

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the college administration office.

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.

Altona 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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Located approximately 15 kilometres southwest of Melbourne, Altona College is thriving Prep to 12 College valuing innovation, integrity and respect. Previously operating as Altona P-9, Altona College was renamed in 2019 when it gained accreditation to deliver senior secondary education and commenced expansion. Altona College Innovation, Integrity, Respect 2 Our facilities are co-located with the Altona Early Years Hub, allowing the community access to education and childcare spanning from 3 months infant care, all the way to Year 12 graduation. Committed to providing high quality education for our local community, we maintain strong links to local interest groups with a long-term vision that sees every student connected to local people, facilities and in the long term, further education and employment.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

At Altona College we are committed to a culture of success where all learners experience growth. We have high expectations of ourselves and know that the challenges associated with learning provide opportunities for personal and academic development. We strive for excellence in education and ensure that students are the agents of their own learning. In valuing innovation, integrity and respect, we seek to provide opportunities for our students to be resilient and future-focused learners. As educators, we are curious as to our effect on student learning and engage in continuous and collective evaluation of this impact. We are curious about our world and the ways in which we can actively contribute to our community. Our vision is to ensure the academic growth of every child across the school. We expect all students to make at least one year's growth each year.

3. Engagement strategies

Altona College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn. A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing*
- *creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning*
- *analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data*

- *deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Altona College use the Altona College Teaching and Learning Framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *teachers at Altona 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*
- *our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community*
- *carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents*
- *monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level*
- *students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, school leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *all students are welcome to self-refer to any member of staff and may be guided toward resources including their Homeroom Teacher, School Nurse, Student Wellbeing Leader, relevant Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning*
- *we engage in School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) with our staff and students, regularly reviewing programs which support positive respectful relationships, within and outside of the college. Other programs include:*
 - *Respectful Relationships*
 - *Bully Stoppers*
 - *Safe Schools*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address key issues faced by students, families and staff*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs*
- *measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.*

Targeted

- *each homegroup has a key teacher who monitors health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support*
- *connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer and are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture*
- *we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)*
- *all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background*
- *our English as a second language students are supported to feel safe, supported and included in our school*
- *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 of varying levels and will work to embed trauma informed practice into their daily work to promote safe, inclusive learning environments for all students*
- *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*
- *Altona College assists students to form Personalised Pathway Plans which include subject counselling, careers education, work experience and community engagement as part of their Career Action Plan.*

Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services: including Care Team Meetings](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

Altona 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*
- *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 Child First*
 - *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

Altona College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. All staff contribute to developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Altona 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*
- *academic performance*
- *observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation*
- *attendance, detention and suspension data*
- *engagement with families*
- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

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

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, with consideration given to the multi factorial nature of student behaviour and engagement. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Altona College is committed to the preparation and preservation of calm, orderly and engaging learning environments. In doing so, our staff access a wide range of strategies, resources and procedures, including the following:

- School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports (SWPBS) include regular reference to College expectations and routines
- SWPBS lessons occur throughout the homeroom program and provide education for students about how to engage with our College values, expectations and procedures

- Berry Street – Trauma Informed Practice: Altona College committed to training all staff in 2020 and will continue to support new staff thereafter. This allows consistent application of trauma informed practice across the school, focusing on calm, respectful interactions with an unwavering focus on allowing each individual to adopt a ready to learn mindset
- Brain Breaks are used throughout lessons to manage student arousal, either calming students who are over aroused or energising students who are under aroused
- Ready To Learn plans (RTL) are encouraged for all students and allow for personalised strategies to be negotiated and implemented wherever appropriate
- Individual Learning Plan's (ILP's) are developed to ensure students in our Program for Students with Disability (PSD) program are adequately catered for through reasonable adjustment and differentiation
- Student Wellbeing supports include a range of internal and external services that are made available to students with varying additional needs.
- High Impact Wellbeing Strategies (HIWS) are regularly employed when working with students: https://www.altonacollege.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/high_impact_wellbeing_strategies_resource_accessible.pdf.

Despite implementation of the above, students will sometimes require additional support and management to stay 'ready to learn'. In managing student behaviour, any of the following may be implemented:

- Use of Altona College, Positive Behaviour Management Procedures (Redirect > Refocus > Remind > Remove > Refer > Restore)
- Use of Brain Breaks, Sensory items or private study time to allow student time to self-soothe and refocus on learning
- Short, teacher-supervised retentions of up to 15 minutes during recess or lunch breaks
- Structured break times which may require allocated seating, out of bounds areas, requirement to walk with the teacher on yard duty or complete assigned duties including basic house-keeping duties around the school
- Referral to a supervised study session of Behavioural Detention
- 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
- 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 Altona 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

Altona 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

Altona 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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Altona 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 and Compass communication platform
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs

- 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](#)
- https://www.altonacollege.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/high_impact_wellbeing_strategies_resource_accessible.pdf

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

- [Child Safety Policy](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November, 2023
Consultation	School Council sub-committee/School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November, 2025