

# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our College 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 policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Leongatha 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 helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our College acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our College 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. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

## POLICY

### 1. School profile

*Leongatha Secondary College was established in 1912 and is located approximately 130 kilometers south-east of Melbourne. Approximately 600 students are enrolled at the College from Year 7 through to Year 12 and approximately 70 school staff members are employed to support student learning; including a school nurse and wellbeing coordinator.*

*The College is situated within the Leongatha Education Precinct, on an attractive 22 hectare site that we share with Leongatha Primary School, South Gippsland Specialist School and TAFE Gippsland.*



*A wide range of enhancement and enrichment activities are available for students such as international experiences, a music program, leadership opportunities and public speaking. We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.*

## **2. Core Values and Vision**

At Leongatha Secondary College we expect all in our school community to take responsibility for their actions.

Effective Learner and Teacher Profiles have been developed via a community consultation process and these serve to provide guidance as to how each member of the College community can contribute to a safe, supportive and challenging learning environment.

### **An Effective LSC Learner:**

- Is self-motivated, inquisitive and organised.
- Displays resilience and a positive mindset.
- Is aware of their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Respects their peers, teachers and the school.
- Is willing to receive feedback and is reflective.

### **An Effective LSC Teacher:**

- Creates positive relationships.
- Displays empathy and is focussed on student wellbeing.
- Is student-focused and enthusiastic.
- Provides clarity, feedback and engaging lessons.
- Understands that challenges and change are necessary for professional growth.

Leongatha Secondary College will provide educational opportunities for all students to reach their maximum potential as lifelong learners. As a College we will embrace the notion that all students can learn and are deserving of every opportunity to experience success in their education.

To realise this vision, Leongatha Secondary College will function as a learner-centred organisation which recognises not only the need for partnerships between home, school and community but also the need for a highly skilled and flexible professional staff. The College's organisational structure will promote an environment for creative and reflective teaching practice.

The College will respond to the impact which changing social and economic patterns have on the needs of learners.

The learning opportunities provided will promote the development of healthy, happy, productive individuals as members of society. These experiences will develop our students' personal well-being, communication skills, social competencies, vocational and life skills.

### 3. Engagement strategies

Leongatha Secondary 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 College), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our College is included below:

#### Universal (whole of school)

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, and parents/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, 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 Leongatha Secondary College use Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to frame the learning and reflection for lessons and work toward ensuring evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Leongatha 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
- our college's Core 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
- planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
  - Grade 6 into Year 7 Transition Program and activities with feeder schools
  - Junior School (Years 7-9) into Senior School (Years 10-12) Transition
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, through Compass using Chronicle entries 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 the Attitudes To School Survey. Students are invited to become a member of the School Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Sub-School Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through athletics, music programs and peer support programs and also with Leongatha Primary School

- All students are welcome to speak directly to the Student Wellbeing team, School Nurse, Year Level Coordinators, Sub-School 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 engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Bully Stoppers
  - Safe Schools
  - Working Group
  - Rock and Water
  - Drumbeat
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- all Koorie students will have the support of the DET Koorie Education Support Officer should they choose to and have an Individual Learning Plan
- Leongatha Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by the Careers department
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

### Individual

Leongatha 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 Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan where deemed necessary
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made that will benefit the student, such as class changes, seating plans, inclusion in the Working Group, support from Educational Support staff in class, participation in the Intervention Program
- referring the student to:
  - school-based wellbeing team, including DET-appointed youth counsellor
  - Student Support Services
  - external professional supports such as headspace, child and adolescent mental health services, ChildFirst, other allied health professionals
  - re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the College 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, 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 working in collaboration with the student and their family to improve attendance
- 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**

Leongatha 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. Leongatha 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

#### **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 Core 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.

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 and management**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Core Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Leongatha Secondary College's Bullying prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Leongatha Secondary College will undertake a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines and Behaviour policy. Where appropriate, parents/carers 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.

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 a Year Level Coordinator/Sub-School Leader
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular 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 Leongatha Secondary College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

## **7. Engaging with families**

Leongatha 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
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

## **8. Evaluation**

Leongatha 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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Leongatha 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
- 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

Related policies including [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#), [Bullying Prevention](#), [Child Safety Reporting and Mandatory Standards](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2021
Approved by	Wayne Chester
Next scheduled review date	June 2023