



# Bentleigh Secondary College

## Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Bentleigh Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

### Scope

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

### Contents

- School profile
- School values, philosophy and vision
- Wellbeing and engagement strategies
- Identifying students in need of support
- Student rights and responsibilities
- Student behavioural expectations and management
- Engaging with families
- Evaluation

### Policy

#### School profile

Bentleigh Secondary College is a thriving and innovative school, proudly supported by its local community providing excellence in education. The College continues to develop a culture of high expectations with a focus on learning. Innovations and developments in curriculum and pedagogy are rigorous and underpinned by current research and ongoing evaluation. Our college has 95 equivalent full-time staff; 4 Principal class, 67.86 teachers, 4 paraprofessionals and 19.14 Education Support Staff. Enrolments reflect a strong and growing reputation in our local community. Based on the school's Student Family Occupation index we have a high socio-economic profile and 4% of students had an additional language and 0.85% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. A key educational priority is to ensure students have access to curriculum activities that broaden and deepen their learning experiences. We value personal effort, perseverance, and excellence.

#### School values, philosophy and vision

We believe our school must provide excellence in education by providing opportunities for the development of the whole student, including the skills and capabilities young people need to lead productive lives. A key educational priority is to ensure students have access to curriculum activities that broaden and deepen their learning experiences. We value personal effort, perseverance and excellence.

Bentleigh Secondary College's vision is to develop students who:

- engage in their learning and become lifelong learners who will develop resilience and optimism
- are independent learners, whose learning is extended by teachers who use high impact teaching strategies and best practice based on data to achieve on-going learning growth
- utilise 21st Century skills to enable them to enhance and develop their learning at school and provide them with the knowledge and skills to apply this learning ethically and effectively in further study, work and in their personal lives.



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This is enacted through the use of a range of evidence based pedagogies and curriculum used by teachers in the classroom. Formative and summative assessment and feedback is provided to students, centred around their learning to set goals for future growth. We also value our partnerships in the development of programs such as Growth Mindset, Mindfulness and Meditation.

Bentleigh Secondary College's values are:

respect for self and others; inclusiveness and the concern for the safety and wellbeing of self and others; harmonious relationships where differences are valued and where we support student voice and agency for students to take responsibility for their learning and enable the learning of others. Our programs and practices are designed to reflect these values.

We are a school where relationships are highly valued, allowing all to feel engaged and connected as a community of learners. Restorative practices are used to acknowledge conflict and to repair relationships. We are a community committed to respectful relationships that achieve successful outcomes for all students in a safe, challenged and supportive school culture.

Bentleigh Secondary College's values are:

**Excellence** – excellence in education

**Responsibility** – the right to learn

**Respect** – the right to be treated with respect

**Inclusiveness** – the right to feel safe

**Community** – the right to feel included

Bentleigh Secondary College is a thriving, well-resourced school, proudly supported by its local community providing excellence in education.

## Engagement strategies

Our students are engaged in their learning and this is confirmed by our excellent results in the Students' Attitudes to School Survey particularly in the area of Teaching and Learning.

Bentleigh Secondary College is organised into two sub schools. Middle (Years 7 to 9) and Senior (Years 10 to 12). Each sub school is overseen by a Head of Sub School and each year group has a Head of Year Level. These staff members are responsible for the wellbeing and engagement of students and tracking their academic progress. They are a point of contact for students and parents who may need additional support. A key focus of the college strategic plan is Student Wellbeing. All students are supported both emotionally and academically through a range of programs and the building of positive relationships. The individual learning needs of our students are strongly supported through classroom teaching, the Disability Inclusion Profile (DIP), the Gifted and Talented Program and intensive literacy, and EAL and Indigenous student support. On the Students' Attitudes to School Survey gives us insights into our student connectedness, motivation and safety. Our attendance rates are consistently above the state median.

Bentleigh Secondary College responds to the needs and expectations of parents and the community by providing educational programs that cater for a variety of learning styles, student needs and ambitions. We develop a Growth Mindset in our teachers and students. Parent involvement in all aspects of the college is actively encouraged and parents are included as active partners with the college in their child's education. Innovative practice is a driving force for our teaching and learning. We have four Learning Pillars in place for social and emotional learning: Year 7 GRIT, Year 8 EQ, Year 9 Learning Journey, Year 10 Learning Leadership. Additionally, at Year 7 and Year 8 students' inquiry based learning brings together all students and teachers in a thematic approach to explore questions in an interdisciplinary manner. At Year Seven to Year Ten, students focus on Problem Solving in STEAM in the college's new Da Vinci Centre. Bentleigh Secondary College is proud of its academic tradition and continues to focus on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

In our Senior School, Bentleigh Secondary College delivers a broad curriculum including VCE Program, the VCE-Vocational Major Program and enables students access to VET Programs to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations. Students are supported by individual career and course counselling, visits to industry, TAFE and universities, information



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sessions, a career newsletter, work experience and career focused guest speakers and workshops. Our college has close links to Holmesglen TAFE which offers a broad range of VETiS pathway subjects to students in Years 10-12. In the last couple of years we have seen a significant increase in the number of students entering university as we counsel and manage all students to ensure successful pathway transitions. Our college student pathways program supports our culture of achievement by offering a dynamic and comprehensive careers program that encourages student aspirations. Our expectation and commitment is to ensure all students are fully supported with transition to further education, training and employment.

Bentleigh Secondary College uses an Explicit Instructional Model in classes to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidence-based, high impact teaching strategies are incorporated into all lessons. We have literacy and numeracy support across year levels in the college with our MYLNS program. The college has adopted 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.

## **Attendance**

Bentleigh Secondary College understands that maximum attendance is a key to student engagement and successful student learning outcomes. The college has actively embraced an approach in dealing with students whose attendance is not maximised. At the Middle and Senior School the college effectively monitors student attendance to ensure student results are enhanced through positive engagement supported by appropriate policies and procedures. The Head of Year Level is responsible for monitoring student attendance, along with the Wellbeing Team.

## **Professional Learning**

Teacher professional learning, complimented by our Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups, is given high priority at Bentleigh Secondary College to enhance quality teaching and learning. Through targeted professional development teachers are skilled in understanding and catering to the different learning needs of students, by developing learning experiences which are rigorous, challenging and meaningful. Student expectations are challenged through this process. Teachers build positive relationships with their students through a cooperative learning environment supported by our strong professional development ethos.

## **Building Leadership Capacity**

Bentleigh Secondary College promotes distributive leadership with continuous development in enhancing the leadership capacity of both students and staff. This leads to an improved learning and engagement culture. A rigorous and inclusive accountability framework based on reciprocity has been introduced.

Staff have been encouraged to develop leadership capacity within the classroom, in their positions of responsibility and by actively participating in the various teams and committees that lead our college community. All teaching staff, as part of the PLC process, are required to visit other teachers' classrooms and engage in professional dialogue around improving teaching practice. Staff are also encouraged to be involved in professional associations and networks to broaden their capacity and model best practice within the college.

Bentleigh Secondary College's leadership and managerial behaviour focuses on people, on development and on core business. A key aim is the enhancement of our team culture through supportive leadership, role clarity, and participative decision-making and professional interaction. The outcome is improved school performance and staff motivation.

The Student Representative Council, Green Machine, the Respect Committee, Sport and House are forums in which students can demonstrate their leadership capacity and contribute to student voice in the college. Year Level Assemblies are also led by students. Formal and inclusive whole school assemblies led by School Captains have allowed a culture of student success to be celebrated. Wherever possible, students are encouraged to participate in other leadership programs at school and within the broader community. We have two elected student representatives and two School Captains on School Council who also participate in sub-committee meetings and Council meetings.



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## **Inclusion, Wellbeing & Transitions**

- The Bentleigh Secondary College Student Wellbeing Team provides a comprehensive range of supports for all students within the college. The team consists of the Head of Wellbeing, the Disability Inclusion Profile Team, Counsellors, the Adolescent Health Nurse and Inclusion Support Staff.
- The Student Wellbeing Team works closely with Youth Support Services within the City of Glen Eira and Bayside areas along with Bentleigh Bayside Community Connect. There is a strong focus on developing and strengthening effective partnerships between the college, the home and local service agencies. In supporting students who may be at risk of disengaging from school, the Wellbeing Team work closely with the Pathways Co-ordinator, agencies such as Youth Xpress. The college has developed a close working relationship with the clinicians at Alfred Child Youth Mental Health Service (Alfred CYMHS) and teachers in the Alfred Education Centre. These providers assist in delivering professional development to build the capacity of our staff to meet the diverse needs of our students.
- Bentleigh Secondary College's wellbeing programs address the strengthening of emotional, academic and social health of all students. These include Peer Support along with targeted programs at various year levels, such as Mindfulness Meditation, Respectful Relationships, Safe Schools, Bully Stoppers, Cybersafety, Safe Partying, Sexual Health, Stress Management, Body Image, Anger Awareness, Civic Rights, Calmer Classrooms, Responsibilities, Teen Mental Health First Aid, and Goal Setting.
- The Head of Wellbeing facilitates educational assessments, counselling, family and academic supports and referrals to specialist assistance.
- Bentleigh Secondary College has many successful student transition and pathways programs. Our Year 7 transition program is comprehensive and includes a pastoral program that includes a significant teacher, personal learning subject, transition camp and peer support.
- Students are welcome to self-refer to the Wellbeing Team, the Adolescent Health Nurse, Heads of Year Level, 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
- Bentleigh Secondary College creates opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs. There are also opportunities for participation in sports teams, clubs and lunchtime activities.

Bentleigh 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 the 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
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing where the student sits in the classroom
- referring the student to:
  - School-based wellbeing supports, such as the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator or Team
  - Student Support Services (SSS)
  - 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

### *Other supports:*

- Connect all Indigenous students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)
- All students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Education Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment and connection with Lookout
- 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

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:



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- 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 Plan 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.

Student Support Groups, see:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>

## Identifying students in need of support

### Intensive literacy support

Bentleigh Secondary College has a history of supporting literacy enhancement with the provision of a literacy expert. Our Year 7 students' literacy needs are carefully assessed through a range of tests and targeted intervention programs including Individual Education Plans, classroom support and attending Positive Education Centre sessions. The needs of our EAL and Indigenous students are also met through targeted literacy, learning and social support programs. A Homework Club operates after school once a week and is available to all students.

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 a 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.

At Bentleigh Secondary College our assessment of students is a strength-based model, as outlined in the DIP process, this information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

Bentleigh 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 that help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Bentleigh Secondary College will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers





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## **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 (see point 2).

The values of the college are:

- Inclusiveness: the right to feel safe.
- Respect: the right to be treated with respect
- Responsibility: the right to learn
- Community: the right to be supported by a positive community

Students have the responsibility to:

- Treat others the way they want to be treated
- Lead by example and be a respected member of the community
- Be responsible for their own learning and actions
- Support themselves and each other in the college community.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

## **Student behavioural expectations**

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 Bentleigh Secondary College's Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Bentleigh 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.

Behaviours that create a positive college community are:

- Being open and non-judgemental
- Being involved in classroom and co-curricular activities
- Being on time to school, completing homework and following the code of conduct,
- Being considerate of all perspectives of our peers.

If a Bentleigh Secondary student behaves in a way that impinges on the rights of students and staff or is unable to meet the responsibilities outlined above, teachers will use a series of steps to assist the student to become a more positive member of our community. Some of the behaviours that will challenge our cooperative learning community and the steps that teachers will use are outlined below. All of these steps are underpinned by the college's Restorative Practices approach. When things go wrong When someone has been hurt

- What happened?
  - What were you thinking at the time?
  - What have you thought about since?
  - Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
  - What do you think you need to do to make things right?
  - What can I (the college) do to help?
- 
- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
  - What impact has the incident had on you and others?



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- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
- What can I (the college) do to help?

Our college considers that a positive approach to behaviour is desirable to foster a school climate within which personal responsibility and self-discipline will be developed.

Students are expected to:

- behave in a responsible manner, obey staff directions, and allow other students to learn without interference
- respect personal property of other people and the school environment
- comply with all school policies including the student code of conduct and the sexual harassment policy
- wear correct school uniform to and from, as well as at school
- be punctual, be prepared for all classes and to complete homework

We are committed to the following strategies to encourage our students to develop self-discipline:

- provide positive reinforcement to improve self-esteem – implement a Growth Mindset approach
- acknowledge differences and encourage sharing, tolerance and compassion among students in order to develop respect for others
- provide consistent and fair forms of discipline
- foster a community pride in the school
- work with students in conjunction with parents

Accepted consequences for non-compliance with the student code of conduct:

## **Initial Consequences**

All classroom teachers will use a classroom management plan which provides opportunity for the student to change their misbehaviour. If a student continues to misbehave they may then be sent to the Head of Year Level. The following types of severe misbehaviour will be followed up and consequences will apply.

- physical abuse
- wilful damage of property
- verbal abuse of teachers or students

## **Follow Up Consequences**

Teachers need to follow up with the Head of Year Level and discuss further consequences. These may include:

- discussion of student's responsibilities
- individual program that reinforces responsibilities and rules
- withdrawal from group activity to enable the student to evaluate behaviour
- written and/or verbal apology
- consultation with parents
- detention
- referral to appropriate counselling
- re-assessment of privileges
- belongings or clothing excluded by the rules to be confiscated for later collection where appropriate
- suspension/exclusion procedures are followed in line with Department of Education and Training Guidelines.

Every effort will be made to ensure that logical consequences are applied for inappropriate behaviour. This Code of Conduct acknowledges the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 which supports racial and religious tolerance and prohibits vilification on the grounds of race or religion. Bentleigh Secondary College has procedurally fair processes for managing student behaviour. Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

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>



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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 Bentleigh Secondary College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

## Engaging with families

Bentleigh 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.

## Evaluation

Bentleigh Secondary College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- the College's Bullying Prevention Policy
- the College's Parents' Code of Conduct
- the Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Communicating with School Staff Policy

Bentleigh Secondary College's Child Safety Code of Conduct is consistent with the Education Department's recommendation.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

Safe Schools are Effective Schools at <https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-schools>

and departmental advice to schools on bullying including cyber bullying at

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx>

Suspension guidelines:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

## Policy Review and Approval

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|----------------------------|----------------|
| Policy last reviewed       | October 2022   |
| Ratified by                | School Council |
| Next scheduled review date | 2024           |