



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the administration office.

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.

Weeroona College Bendigo 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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2. School values, philosophy, and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Weeroona College Bendigo (WCB) operates across two campuses with our main campus located on the northern side of Bendigo with a population of 780 year seven to year ten students and a small cohort of Year 11 and 12 students completing Vocational Pathways Certificate (VPC). Our second campus (BFLO- Bendigo Flexible learning Options) is an alternative setting and is a collaborative partnership between the five Bendigo Secondary Colleges and Kalianna Specialist School that aims to reengage learners from year seven through twelve. The current enrolment at BFLO is 55 students.

We have very strong educational partnerships with our associate primary schools in the White Hills cluster, the other three Bendigo year seven to ten colleges and Bendigo Senior Secondary College where our students transition for years eleven and twelve.

Our modern learning spaces provide for a wide range of flexible teaching and learning activities including independent study, peer tutoring, small and large group work, project-based learning, lecture-based learning, seminar style learning, research, performances, and presentations by students and learning by building, doing and creating.

WCB has a firm commitment to maximising the educational opportunities for each one of our students and we place a high emphasis on all students achieving personal excellence. Each student has a Ready to Learn plan where teachers and parents can track progress with their students to ensure that individual learning needs are met. Literacy and Numeracy are a high priority at Weeroona College Bendigo where we work to ensure that our teaching supports all students across the curriculum. We are a community of readers and encourage reading opportunities at school and at home and we have a differentiated learning model for teaching Mathematics that supports individual learners. All teachers at WCB explicitly teach literacy skills in each of their classes, with a focus on vocabulary and we are supported to do this by our brilliantly resourced Global Learning Centre (library).

Our college has made the development of a high-quality curriculum that caters for the needs of all students a major priority over the past few years. A balanced core curriculum is offered for year seven and eight students and year nine and ten students undertake a mixture of core and elective studies. Our year 10 students have access to VCE courses and our year 9/10's to VET programs.

WCB has a strong culture of extracurricular programs. We have a proud tradition in the Performing and Visual Arts including a well-supported instrumental music program, bands and arts spectaculars and College productions. The College also has very high standard sporting programs, where our students compete as the Weeroona Warriors. We are proud of our students who perform exceptionally well in a broad range of interschool sports activities. Another highlight of our college program is our participation in the Energy Breakthrough competitions. The College has an outstanding record of success over many years and the students, staff and families involved have benefitted enormously from this program.

We have developed a culture of high expectations for all our students and have embedded a Learning Protocol framework based on our school values: Kind, Safe, Learners. To support this, we have also developed a learning support plan that clearly articulates a consistent set of expectations by all staff using a restorative and trauma informed approach.

2. School values, philosophy, and vision

Our college vision statement – Weeroona College Bendigo is a community of learners, where everyone is welcome, respected and challenged.

Our core values are:

Kind

Safe

Learners

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Weeroona College Bendigo has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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 the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

Weeroona College Bendigo is a community of students, parents and teachers committed to providing a safe, secure, and engaging learning environment.

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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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, VCE and VPS to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers use an instructional 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 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 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. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Advisor, Learning Community Leader, School Improvement Team and Principal Team whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school productions, athletics, and music programs.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Advisors, Learning Community Leaders, 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
 - Restorative Practice
 - Berry Street Education Model
- 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)
- 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 community group has two Learning Community Leaders, senior teacher responsible for their community, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their community, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- 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
- Our English as an Additional 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 through our Multicultural Education Assistant and our Wellbeing Team
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTQIA+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTQIA+ Student Support
- 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 will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in theory 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
- Weeroona College Bendigo assists students to plan their Year 10 Work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Weeroona College Bendigo 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 ChildFirst
- Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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. Identifying students in need of support

Weeroona College Bendigo 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Weeroona College Bendigo 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, 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

Behavioral expectations of students 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 will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Weeroona College Bendigo 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 implement 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 Learning Community Leaders
- restorative practices
- detentions
- 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>

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 Weeroona College Bendigo is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

7. Engaging with families

Weeroona College Bendigo 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.

8. Evaluation

Weeroona College Bendigo 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
- SOCS

Weeroona College Bendigo 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
- 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/carers 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	March 2024
Consultation	College council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2026