

# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

## 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 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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## 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.

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*
- *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 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 Leadership Group. 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 with our staff and students, regularly reviewing programs which support positive, respectful relationships within and outside of the College*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address key issues faced by our students, families and staff*
- *opportunities for student inclusion in a flexible co-curricular program including sport, arts and academic pursuits*
- *buddy programs, peer support programs*

### Targeted

- *each homeroom has a key teacher who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support*
- *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*
- *Altona College assists students to form Personalised Pathway Plans which include subject counselling, careers education, work experience and community engagement*
- *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.*

### Individual

- *Student Support Groups*
- *Care Team Meetings*
- *Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan*
- *Program for Students with Disabilities*
- *referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services*
- *referral to various programs including, but not limited to ChildFirst, Headspace and Navigator*

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 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*
- *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**

Altona College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. All staff contribute to the development and implementation of evolving 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 through enrolment and transition*
- *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, teachers or family members*

## **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, discrimination or intimidation*
- *express their ideas, feelings and concerns in a calm and respectful way*

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.

## **6. 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 in accordance with the Altona College Bullying 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 Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where major or repeated minor behaviours require it, 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 of the multi factorial nature of student behaviour and engagement. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

The management student behaviour and engagement at Altona College is undertaken as outlined below:

### Pre-Correction and Prevention:

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 wide range of internal and external services that are made available to students with varying additional needs*

### Management

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 the Altona College, Positive Behaviour Management Procedures (Redirect > Refocus > Remind > Remove > Refer > Restore)*
- *Use of Brain Breaks, Sensory items or private study time to allow students time to self soothe and re focus 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 a teacher on yard duty or complete assigned duties including basic housekeeping duties around the school*
- *Referral to a Supervised Study Session or Behavioural Detention*

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy. For further information, see the Altona College – Escalated Behaviour Management Procedure.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

## 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
- parent survey data
- COMPASS
- CASES21
- SOCS

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

Further department of education resources can be found as follows:

General information: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

For parents: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/Pages/school-age.aspx>

Supporting students: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/studentsupport.aspx>

## **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated in November 2019 and is scheduled for review in November 2022.