIEW |
|-----------|---------|--|----------------------|-------------|
| June 2022 | 4       | Portland Secondary College School Council<br>Portland Secondary Staff<br>Student Leadership Team | Principal Jo Kindred | May 2023    |