Creating a Respectful and Safe School Community

To all members of our school community, you will find a copy of our Statement of Values; Promoting a Healthy, Safe and Respectful School Community at Weeroona College Bendigo and our Cares and Concerns Protocol in this PDF document. We believe that a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment is essential for providing quality learning opportunities for all students. Meaningful and active engagement within and between families is invaluable in boosting a young person’s learning and wellbeing.

We are committed to promoting a positive culture within our school community and ask that you read this document which outlines the expectations for how all members of our school community – principals, teachers, parents, students and visitors - should behave. Having a shared understanding of our expectations will ensure that all members of our community understand the shared responsibility for maintaining respectful, safe and orderly school environments that support student learning.

Thank you for taking the time to read this importance information.

Leanne Preece
Principal
At Weeroona College Bendigo we value:

- **RESPECT**
  accepting difference and treating others with empathy and tolerance.

- **INTEGRITY**
  behaving truthfully, in a trustworthy manner and taking responsibility for one’s actions.

- **PERSONAL EXCELLENCE**
  seeking to perform at one’s own highest possible standard.

**Our focus at Weeroona College Bendigo** is to always achieve the best outcomes for all students by:

- Providing a safe, caring and supportive learning environment for our students.
- Building positive, supportive relationships between students, parents and staff.
WHY DO CONCERNS ARISE?

Schools are very busy places - there are lots of things that happen and there are many decisions made every day.

At the same time, the community is quite diverse, with many individuals or groups having vastly different opinions on how things should be done.

It is inevitable, therefore, that times will arise when some parents agree with the school’s actions while others disagree and wish to discuss the matter with the school.

We welcome such discussions, and encourage parents to raise issues so that they may be dealt with speedily and resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Concerns, after all, are not a negative experience – so long as they are dealt with positively by everybody.

The following process for presenting and managing community cares or concerns has been developed by School Council in consultation with the community.

We believe it works well, and it is the way we will manage all concerns at our school.

AGREED COMPLAINTS PROCESS

We ask that the following process be used to resolve cares or concerns at our school.

STEP 1

Try and find out the facts before contacting the school. Many concerns are quickly resolved once the parent is aware of all the facts.

STEP 2

Let the school know via letter, telephone or make an appointment to meet to let someone know that you have a concern, providing details of the issue. Our aim is to acknowledge receipt of your concern within two school days.

STEP 3

We aim investigate your concern in a timely manner and the most appropriate person will contact you to discuss the matter, or to organise a meeting. Almost all issues are resolved by this point.

STEP 4

If, however, the matter remains unresolved, make a formal appointment to discuss the issue with the Principal/Assistant Principal.

STEP 5

The Regional Office can be contacted to help solve problems. The Principal/Assistant Principal can provide contact details.

THINGS TO ALWAYS REMEMBER

- Problems are best resolved using a positive attitude. Anger is usually counter productive to solving problems.
- People need time to investigate and resolve many problems; a quick fix is not always possible or desirable.
- Our school is large and complex – very few decisions will suit everybody.
- There are always at least two sides to every story – with students there are often as many stories as there are children.
- Not all disagreements can be resolved – sometimes we simply have to agree to disagree.
- Opinions vary widely – disagreement is a natural part of life.
- Everybody is doing what they believe is right, even if it’s different to what we think.
Students at Weeroona College Bendigo are actively engaged in their learning which is personalised according to their needs and interests. Our students are independent; know what they need to learn and our teachers challenge and support them to achieve personal excellence.

Our College Values are RESPECT, INTEGRITY, PERSONAL EXCELLENCE

STATEMENT OF VALUES
PROMOTING A HEALTHY, SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Weeroona College Bendigo recognises the importance of the partnership between schools and parents to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, ensuring inclusive, safe and orderly environments for children and young people.

This Statement of Values sets out our behavioural expectations of all members in this school community, including the principal, all school staff, parents, students and visitors. It respects the diversity of individuals in our school community and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members in building safe and respectful school communities.

Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence, aggression and threatening behaviour are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in this school.

Our Statement of Values acknowledges that parents and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child. Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as we do this respectfully as a community working together.

RESPONSIBILITIES

AS PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL LEADERS, WE WILL:

- Work collaboratively to create a school environment where respectful and safe conduct is expected of everyone.
- Behave in a manner consistent with the standards of our profession and meet core responsibilities to provide inclusive, safe and orderly environments.
- Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general wellbeing of all students in attendance at the school is protected.
- Identify and support students who are or may be at risk.
- Do our best to ensure every child achieves their personal and learning potential.
- Work with parents to understand their child’s needs and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly.
- Respond appropriately when inclusive, safe or orderly behaviour is not demonstrated and implement appropriate interventions and sanctions when required.
- Make known to parents the school’s communication and complaints procedures.
- Ask any person who is acting in an offensive or disorderly way to leave the school grounds.

AS TEACHERS AND ALL NON-TEACHING STAFF, WE WILL:

- Model positive behaviour to students consistent with the standards of our profession.
- Proactively engage with parents about student outcomes.
- Work with parents to understand the needs of each student and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly.
- Work collaboratively with parents to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for students with additional needs.
- Communicate with the principal and school leaders in the event we anticipate or face any tension or challenging behaviours from parents.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect.

AS PARENTS, WE WILL:

- Model positive behaviour to our child.
- Ensure our child attends school on time, every day the school is open for instruction.
- Take an interest in our child’s school and learning.
- Work with the school to achieve the best outcomes for our child.
- Communicate constructively with the school and use expected processes and protocols when raising concerns.
- Support school staff to maintain a safe learning environment for all students.
- Follow the school’s complaints processes if there are complaints.
- Treat all school leaders, staff, students, and other members of the school community with respect.

AS STUDENTS, WE WILL:

- Model positive behaviour to other students.
- Comply with and model school values.
- Behave in a safe and responsible manner.
- Respect ourselves, other members of the school community and the school environment.
- Actively participate in school.
- Not disrupt the learning of others and make the most of our educational opportunities.
AS COMMUNITY MEMBERS, WE WILL:

- Model positive behaviour to the school community.
- Treat other members of the school community with respect.
- Support school staff to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment for all students.
- Utilise the school’s communications policy to communicate with the school.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT WILL:

- Provide support and advice to principals to equip them to manage and respond to challenging behaviour of students, parents and staff.
- Provide practical guidance and resources to support schools to manage and respond to challenging behaviour of students, parents and staff.
- Provide practical guidance and resources to support schools respond to and prevent bullying and promote cyber-safety and wellbeing.
- Provide access to evidence based resources and strategies to increase student safety, wellbeing and engagement.
- Provide schools with practical and legal support as required.
- Provide parents with practical guidance and resources to resolve conflicts with the school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR FAILING TO UPHOLD THE STATEMENT OF VALUES

UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOURS

Behaviours that are considered inappropriate on and adjacent to school grounds or in relation to school business and that do not uphold the principles of this Statement of Values include when a person:

- is rude, aggressive or harasses others
- sends rude, confronting or threatening letters, emails or text messages
- is manipulative or threatening
- speaks in an aggressive tone, either in person or over the telephone
- makes sexist, racist or derogatory comments
- inappropriately uses social media as a forum to raise concerns/make complaints against the school
- is physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close.

CONSEQUENCES

Principals are responsible for determining what constitutes reasonable and unreasonable behaviour.

Unreasonable behaviour and/or failure to uphold the principles of this Statement of Values may lead to further investigation and the implementation of appropriate consequences. This may include:

- utilising mediation and counselling services
- alternative communication strategies being applied
- formal notice preventing entry onto school premises or attendance at school activities. Written notice will follow any verbal notice given.
- an intervention order being sought
- informing the police which may result in a charge of trespass or assault

By agreeing to meet specified standards of positive behaviour, everyone in our school community can be assured that they will be treated with fairness and respect. In turn, this will help to create a school that is safe and orderly, where everyone is empowered to participate and learn.