

NEERIM DISTRICT 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:

- (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.

Neerim District 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 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

The staff, students and community of Neerim District Secondary College have implemented significant change over the past eight years. Most notably the College became a pilot school for the Positive School Wide Behaviours Program. The data in this document reflects that this program continues to be successful in increasing student connectedness to school. Student academic achievement too is on the rise. In 2018, the school had 41% of students who made High Learning Gain in Writing. Both Spelling and

Grammar and Punctuation Learning Gain results reflected state averages, although the latter results were slightly higher. Reading Learning Gain results indicate that we have work to do in this area. There were 38% of students that achieved low learning gain and only 19% high learning gain.

VCE results in terms of All Study Mean, was slightly above state mean but generally has remained at around state mean for the last 4 years. The school is using Equity Funding to timetable additional English classes which focus on a student's individual learning needs, as well as to fund smaller class sizes.

The school is a member of the Tarago Education Community (TEC), along with the local primary schools. The TEC was responsible for implementing a viable and ongoing Mandarin Language Program Prep to Year 12 and has assisted many students, parents, and teachers to visit China. Neerim District Secondary College continues to place a strong emphasis on its students becoming globally ready citizens through the Mandarin Program, hosting Chinese visitors, and taking up opportunities to learn in China.

The College has an active Student Leadership Action Group (STAG). This group is made up of students from all year levels. They regularly run assemblies, school events, and make decisions about uniform, daily organisation at the school, student rewards, and other relevant issues.

NDSC has had a strong focus on building practice excellence through a strong College focus on writing. The results of this has shown marked improvement in learning gain.. The introduction of an agreed model of instruction will be implemented in 2019.

The school has invested a lot of resources into ensuring NDSC has a positive climate for learning. It has a strong wellbeing structure and the staff are committed to improving student efficacy. The Positive School Wide Behaviours Program has embedded a set of values and behaviours that reflect a strong sense of school community. A learning coach program has been introduced to ensure that every student remains on track and develops learning goals.

Students at our College continue to enjoy the benefits of small class sizes: 1:1 support, timely feedback, quick intervention, and a safe and orderly learning environment. Students in Years 7 - 10 Mathematics and in Years 7 - 10 English are pre-tested prior to each topic and then grouped based on ability. This allows teachers to provide learning at the exact stage of each individual student's Mathematical and English development. All teachers at the College work together in small teams to develop curriculum which is challenging and engaging. The College, along with other local secondary schools, is a founding member of the Trade Training Alliance. Our students have access to state-of-the-art facilities at the Baw Baw Training Centre in the areas of building, plumbing, and automotive. Through the ENHANCE program, the College is pioneering one-on-one programs for talented students, which includes access to summer classes, on line courses, tutoring, and additional learning opportunities through excursions, mentoring, and elite coaching. All students at NDSC have a Learning Coach who supports them to achieve their best.

In 2019, a strong focus on reading and developing an instructional model to improve instructional practice. A Literacy Plan will also be developed to ensure a college wide approach to improving student outcomes.

The students at Neerim District Secondary College adhere to the principles they developed in the Positive Behaviours Matrix: show respect, be committed, and work together. Student Attitudes to School Survey data continues to show that the students at NDSC believe their school, and their behaviour is above that of the network, region, and state when compared with other secondary schools. Student Attendance in 2018 dropped away with an increase of students in the 80-95% attendance range. In 2018,

the College will develop and implementation plan to improve processes and education around the importance of attending school.

Student and staff wellbeing at the College is valued, and the school is committed to seeing this continue. Our vertical home group structure (based on our house system) allows not only for student leadership, but also provides a daily forum where students can raise issues, receive support, and contribute to the daily life of the school. The STAG group is another avenue for students to express their views and opinions. Home group teachers worked with their groups to further elaborate on students understanding of respect: respect for self, in relationships, within the cyber space and in interpersonal relationships. In 2018, all students had a Learning Coach to support them with their studies.

The College operates a very strong Wellbeing Program with a Wellbeing Team Leader, School Nurse, Psychologist, Chaplain, and Integration Coordinator, a doctor and a nurse. The school is recognized as providing outstanding support to students with disabilities, and our small size allows us to be flexible in providing additional programs for both talented students, and those with special needs

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

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our school is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

We are committed to preventing and addressing child abuse, bullying, including cyberbullying. Please see our Child Safe Standards and Bullying Prevention Policy.

Our philosophy:

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive, and free from harm and abuse.

Our values:

Leadership, Community, Perseverance and Respect

Guiding principles:

- The school will continue to collaboratively develop and implement a fair and respectful whole-school engagement and behaviour management approach based on the School-Wide Positive Behaviours Program.
- The school's curriculum will include Positive Behaviour Support Values and Behaviours to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement. The school will also educate students about child abuse and how to respond through the schools Health program.
- The school will promote active student participation and provide students with a sense of ownership of their environment.
- The school will support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. The school will regularly inform parents about the Child Safe Standards and how to report concerns.

- The school promotes active 'student participation' as an avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating school change.
- The school will establish social/emotional and educational support for vulnerable students and monitor and evaluate progress.
- The school will identify and respond to students at risk of school refusal.
- The school will have processes in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support.
- The school will build strong links with the local community to gain access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of our school and our teachers to respond to the needs of the students.

Philosophy Statement

3. Engagement strategies

Neerim District 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.

The school works collaboratively with students, parents/carers and community to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices based on the school's values, expected social competencies and positive peer relationships.

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 Neerim District Secondary College use a gradual release of responsibility(?) instructional 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 Neerim District 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 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 Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support 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, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Wellbeing Coordinator, Doctor in School, School Nurse, Social Welfare Officer, PSD Coordinator, School Chaplain, 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 engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - o Respectful Relationships
 - o Safe Schools
 - o Safe Minds
 - o Be You
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs ?)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

Targeted

- each year group has a Year Level Coordinator, a teacher responsible for their year, 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
- 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 (?)
- 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
- Neerim District Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan (?)
- wellbeing 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

Individual

- Student Support Groups:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcstusupp.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to Child First, Headspace
- Navigator

- Lookout

Neerim District 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 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:
 - o school-based wellbeing supports
 - o Student Support Services
 - o appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
 - o re-engagement programs - e.g. Blackwood

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 Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - o under PSDMS
 - o in Out of Home Care
 - o and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

4. Identifying students in need of support

Neerim District 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Neerim District 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
- learning coach observations
- exit, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- chronicle updates
- child safety reports
- previous school/s feedback

- student support services e.g. psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist etc.,
- DHHS and other support agencies communication

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.

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 with Neerim District Secondary College's Bullying policy.

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

Positive Behaviour Supports or disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- restorative approaches
- exited from classroom activities for a specified period - where appropriate parents/carers to be informed of such withdrawals
- individual behaviour supports; safety plans, individual education plans, negotiated programs, PBS plans, conduct cards etc.,
- 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 reviews
- detention
- suspension (in-school and out of school)
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion can only be approved by the principal are measures of last resort. They may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

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

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools and will not be used in any circumstance.

7. Engaging with families

Neerim District 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.

Parents and Carer's are expected to act in a respectful and productive manner when dealing with our school. Further detail on parent and carer responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behaviour are outlined in our [Statement of Values](#)

8. Evaluation

Neerim District 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

The following will provide more information and resources

Philosophy Statement, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Policy, Child Safety Commitment Statement, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in September 2019 and is scheduled for review in *September 2021*