STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Georgina Padula on 9830 5099.

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.

Canterbury Girls' 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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Canterbury Girls' Secondary College is a Year 7-12 college located in the City of Boroondara in Eastern Metropolitan Region. The student enrolment figure remains consistently at about 750 students. Canterbury Girls' Secondary College seeks to provide a quality educational environment, tailored to meet the needs of girls, with a focus on success in a range of academic, creative and sporting endeavours and the development of self-esteem and integrity. It is a learning community in which members respect each other. Both individual achievement and contribution to group activities are encouraged and valued. Valued College traditions develop a sense of continuity and identity for students and teachers. The College is also committed to promoting leadership skills in a learning environment based on co-operation, self-discipline and concern for others. The College endeavours to provide a range of options for students at all year levels. Middle School programs provide for study across all subject areas based on a core and elective model. In Senior School the timetable is arranged vertically to allow maximum enhancement. The expectations of parents and their children are very high. The co-curricular program, seen by many students and parents as an integral part of the regular program, features a large and comprehensive instrumental music program, extensive sporting opportunities and a vibrant House system.

As an eSmart school 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.

It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher is a vital source of support and a determinant in the success of their students. The teachers at this school will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. This school recognises the need to be engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Our school strives to be a learning community where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are valued and respected. Our heterogeneous profile means that in any given class a range of student ability exists. Within this diversity, our school aims to challenge all students to become optimistic, resilient, creative and critical thinkers. We seek to promote our school values of diversity, achievement, responsibility and endeavour throughout the curriculum, in co-curricular activities, and in our daily operations.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Canterbury Girls' Secondary College Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

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.

Canterbury Girls' Secondary College is a dynamic learning community focused on ensuring student needs are met, and on developing resilience and an attitude of lifelong learning so

that students are creative, curious and open to new opportunities which they are prepared to meet.

- We take pride at all times in our school and build a sense of belonging by fostering a strong sense of identity within classes, year levels, sub-schools, Houses and the whole school.
- We actively build relationships between students, parents and staff to ensure a learning community that enables all students to succeed and that values the importance of hearing all voices.
- We accept and support the diversity and individuality of all members of the school community and all we do demonstrates this acceptance.
- We understand the importance of a strong co-curricular program that provides a breadth of opportunities for all students and we embed such programs in the school.
- We know that there is a strong link between wellbeing, positive relationships and academic outcomes so that the wellbeing programs in the school are supported and resourced by the whole school and draw on internal and external experts to build student resilience and to support students.
- We develop teachers as passionate educators through an effective professional learning program and within teams to foster and build a professional learning community.
- The programs of, and teaching in, the school will support and promote the principles and practices of Australian democracy including a commitment to:
    - An elected government
    - The rule of law
    - Equal rights for all before the law
    - Freedom of religion
    - Freedom of speech and association
    - The values of openness and acceptance of differences and diversity
    - The safety of all children.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Canterbury Girls' 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

Our whole of school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion are:

- maintaining high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising 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 and 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
- delivering a broad curriculum including VET programs and VCE to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers using the school's instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction ensures that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers adopting 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
- incorporating our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promoting it to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planning transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- providing students 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.
- creating opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs such as the Big Sister/Little Sister program
- welcoming all students to self-refer to the Mental Health Practitioners, year level coordinators, 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
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Respectful Relationships
    - eSmart
    - Safe Schools
- developing programs, incursions and excursions to address issue specific needs or behaviour
- creating opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- encouraging buddy programs, peers support programs

- putting measures 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

Our targeted strategies to address particular groups of students or concerns in certain age groups or friendship circles include:

- having a year level coordinator for each year group and a Head of Sub-School who is a leading 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
- supporting Koorie students to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- supporting our English as a second language students through our English as an Additional Language (EAL) program, and supporting all cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) students to feel safe and included in our school including through [insert any specific strategies you have in place to support CALD students]
- providing a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and following the Department of Education (the department) policy on LGBTIQA+ Student Support [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQA+ students]
- supporting all students in Out of Home Care 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
- supporting students with a disability 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
- ensuring wellbeing and health staff undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- supporting students enrolled under the department's international student program in accordance with our legal obligations and department policy and guidelines at: International Student Program
- assisting all students from Year 10 and above to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- assisting students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Canterbury Girls' 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 students and their parents/carers to talk about how best to help the students 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 The Orange Door
    - 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 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

Canterbury Girls' 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. Canterbury Girls' 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
- Student Support Groups and Individual Education Plans

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 and School Philosophy 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 and School Philosophy/Student Code of Conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination is not 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, Canterbury Girls' Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

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 the year level coordinator
- 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 situations consistent with department policy:

- Suspensions Policy
- Expulsions Policy
- Restraint and 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.

The principal of Canterbury Girls' 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

Canterbury Girls' Secondary College values the input of parents and carers, and we 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/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff Policy.
- 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

Canterbury Girls' Secondary College collects 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 are assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

Canterbury Girls' Secondary College also regularly monitors 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 is 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

The following department policies and resources are relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Attendance
- Behaviour - Students
- Child Safe Standards
- Expulsions
- Koorie Education
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Student Engagement
- Students with Disability
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Suspensions

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

- Action Plan - Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2026
Consultation	Consultation occurred with school staff and student leaders on 9 October 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2028