

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Portland Secondary College on 03 5523 1344 or portland.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

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, 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. This Policy applies to both Campuses of Portland Secondary College.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

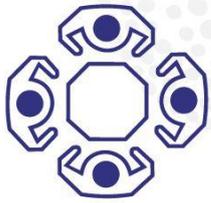
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POLICY

1. School profile

Portland Secondary College is a state secondary school set in a 11.12 hectare regenerated bushland setting, catering for approximately 510 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.



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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 49 teaching staff, some of whom work part time, and a number of Education Support staff. The staffing profile includes three 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 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 and a Year 7 Hub created. 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.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Portland 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. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of Respect, Success, Resilience and Creativity.

Portland Secondary College's Mission Statement is *we strive to create an environment where high expectations, a wealth of opportunities, and dedicated professional growth enable students to embody our core values.*

The College aims 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. The College's dedicated staff provide a wide range of special co-curricular programs that support and extend all students. A wide range of studies are offered at senior levels including VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education), VCEVM (Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major), VETiS (Vocational Education and Training in Schools) 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

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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.

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available online on the College's website.

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Portland Secondary College 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
- 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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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 VCE VM 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 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 Voice and Agency Committee and other forums including Year Group meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Managers, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.

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- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school productions, sport coaching and playing, music programs and School clubs.
- all students being welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Level Managers, 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
 - 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)
- 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 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
- 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 Marrung Action Plan for further information
- 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, VCE VM and VETiS students, Holiday Revision Program for VCE, VCE VM 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
- 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](#)
- 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



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Creating the Opportunities...

Individual

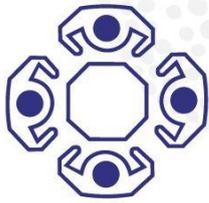
- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plans
- Programs for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace or The Orange Door
- Re-Engagement Program
- Doctors in Schools
- Navigator 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 Education 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 Education 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 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 or The Orange Door
 - Re-engagement program



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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 Engagement Support Officers
- 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

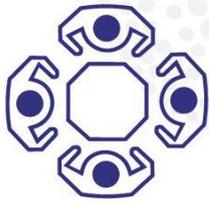
5. Student rights and responsibilities

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, racism, 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

We strive to create an environment where high expectations, a wealth of opportunities, and dedicated professional growth enable students to embody our core values.



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- 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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

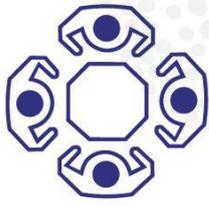
When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Portland Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the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

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings



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Creating the Opportunities...

- 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.

The Principal of Portland 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

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:

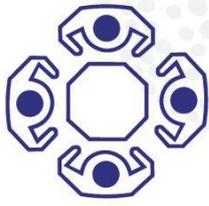
- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that 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

8. 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



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- Suspension Data
- Compass Data
- Parent forums
- Mentor Survey data

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

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 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](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour – Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

Our school policies and documents can be found at portlandsc.vic.edu.au/our-school/policies/

Relevant Policies and documents:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy



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POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Feb 2026
Consultation	Consultation on this policy is mandatory. Consulted with School Council in Feb 2026 and SVAC in March 2026.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before February 2028