NUMURKAH SECONDARY COLLEGE
STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy last reviewed	July 2025
Consultation	School leadership team NSC School Council (at meeting 11-08-2025)
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2027

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.

Numurkah 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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POLICY

1. School profile

Numurkah Secondary College was established in 1957 and is located approximately 227 kilometres north of Melbourne. We are surrounded by a supportive community and work collaboratively with active School Council.

Numurkah Secondary College had 261 students enrolled during 2025 across year levels 7-12. Students come from Numurkah as well as surrounding towns and villages including Katunga, Strathmerton, Wunghnu, Katamatite, Waaia, Naring, and Tallygaroopna. Our college supports a range of pathways for students including VCE, and VCE Vocational Major with opportunities to engage in School Based Apprenticeships and VET courses

Numurkah Secondary College has developed close ties to the local community which enable diverse learning opportunities for students, and we enjoy support from our local shops and community services.

Students are supported by over 50 staff members, including well-being staff such as a school psychologist, school chaplain, school nurse and the Doctors in Schools Program.

Our school is situated in a rural community where agriculture and healthcare are key industries and employers in the area. This also informs the aspirations and focus for many of our students.

Numurkah Secondary College Innovations

Numurkah Secondary College strives to provide a caring and supportive environment where students and staff are able to learn, to grow and to pursue excellence.

To facilitate this, students joining the college in Year 7 experience a program that exposes them to a range of subjects across areas such as wood and metal work, textiles and the arts. This together with subjects such as English, Maths, Science, Humanities and Physical Education allows students to see what is possible on their learning journey.

Students in Years 8-10 have greater flexibility in their learning journey, allowing them to choose from a range of themed subject offerings in the areas of the Technologies and Arts, Humanities and Physical Education. In Year 10, the options allow diversity in additional subjects such as Maths and Science to support students in their next big step into senior secondary education.

Students in Years 11 and 12 are offered a broad choice of subjects to support their goals as they finish their secondary schooling, including VCE subjects and the new VCE Vocational Major that builds on and replaces our well established and successful VCAL program.

2 School values, philosophy and vision

Numurkah Secondary College's 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, excellence, aspiration and pride at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is "Inspiring aspiration and lifelong learning."

Our Statement of Values is available online HERE

3 Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Numurkah Secondary College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, in an inclusive and safe environment, with a focus on School Wide Positive Behaviour principles. 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

- 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
- building student resilience and mental health wellbeing through The Resilience Project
- 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 increased choice at Years 8-10, and senior student access to VET programs, VCE and VCE VM where subject choice is tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Numurkah Secondary College use a LEARN instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high impact teaching strategies are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Numurkah 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 and School Philosophy 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 Compass and through home rooms, school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students voice is prioritised with contributions and feedback welcomed via student year group representatives, year level leader meetings and other forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their any member of staff 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 and of the school wellbeing staff including the Year Level Leaders, Assistant Principals 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

- 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
- 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 year group has a Year Level Leader who monitors educational needs and wellbeing of students in their year level, 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, including their Work Experience Program
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. We connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer and an Individual Education Plan
- 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
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported 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
- 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. This includes contact with the CALD Officer for the school, and Pride Club.
- 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, such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- 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 are partnership meetings with the school, families and any other support workers to discuss and plan what is needed to a student at an individual level. Further information can be found at https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy
- Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plans as required
- Program and support for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace, Orange Door
- Navigator for support with attendance and engagement
- Lookout

Numurkah Secondary College implements a range of strategies as outlined above that support and promote individual engagement. These are designed to ensure all students, including those who may be at risk who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances are linked in with the services and support that meets their educational needs.

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
- 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

Numurkah Secondary College is to provide 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. The school 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 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 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, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. 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 this policy. Bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Numurkah Secondary College's Anti-Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Numurkah Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. 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 Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- after school detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension or expulsion

Suspension and expulsion 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 Numurkah 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

Numurkah 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.
- Contact with homeroom teachers at least once per term to update families on student successes, concerns and growth
- providing parent volunteer opportunities, including roles on School Council 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.

8 Evaluation

Numurkah 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

Numurkah 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.

9 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

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

Additional policies can be found at https://www.numurkahsc.vic.edu.au/policies.html

Relevant documentation related to this policy include:
Attendance Policy
Bullying Prevention Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy