



# 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.

Bendigo Senior Secondary College (BSSC) 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.

## POLICY

### School profile

**Bendigo Senior Secondary College (BSSC)** is a Year 11 and 12 school located in one of Victoria's strongest and fastest growing regional areas. With an enrolment of 1800 students, we are the largest provider of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETIS) in the state.

Our **ROLE** at BSSC is to empower learners for individual, community and global leadership, underpinned by the values of Respect, Optimism, Learning and Environment. We are proud of the significant role we play supporting young people from the Greater Bendigo community to access high quality education programs, tailored to meet the individual needs and pathway goals of every student.

BSSC is located within the Rosalind Park precinct in the centre of Bendigo and has enjoyed an unrivalled picturesque location on this site for more than a century. The entire college site is on the Victorian Heritage Register. Staff, students and the broader community value the history of the college, and the contribution it has made to the city and to state education.

The college provides an inclusive learning environment which supports students to develop attributes and behaviours necessary to be respectful community members, independent and resourceful learners and to achieve success within and beyond school. We foster a strong study culture with high expectations around student effective use of private study time in the various study spaces around the college. Year 11 students are supported to develop their study and independent learning skills through enrolment in Study Centre classes. Staff are committed to

supporting the academic progress and wellbeing of students where strong, respectful relationships are the basis for all communication. Students are encouraged to interact closely with their teachers and seek help at any time. The college has a reputation for exemplary use of ICT and delivery of online learning. Students have high level access to ICT and the college operates a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) model where students provide their own laptop or other device to support their learning. There is an emphasis on the use of blended delivery, which allows students to access digital curriculum resources to support the classroom instruction provided by teachers. This is enhanced by access to digital content developed through the Victorian Virtual Learning Network, a BSSC initiative where the college provides VCE online to students in schools around the state in a range of VCE studies.

An online portal is available which allows parents to monitor attendance, work completion and achievement in real time and provides for the approval of absences. Teachers upload key assessment outcomes and comments in a progressive reporting model.

A strength of our college is the expertise and commitment of our dedicated staff. Teachers at BSSC play a leading role in state wide curriculum development, subject associations, VCAA assessment processes and in the professional learning of teachers across the state. All staff are expected to demonstrate the highest professional standards and a commitment to excellence. The college has a culture of self-reflection and continuous improvement, which is supported by a rigorous performance and development process, allowing recognition of outstanding work and identification of areas for further improvement.

A wide range of VCE studies is offered and students can select units in Business and Information Technology, English, Health & Physical Education, Languages & EAL, Humanities, Mathematics, Performing Arts & Media, Science, Technology and Visual Arts. An accelerated learning program operates in conjunction with the four government 7-10 colleges where students are able to undertake some VCE studies whilst in Year 10 and are then encouraged to undertake a Unit 3/4 study in their first year at the college.

Pathways in VCAL are offered at Intermediate and Senior levels to support students with an applied learning preference, with opportunities for students to theme their subject selection in a vocational interest area. Student programs are tailored to meet the learning, wellbeing and pathway goals of each student. Programs can include combinations of studies at Unit 1/2 and 3/4 level, completing the VCE/VCAL over three years or negotiating a program to meet individual student health, school-based apprenticeship or elite sport training commitments. We have a close relationship with the four government Year 7-10 colleges in Bendigo and work together around orientation activities and pathways advice to support students in making informed program choices and a positive transition to our college.

The college is a Registered Training Organisation with many Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs on its scope of registration. Strong relationships with other training providers in Bendigo and our Trade Training Centre provides our students with access to excellent vocational training facilities and opportunities.

As a senior secondary education provider, we specialise in assisting students to make a positive transition to the next stage of their lives, whether that is to University or other study, apprenticeships or traineeships or directly on to employment. Extensive careers and pathways advice is available to students and is complemented by the individual support each student receives from their Advisor who closely monitors their wellbeing and progress. Additional support to assist students to stay engaged with their learning is provided through our Wellbeing Team. Students can access support from our Student Wellbeing Team and other visiting department staff.

NETschool is a second campus of the college, providing curriculum access for 15 to 18 year old students who have been outside mainstream schooling or training. NETschool provides both online and face to face delivery of VCE, VCAL and VET units from its central city location.

The college provides outstanding facilities to support student learning in a combination of historic and modern facilities. More recent modernised or new building projects have included the Ulumbarra Performing Arts Centre which incorporates a 1000 seat theatre, café and foods/hospitality facilities, and a new Student Services Centre. A

new library, VCAL learning centre and modernised learning spaces and other recent building projects include refurbishment of the Multimedia Centre and a new outdoor recreation area. A major project to renovate and extend the historic Maths building will take place in 2022. Other purpose-built facilities include our Language Centre and our Trade Training Centre. Each of these areas contain casual student study spaces and high-level access to ICT.

One of the features of the college for many years has been the presence of students from other countries, including many from China, who come to study as fee paying students or through exchange programs. The pandemic has inevitably impacted upon this program but the college remains committed to its future when conditions allow. International students are supported in homestay arrangements with local families who provide cultural and language enrichment experiences. We are proud of the work we do to support New Arrival and refugee students. Intensive EAL support is provided and a homework club operates to serve these students from the college and other Bendigo secondary schools.

The college highly values the contribution of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population. These students are assisted by a range of additional support services which are closely linked to families and Community. The international focus of the college is wide ranging and includes sister school relationships in China, France, Germany and Indonesia. When travel conditions allow, students can participate in curriculum and intercultural learning exchanges to these countries, and also to Italy and Greece. College curriculum has also developed a focus on the building of student global perspectives.

The college runs a very successful Confucius Classroom program in partnership with the Chinese government agency, Hanban, and a Chinese sister school. This program attracts high quality Chinese teachers to Bendigo who deliver Chinese language and culture programs into over twenty Bendigo primary and secondary schools, and evening classes for the broader Bendigo community. This program is supporting young people from around the region to access an additional language and build their intercultural competence.

At BSSC we believe that every child is capable of achieving and has a right to a high-quality education which will empower them with the attitude, knowledge and skills necessary for success in life and work beyond school.

For further information about the College visit [www.bssc.edu.au](http://www.bssc.edu.au)

### **School values, philosophy and vision**

Our college 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 college acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

#### **Our vision:**

Our ROLE is to empower learners for individual, community and global leadership.  
We value Respect, Optimism, Learning, Environment.

Respect means:

- Respecting ourselves, others and our relationships.
- Respecting ourselves and others in all we think, say and do.
- Respecting our learning, community and environment.

Optimism means:

- Being enthusiastic in our living, learning and contributing.
- Embracing opportunities to make a difference.
- Being resilient and persistent in adversity.

Learning means:

- Embracing learning opportunities.

- Being a lifelong learner.
- Being a continuously improving individual and community member.
- Being a leader of self and of others.
- Being innovative and open to possibilities.

Environment means contribution to:

- The culture we make through our beliefs and actions.
- The community we make through our relationships with others.
- Sustainability and planetism through wisdom, balance and action.
- Being a responsible global citizen.

For full details of the BSSC Rights and Responsibilities, please see <http://www.bssc.edu.au/college/college-policies/>.

### Engagement strategies

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

The college works collaboratively with students and parents/carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices, based on the college's values, expected social competencies and positive peer relationships. There are also intervention strategies in place to address inappropriate behaviours which can negatively impact on the learning environment of the self and others.

BSSC 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, targeted and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

#### Universal

- Our college will deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL including modified programs through our NETschool campus.
- 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 - aligned to the VCAA Assessment policies.
- Our teachers develop curriculum programs to engage students based on current research (use of BSSC Instructional Model) and use of a variety of pedagogical approaches.
- Our teachers develop supportive relationships with individuals and their families through our Advisor model including Blast Off interviews, Parent/carer/teacher/student interviews and progressive reporting (ELIs and academic achievement)
- Our college will develop behavioural expectations for all members of the college community in consultation with students, staff and parents/carers, and these will be communicated with all students and shared with their families (Rights and Responsibilities documents and Respectful Learner Responsibilities).
- Our college will regularly acknowledge examples of positive behaviour and student achievement, both informally in classroom settings and more formally in events such as assemblies and via communication to parents.
- All students and teachers will have the opportunity to participate in a social and emotional learning curriculum program (Respectful Relationships and others as part of our Advisor program) and extra curricula activities such as Wellbeing Week, Reconciliation Week, Cultural Diversity Week and ParticipACTION Week.
- Students will have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about college operations both through the Student Leadership Team and other more informal mechanisms (including Attitudes to School survey and Student Voice Tool - PIVOT).

### Targeted

- Each student has an Advisor and a Student Engagement Coordinator, who will monitor the academic progress and wellbeing of their students.
- All students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor and will be supported with regular Student Support Group meetings.
- Youth Health Nurse and wellbeing staff will undertake health promotion and social skill development in response to needs identified by classroom teachers or other college staff.
- The Attendance Support Officer will closely monitor and track the attendance of all students including Indigenous students and students who are at risk due to low attendance and intervene with appropriate support strategies.
- Utilising the Koorie Education Support Officer to support Indigenous students to remain engaged with education.
- Utilising Multicultural Education Aides to support students from refugee backgrounds.
- Through the provision of our Specialist Programs to link students with particular interests within a chosen pathway.
- Provision of extra-curricular activities (such as Learning Area based activities, Overseas Trips, Camps, Sports programs, celebrations of Chinese New Year).
- Development of sustainable destinations utilising student support structures such as Careers and Pathways team, Work Placement team, Student Wellbeing Team and/or referral processes to external agencies as needed.
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

### Individual

All students will be supported to develop and implement their [Individual Education Plan](#) which will be regularly reviewed with their Advisor.

Staff utilise information provided at Blast Off interviews and from the transfer of information from students 7-10 schools to create support plans for students in need of extra support. Our staff build constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances.

Strategies to support attendance and engagement of individual students include:

- Contact with parent/carers through phone conversation &/or emails.
- Being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances, health and/or wellbeing.
- Establish a [Student Support Group](#) through working together with all stakeholders, particularly for students with a disability, additional learning needs, in Out of Home Care or with other complex needs that require ongoing support.
- Seek extra resources under the Program for Students with Disabilities for eligible students.
- Develop a [Behaviour Support Plan](#)
- Consider and implement environmental changes needed (e.g. classroom set up, entry/exit or location).
- Referral to internal support services (e.g. Wellbeing Team, including visiting DET services, NETschool, Careers and Pathways Team, [Student Support Services](#), etc.)
- Referral to external support services including headspace, CAMHS and other local support services.

### **Identifying students in need of support**

BSSC is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Engagement and Wellbeing teams play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. BSSC will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

### **Personal information gathered upon enrolment**

Identification strategies include:

- liaison with DET 7-10 colleges to ensure information about student's medical conditions, wellbeing needs, special learning needs, living arrangements, custody restrictions, engagement barriers and other relevant information is transferred to BSSC.
- a structured set of questions used for the Blast Off interviews.
- Advisor structure allows the gathering of student information through Student/Advisor conversations.
- access for parents and students to staff – can be contacted at anytime via the Compass portal.
- structured questions and response items included in the Individual Education Plans that students complete, associated with the parent/carer/teacher/student interviews involved.
- 1:1 interviews with students through roles as classroom teachers, NETschool mentors, Advisors, Student Engagement Coordinators (SECs), etc, where external support groups and agencies may be referenced (eg. headspace, social worker, CAMHS, etc)
- student activities providing a focus for students to locate people to share information and access available supports to provide information.
- other opportunities for information gathering include: The SEAS/Special Consideration identification process, Parent/Carer/Teacher/Student (P/C/T/S) interviews, Careers and Pathways interviews, Work Placement process, Registered Training Organisation Vocational Education and Training (VET) registrations, Full Details Checks through the Victorian Assessment Software System (VASS) and the Financial Support application process.

### **Attendance rates**

The attendance rates of all students are closely monitored by Advisors, the Student Engagement Officers and SECs. Intervention occurs at any time when concerning patterns are emerging, however the college abides by the agreed attendance follow up procedures, to ensure a consistency of practice across the college. The college has published Attendance Policy and procedures (<http://www.bssc.edu.au/college/college-policies/>).

### **Academic performance**

Identification strategies include:

- close individual monitoring of academic performance through the Compass portal
- learning support intervention through the Tutor Learning Initiative
- course counselling (to more suitable subject levels).
- testing of students with identified learning difficulties as appropriate.
- use of Multicultural Education Aide Support.
- ACER testing at NETschool for literacy pre-testing.

### **Behaviour observed by classroom teachers**

Identification strategies include:

- use of professional training, which is supported by professional development. This includes Wellbeing Team supported sessions and scenarios. The training informs classroom teachers on how to identify changes in student behaviour and carry out effective 1:1 discussions with students to identify support needs.
- tracking Empowered Learner Indicator (ELI) changes, to identify learning behaviours in need of additional support.
- tracking Compass portal Chronicle posts and sharing information about student behaviours.

### **Engagement with student families**

Identification strategies include:

- information sharing through conversations around the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), discussed at Blast Off interviews.
- phone calls home as Advisors and as classroom teachers, where required.
- the identification of student needs through Financial Support applications.
- progressive reporting and regular progress reports.
- two-way communication through the Compass portal.
- conducting Student Support Group (SSG) meetings for students in Out of Home Care (OoHC), students receiving funding through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) and other students, as needed.

## 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.

A copy of the college's Rights and Responsibilities can be found at <http://www.bssc.edu.au/college/college-policies/>.

## Student behavioural expectations

Bendigo Senior Secondary College has shared expectations of the principal, teachers and college staff, students and parents/carers.

### The Principal, Teachers and Education Support Staff

Bendigo Senior Secondary College has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures all students are valued, feel connected to the college, are engaged in their learning and experience success. The principal, teachers and education support staff will:

- deliver an inclusive, comprehensive and challenging curriculum which promotes positive behaviours and emphasises the wellbeing of every student.
- employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students.
- focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues.
- consistently apply the Rights and Responsibilities and Respectful Learner Responsibilities through a shared collegiate understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances.
- recognise that for some students additional support may be needed in the form of staged responses and is committed to working with families to reintegrate students after exclusion.

### Students

Bendigo Senior Secondary College provides a setting where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and personal development in a supportive environment. Students should

- participate fully in the college's educational program.
- respect the rights of others to learn and to teach.
- assist in the provision of a safe environment through personal behaviour and vigilance in addressing issues of bullying, including cyberbullying, and harassment, as outlined in the Bullying Prevention Policy (<http://www.bssc.edu.au/college/college-policies/>).

- model the college's core values of Respect, Optimism, Learning and Environment and our Respectful Learner Responsibilities.
- take responsibility for their behaviour and its impact on others.
- comply with all reasonable requests of staff and all college policies.
- maximise opportunities for success through full attendance and bringing correct equipment to all classes.
- work with teachers and parents in developing strategies to achieve academic and personal goals.

### **Parents/carers**

Bendigo Senior Secondary College encourages a partnership with the young person's parent/carer and the college to promote positive educational outcomes for students. To assist in supporting their student to achieve personal and academic goals parents/carers should

- maintain regular communication with the college regarding their student's learning and wellbeing needs.
- support their student's full attendance in the college's educational program.
- support the college in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment.
- actively engage in opportunities to support their student's transition into, within and out of the college.
- have high expectations of their student's behaviour and an understanding of the college's behavioural expectations, as outlined in the Rights and Responsibilities.
- cooperate with the college by assisting in the development and enforcement of strategies to address individual needs.

### **Inclusivity in the college community**

The college aims to address inclusivity by

- actively supporting the enrolment of students from different cultures into the college through a structured transition process.
- the provision of a designated English as an Additional Language curriculum.
- the employment of highly skilled and qualified staff to support students from other cultures.
- the provision of a community based Homestay program for international fee paying students.
- utilising the support of a Koorie Education Support Officer (KESO) and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program Coordinator to support the educational needs and inclusivity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- the support of the Student Engagement Coordinators for all students with a disability and their programs, including providing individualised advice to each student's teacher and conducting regular Student Support Group meetings for PSD students.
- establishing a student-led support group for students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and training a group of staff members as LGBTIQ+ 'allies', who can provide extra support to these students.
- conducting whole college celebrations of important cultural events, such as Cultural Diversity Week and Reconciliation Week.

### **Student behaviour management**

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

Our school considers, explores and implements 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 Student Engagement Coordinator
- restorative practices
- 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, 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>

The Principal of BSSC 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.

### **Creating a child safe organisation**

The college is committed to being a child safe organisation. It will do this by complying with the requirements of the Child Safe Standards including having strategies in place to embed a culture of child safety at the college, having a child safety policy and having policies and procedures to manage reports, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.

The college has a Child Safety Code of Conduct, a Child Safety Statement of Commitment and a Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations policy (<http://www.bssc.edu.au/college/college-policies/>).

### **Engaging with families**

BSSC values the input of parents and carers, and 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 and welcome feedback at any time. The college actively seeks feedback through the Parent Opinion survey, and from parent representatives on College Council.

The college supports families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. It provides an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning.

The college seeks to create successful partnerships with parents/carers and families in a variety of ways. We ensure that all college policies are available through the college website (<http://www.bssc.edu.au/college/college-policies/>) and that parents/carers have opportunities to contribute to their development and review through College Council.

There is an ongoing focus on increasing opportunities for college-to-home and home-to-college communications. This begins with our Blast Off interviews at the commencement of the school year and is ongoing through our Advisor Program. Compass, our online portal, provides a range of functions that facilitates college-to-home communications. Examples include progressive reporting, positive Compass portal Chronicle postings, attendance and at-risk notifications, posts on parents' and students' news feeds, SMS messages, weekly eNews. Compass provides home-to-college communications through an email facility and Parent/carer/teacher/student interviews are held each semester. Our social media platforms are also regularly used to engage our parents/carers.

Parents/carers of our EAL students are also supported to engage with the college. Relevant documents are translated into different languages and interpreters are provided when needed.

There is significant parent/carer engagement opportunities through our transition program. Our Open Days, information evenings, course counselling sessions, assemblies, Awards Night and Graduation are examples of ways in which we welcome our parents/carers into the college.

Parents/carers are expected to act in a respectful and constructive manner when dealing with our college.

## Evaluation

BSSC 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 Attitudes to School Survey data
- Parent Opinion Survey data
- Staff Opinion Survey data
- data extracted from software such as Compass portal, BSSC online enrolment system, CASES21 (Computerised Administrative System Environment in Schools) or SOCS (Student Online Case System).

BSSC 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 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

All further related policies can be found at: <http://www.bssc.edu.au/college/college-policies/>.

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2020
Consultation	Consultation occurred with our college community throughout 2019 and 2020
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2022