



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the main office on 5147 1790.

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.

Maffra 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

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

Maffra Secondary College is located approximately 220 kilometres East of Melbourne. We have approximately 550 students enrolled from Year 7 to 12.



Our school is a rural centre that has a diverse range of feeder primary schools from Maffra and smaller towns surrounding Maffra, including Boisdale, Briagolong, Heyfield, Cowwarr, Bundalaguah, Nambrok, Denison, Tinamba, Stratford, Mewburn Park, and Valencia Creek. Approximately 70% of our students travel to school from nearby areas by bus.

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

Maffra Secondary College's Vision Statement is to provide a positive learning environment where all individuals are accepted, inspired and empowered to succeed.

Our core school values are respect, community, resilience and learning. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate these core values at every opportunity.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Maffra 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*
- *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, NAPLAN, School Staff Survey data, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data*
- *deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, SBATs, VCE and VM to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Maffra Secondary College use an explicit instructional model 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 Maffra Secondary College 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*
- *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
- we 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 student leadership program and other forums including focus 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 plays, athletics, and music programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to wellbeing, our School Nurse, Year Level Coordinators, Year Level 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 have a targeted education support officer (TESO) at year 7 and 8 to support students in their early years of secondary education
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes the respectful relationships program, delivered via our Learning to Learn program
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs, or issues with vaping)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams 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 Coordinator, a teacher 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 employ a full time Koorie education support officer to help with this through our wellbeing team
- our English as a second language students are supported through regular engagement with their English teachers, and additional support is provided through the department's EAL regional staff visits
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTQIA+ student support.
- we have a student diversity captain to help canvass the needs of diverse student groups
- 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 having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG)
- 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
- Maffra Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Maffra Secondary College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These 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
- providing learning adjustments, modifications or differentiation to learning programs as needed
- 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 Engagement 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

Maffra Secondary College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Wellbeing team, Year Level Coordinators and Year Level Leaders, along with classroom teachers who may refer students as needed, all play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Maffra 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*
- *referrals from classroom teachers around necessary learning adjustments or suspected difficulties in accessing learning*

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.

Maffra Secondary College's values are Learning, Community, Resilience, Respect. At Maffra Secondary College everything we do encompasses our values. Learning is our key driver, and we strongly believe learning extends well beyond the four walls of a classroom. We strive to develop students who know how to learn, and are equipped with the skills to take on a lifetime of opportunities and challenges.

We instil a strong sense of community and compassion in our students, by means of connecting with our local primary schools, hospital and aged care facilities, our local business and our local community groups. We work closely with our students to build resilience. This is done by explicitly teaching how to give, receive and use high quality written and verbal feedback. When feedback is received, students are encouraged to value their mistakes and learn from them.

Respect defines our relationships within the school, which is fundamental to everything we do. We believe this needs to be mutual between staff and students, and we pride ourselves on the positive and supportive culture we're able to create with each and every cohort of students.

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 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, Maffra 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 uses the SWPBS framework and we implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class. These interventions include explicitly teaching the expected behaviours, establishing classroom routines and rules, reteaching, reminding, and prompting students with positive expectations as needed.

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, and reteaching the expected behaviours
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or asking a student to step outside to reset
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator or Year Level Leader
- restorative practices
- detentions or catching up on lost learning time to ensure learning occurs
- 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 Maffra 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

Maffra 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.

8. Evaluation

Maffra 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 accessed through Compass
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Example 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
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included on staff digital handbook via Teams
- 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](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2025
Consultation	Programs and Policies Committee – March 2025 Wellbeing Team – Feb 2025 School Council – March 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2027