



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students

expectations for positive student behaviour

support available to students and families

our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Thomastown Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, 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.

CONTENTS

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Curricular Programs
5. Identifying students in need of support
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POLICY

1. School profile

Thomastown Secondary College has a unique and proud history. Designed in 1971 on a mini-school model with a strong focus on engagement and student voice, we have retained our core values while responding to the changing needs of our community and that of the broader society. We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially and emotionally. Our motto **Individual Excellence** is embedded in our rich learning environment which values and supports diversity, excellence and teamwork

The College fosters a spirit of mutual respect and support, where every student is expected to strive

to reach his or her potential. All students are encouraged to participate in enrichment and extension programs. Founded on the understanding that effective schools are centered on the individual student as a learner and as a person, the vertically structured curriculum and distinct teaching teams in each of the Year 7-10 mini-schools allows enrichment at all year levels and in all learning areas. Underpinning this belief is the unique Home Group structure, which provides each student with the same teacher-mentor from Year 7 to Year 10. This program supports a dynamic partnership between students, Home Group teacher and parents and provides continuity and effective monitoring of the social, emotional and academic needs of each student. A separate senior mini-school encourages an adult approach to learning.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

The College mission is to empower students to develop strong social, emotional and academic skills, essential for all citizens in this global world and we encourage all students to participate in shaping and improving our learning environment. 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.

A College community thrives when there is respect for each individual and there is a commitment to build trust, promote self-esteem and ignite passion. A genuine sense of community is achieved when every individual feels valued and respected and where the richness of cultural and ethnic diversity is recognised. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of trust, respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our strong sense of ownership and pride is reflected in the respect we show each other, our families and our communities.

At Thomastown Secondary College we...

- *welcome creativity, curiosity and celebrate innovation in a safe and supportive environment*
- *foster courage in thoughts and actions*
- *respect and support different learning styles*
- *demonstrate enthusiasm for learning and teaching and welcome new challenges and opportunities*
- *work collaboratively in pursuit of individual excellence for all members of the College community*
- *interact positively, constructively and respectfully with each other*
- *support the aspirations of others and accept responsibility for achieving our own individual excellence*
- *display pride in our school, our heritage and ourselves*
- *embrace our obligation to contribute positively to the College and wider community*

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Thomastown 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 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 and VCE to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Thomastown Secondary College use the school's Pedagogical Model 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 Thomastown 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 Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their Home Group teachers, Subject teachers, Unit Leader, Learning Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school productions, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Home Group Teacher, School Nurse, Forum Representatives, 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*
 - *Cyber Safety*
 - *Safe Schools*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (City Link Program)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *peers support programs*
- *measures are 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

- *each student has a Home Group Teacher who monitors their health and wellbeing 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
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through our Vertical and Home Group Structure and through programs such as; City Link, Tutoring, Homework club, Breakfast club multicultural days.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through our Vertical and Home Group Structure, Teacher aides, differentiation tutoring and homework club
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support through the Welfare Team, Home Groups](#).
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#), through use of teacher aides, reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- 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
- Thomastown Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their managed individual pathways plans (MIPS).
- wellbeing and health 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, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.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
- Lookout

Thomastown 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
- 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 Child First*

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*
- *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. Curricular Programs

The curriculum programs of the College will recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the College's students by:

- *accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning*
- *intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs*

The College is committed to the delivery of an inclusive curriculum that ensures all our students have access to a quality education to meet their diverse needs.

To improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities, the following key strategies are in place:

- *providing parents/carers with a learning program that best suits their child's needs*
- *involving students and parents in programming and planning decisions*
- *supporting students' access to programs that let them pursue achievable pathways*
- *ensuring the expertise of teachers working in our College is maintained and developed*

Involvement in our College by parents and carers helps children achieve the best possible learning outcomes. Parents and carers will be provided with the opportunity to participate in College life, both formally and informally, through College council, the Parent Association, volunteering and staying up to date with news about what is happening in education via our newsletter.

The College's strategies to promote pro-social values will be whole-College in focus and include close links with curriculum. The Victorian Curriculum F-10 includes the learning capabilities of Ethical, Personal and Social and Intercultural Capabilities, which encourage students to work with others, to assist students to become responsible local and global citizens, equipped for living and working together in an interconnected world, to explore what it means for both an individual and society to live well and to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at College. In the context of the new Victorian Curriculum F-10, the College curriculum will include pro-social values and behaviours to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.

Student voice/student participation is about valuing people and valuing the learning that results when we engage the capacities and multiple voices in the College. It focuses on realising the leadership potential inherent within all learners. There are five dimensions to student participation:

- 1. student involvement in College and community development*
- 2. students as researchers and co-enquirers*
- 3. student feedback on teaching and learning*
- 4. students as peer-tutors*
- 5. student involvement as a manifestation of inclusion principles*

The College promotes active 'student participation' as an avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating College change. Student participation ranges from young people sharing their opinions of problems and potential solutions through student council or in focus groups associated with College strategic planning. It also includes our students sharing their 'voice' by collaborating with teachers to actually improve education outcomes, including helping to improve teaching, curriculum and teacher-student relationships and leading to changes in student assessment.

5. Identifying students in need of support

Thomastown 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 that help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Thomastown 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*
- 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*
- the Attitudes to College Survey data*
- College level report data*
- parent survey data*
- data from case management work with students*

The College will use coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. The College will provide the following support structures:

- monitoring of, and responding to, protracted student absences*
- trauma management plan*
- protocol for mandatory reporting*
- Student Support Group's for children in need*
- bullying survey of students and College environment*

The College will utilise relevant external student wellbeing support services in order to identify and address the barriers to learning that individual students may be facing. Such services to provide support for students and staff include:

- *psychologist for psychological and academic assessment*
- *mentors – providing support for ‘at risk’ children*
- *Department of Human Services case managers and support workers*
- *social workers to provide services such as counselling, social skills and anger management programs*
- *youth agencies*
- *local parent support groups*
- *relevant DET support staff*
- *C.A.S.A. [Centre Against Sexual Assault]*
- *College Focused Youth Service (SFYS)*

6. 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, 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	
<p>Each student has a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a broad curriculum within a positive learning environment ◆ feel emotionally, socially and physically safe ◆ learn and play without interference from others ◆ be treated with care, courtesy, respect and fairness ◆ be given guidance, help and support when required 	<p>Each student has the responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ take responsibility for their own actions ◆ be fully informed about College rules and consequences of breaking rules ◆ take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided ◆ be cooperative and respectful towards staff and students ◆ take proper care of all College resources and facilities ◆ present a positive image of the College to the public ◆ respond appropriately to progress reports

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.

7. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school’s Statement of Values/Student code of conduct. Student violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with Thomastown Secondary College’s Bullying policy.

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

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 Home Group Teacher or Unit Leader*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*
- *behaviour reviews/ monitoring books*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive measures are measures of last resort and 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>

- <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>

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

8. Engaging with families

Thomastown 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.
- 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.

9. Evaluation

Thomastown 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

Thomastown 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 transition and enrolment packs
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- 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](#)

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

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 of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

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

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2023
Consultation	Community consultation via College website - ongoing Consultation with School Council 24 th August
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2025