

# Healesville High School

## Student Engagement Policy



### Overview

Healesville High School is committed to preparing students for a positive and productive future, keeping in mind that it has students from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds and cultures. The school's **vision** is to provide a safe, engaging and dynamic learning environment that promotes the school **values** of respect, responsibility, relationships and teamwork.

Student Engagement is a difficult area to define, it refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism and passion that a student shows when they are learning, it is not simply about good classroom behaviour and attendance. Student engagement can be broken into three specific areas;

1. **Cognitive Engagement:** refers to a student's psychological investment in their own learning. When cognitively engaged, students concentrate, focus on achieving goals, are flexible in their work and cope with failure.<sup>1</sup>
2. **Behavioural Engagement:** refers to student participation in learning and classroom activities.<sup>2</sup> Including adhering to behaviour rules, attending lessons as required and arriving at class on time.<sup>3</sup>
3. **Emotional Engagement:** refers to the relationship between students and their teachers, classmates and the school.<sup>4</sup>



It is imperative that the above aspects of student engagement are understood, considered and monitored to allow students to identify positively with their learning environment.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to,

- Develop and encourage a healthy culture where high levels of achievement are an expectation in a positive social environment.
- Provide a safe learning environment that maximises student learning opportunities and performance through engagement.
- Provide varied opportunities for students and parents to openly communicate and participate in school based activities.

<sup>1</sup> Fredricks et al (2004) 'The Measurement of Student Engagement: A comparative analysis of various methods and student self-report instruments'.

<sup>2</sup> Finn and Zimmer (2012) 'Student Engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?'.

<sup>3</sup> Fredricks and McColskey (2012).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## HHS – Student Engagement Policy

- Build a school environment that is based on positive behaviours and values.
- Provide support to individual students who are disengaging from their learning, where regular attendance is not consistent or negative behaviours are being exhibited.
- Ensure prevention (cognitive, behavioural and emotional) and intervention processes are available to all students who are seen as being ‘at risk’.
- Develop processes to build strong links with the local community which allows 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.

### Healesville High School Profile

Our school was established in 1961, it is a medium single campus co-educational secondary school in the Yarra Ranges (approximately 70 kilometres from Melbourne). In 2016 school enrolments are around 420 students. We have approximately 60 staff (full-time and part-time) including a school nurse, a wellbeing coordinator and counsellors.

Our school has families from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and cultural backgrounds. The school has a strong representation from the Koorie community; approximately 7% of our student cohort. Approximately 115 families have access to the CSEF (Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund) funding available.

### Engagement Strategies

To realise our vision, our school has in place a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in the school. We are aware that some students, as a group or as individuals will need extra social, emotional or educational support to flourish at school, and so strategies have been put in place to help identify these students and provide them with the support they need.

Healesville High School aims to always work collaboratively with students and parents/carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices, based on the school’s values, expected social standards and positive peer relationships. There are also intervention strategies in place to address inappropriate behaviours which can negatively impact on the learning environment of themselves and others.

#### Whole school approach strategies

- Our school will deliver a broad curriculum, which includes VET programs, VCE and VCAL.
- Our teachers will adopt a range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students.
- Our school has developed behavioural expectations for all members of the school community in consultation with the students, staff and parents carers and these will be taught to all students and shared with their families (see the Student Code of Conduct and Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct).
- Our school will acknowledge examples of positive behaviour and student achievement both formally and informally. For example, in class, communication to parents, through whole school assemblies, year level assemblies and/or presentation evenings.
- Students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through student voice/leadership and other informal mechanisms.

**Targeted (group) approach strategies**

- All students from Year 10 and above, and all Koorie students from Year 8 and above, will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan (CAPs).
- All students in 'out of home care' will be referred to Student Services for an Educational Needs Assessment.
- School nurse and welfare staff will undertake health promotion and social skill development in response to needs identified by classroom teachers or other school staff during the school year.
- Relevant teaching staff will apply a trauma informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma, such as students from Koorie backgrounds or who are in out of home care.

**Individual Strategies**

- Strategies to support attendance and engagement of individual students include;
  - Arrange to meet with students and their parent/carer to talk about how best to engage the student in positive learning practices.
  - Establish student support groups.
  - Seek extra resources which may be available under the Program for Students with Disabilities for eligible students.
  - Develop an individual behaviour plan (see appendix 1).
  - Consider if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set-up.
  - Refer to internal support services eg Student Welfare Manager.
  - Refer to external support services including Childfirst, Youth Central, Local Government Youth Services, Salvation Army Youth/Mentor Services, Yarra Valley Community Health Service, Indigenous Community Service.

**Identifying students in need of extra support**

Our school will communicate effectively through compass, email and verbally to enable classroom teachers the opportunity to identify students in need of extra support using the following strategies.....;

- Personal information gathered upon enrolment,
- Attendance rates,
- Academic performance, particularly in literacy and numeracy assessments,
- Behaviour observed by classroom teachers,
- CAPs plans (Career action plans),
- Communication with student families.

**Behavioural expectations**

Shared behaviour expectations for students, parents/carers and school staff are found in the following documents along with the shared behaviour expectations table found in appendix 2;

- Student Code of Conduct
- Parent/Carer Code of Conduct
- Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct

**School actions**

- **Responding to challenging behaviour**

Students who act in a way that is in breach the Student Code of Conduct will incur consequences as outlined in the 'Behaviour Management' document (see appendix 1).

- **Discipline**

Disciplinary measures will be implemented as a part of the staged response to challenging behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to address the range of factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include;

- Restorative approach (repairing damage caused)
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class activities for a specified period. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed of such withdrawals.
- Detention
- Suspension (in-school and/or out of school)
- Expulsion.

It is important to note that suspensions and expulsions should only be utilised as a last resort and may only be applied with the approval of the Principal.

Information on grounds and processes for suspension and expulsion that our school will follow are available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/discipline.aspx>

### **Engaging with families**

Healesville High School values the input of its parents/carers into the operations and curriculum offerings, the school seeks feedback and approval from parents/carers in many forms, for example;

- Parent opinion survey,
- Parent representatives on school council,
- Parent approval on senior school course selection

The school intends to support and engage student's families in their child's learning and build their capacity as active, respectful, responsible learners. The environment which the school offers is both welcoming and responsive to enable a strong partnership to grow to enable successful outcomes.

The school will create partnerships with parents/carers and families by;

- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Student Code of Conduct, the Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct and the Student Engagement Policy.
- Communicating effectively with student's parent/carers.
- Providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers and students to contribute.
- Involving families with homework and other curriculum related activities.
- Involving families as participants in some school decision making (ie. School council opportunities for parents, availability of information on the newsletter and/or website inviting parent input.
- Coordinating welfare and engagement resources and services from the community for families, students and the school (ie. Counselling services).
- Involving families in Student Support Groups (ie. Discussion about Individual Learning Plans – ILPs).

Parents are responsible for their child's attendance and engagement, this is outlined in appendix 1 (to be distributed to parents when a child is enrolled).

Furthermore, parents are expected to behave in a respectful and constructive manner when dealing with our school as outlined in the Parent Code of Conduct.

### **Evaluation**

- **Data collection and analysis**

Data will be collected through Compass regarding the frequency and types of wellbeing issues, attendance and behaviour concerns, so as to measure the success or otherwise of school-based strategies and approaches.

Other sources of data used may be;

- The Attitudes to School Survey data,
- School level report data,
- Parent survey data,
- Data from case management work with students.

- **Review this policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Appendix 1

Shared Behaviour Expectations

	<b>Students</b>
<b>Engagement (ie. Participation in the classroom &amp; other school activities)</b>	Demonstrate; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparedness</li> <li>- Effort</li> <li>- Self-discipline</li> <li>- Team work</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance</b>	All students are expected to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend all timetabled classes in a timely fashion everyday that the school is open.</li> <li>- Be prepared to participate fully in all lessons.</li> <li>- Bring a note from parents/care givers explaining absences.</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviour</b>	Students are expected to follow the ‘Student Code of Conduct’.

	<b>Parents/Carers</b>
<b>Engagement (ie. Participation in the classroom &amp; other school activities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote positive outcomes by valuing the importance of education and liaising with the school on their child’s progress/needs.</li> <li>• Support their child to be prepared for the school day.</li> <li>• Monitor their child’s school involvement and progress and communicate with the school if and when issues/concerns arise.</li> <li>• Need to be informed (ie read newsletters and/or website) and support the school’s programs (ie participate in parent/teacher interviews).</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance</b>	Parents/Carers are expected to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accurately complete their child’s enrolment details.</li> <li>- Ensure their child attends school regularly.</li> <li>- Advise the school as soon as reasonably possible when and why their child is absent.</li> <li>- Endeavour to schedule family holidays for school holidays.</li> <li>- Advise the school when an extended absence may occur, allowing for the school to provide work to support the students ongoing learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviour</b>	Parents/Carers are expected to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have high expectations of their child’s behaviour and an understanding of the school’s behavioural expectations.</li> <li>- Communicate with the school regarding any changes in their child’s circumstances which could have an effect on their ability to learn effectively.</li> <li>- Cooperate with the school when developing strategies to address their child’s individual needs.</li> </ul>

	<b>Staff and Volunteers</b>
<b>Engagement (ie. Participation in the classroom &amp; other school activities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school will comply with its duty of care obligations and have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that can effectively engage students.</li> <li>• The school will provide appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to have input into their learning and experience success.</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance</b>	In accordance with legislation released March 1, 2014, the school will: In accordance with DET procedures the school will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proactively promote regular attendance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mark rolls accurately each lesson.</li> <li>- Follow-up on any unexplained absences promptly and consistently.</li> <li>- Identify trends via data analysis.</li> <li>- Report attendance data in the school’s Annual Report.</li> <li>- Support students whose attendance is problematic by developing ‘Return to School’ plans and working with families to implement individual strategies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and volunteers are expected to follow the ‘Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct’.</li> <li>• The school will employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the ‘norm’ for all students and focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues.</li> <li>• The <b>BEHAVIOUR STRATEGIES/POLICY</b> and/or <b>STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT</b> consistently through a shared understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances.</li> <li>• The school recognises that for some students additional support may be needed and the school is committed to working with families to ensure a consistent and transparent approach is taken.admin</li> </ul>

