

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Heathmont College on 03 9871 4888 or heathmont.co@education.vic.gov.au.

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.

Heathmont 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

Heathmont College was established in 1983 and is a dynamic learning community committed to empowering students to achieve their best and flourish in a changing, future-focused world.

Heathmont College is a co-educational, years 7 - 12 secondary school located in the suburb of Heathmont in the Maroondah network. In 2024, a total of 679 students were enrolled at the college, 291 female and 386 male. 6% of students had English as an additional language and 2% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Our

staffing body consisted of 64 teachers (several of them part-time) and 42 support staff (also several part-time). We employ three maintenance staff, four wellbeing staff, five administration staff and four principal class staff members. The school's socio-economic profile continues to be listed as low - medium with our SFOE decreasing slightly from 2023, indicating that the school population is becoming more affluent.

Our curriculum at Heathmont College reflects the Victorian Curriculum framework and we offer a wide range of VCE programs including the VCE-Vocational Major. We also have a Sports Academy program for aspiring athletes and offer a range of additional extracurricular programs in the Arts, Debating, Chess and STEM

Our values—curiosity, compassion, and community—underpin our educational approach, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. We offer a broad curriculum, including VCE, VCE Vocational Major, and VET programs, to provide flexible pathways for all students. Specialist programs, such as the Build Me Up mathematics initiative and the MacqLit literacy program, support students needing targeted intervention.

Our school grounds back onto native bushland, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Most students that attend our school live locally and tend to walk or ride their bike to school although it is also serviced by several school bus routes. Heathmont College has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Our school is culturally diverse and has strong representation from the Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Heathmont 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 **community**, **curiosity**, and **compassion** at every opportunity.

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.

Our Statement of Values is available online on our website at www.heathmont.vic.edu.au

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Heathmont 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 whole of school, year level and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Whole School

- 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, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations

- teachers at Heathmont College use an [NAME] 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 at Heathmont 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 Year Level meetings, House meetings, Peer Support Groups and the Principal Advisory Group. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Mentor Group Teachers, House Leaders, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through mentor group, curriculum programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Level Coordinators, 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
- The college is also the lead school in the Maroondah Positive Education Network (MPEN) and consistently works to engender positive education principles in teacher practice as well as to build student understanding, knowledge and enactment of positive education strategies and principles to build resilience and wellbeing.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
 - School-wide Positive Behaviour Support
- 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)
- implementation of High Impact Engagement Strategies
- mentor 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.

Year Level

- each year level has a Year level Coordinator, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all students are allocated to one of our four house groups on entry to the college and remain in this group throughout their time at the college. The house leaders and mentor group teacher from the house will oversee the student's wellbeing and engagement across the years and will get to know the family and student well as a result. The House leaders, in particular, play a crucial role in monitoring student engagement through attendance rates and will work with individual students and their families to develop and implement strategies to improve engagement where needed.

- all students from Year 9 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 the Murrang Coordinator
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Heathmont College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- 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
- Mentors assigned to each year 12 student to support the progression of outcomes including academic, wellbeing and vocational.
- All students at Year 9 participate in the 9LiFE program which focuses on personal and community development
- All students also participate in the school's Flourish program – a pastoral care program designed based on Positive Education principles to support students to build resilience, self-awareness and strong self-concept.

Individual

Heathmont 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, Headspace, Child and Youth Mental Health Services (CYMHS) other allied health professionals, Child First or other specialised support services.
 - 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 Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- Monitor students' academic progress and where appropriate, set goals to support the students' outcomes.
- 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

Heathmont 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Heathmont 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
- 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
- external support services, such as Integrated Family Services, contacting the college

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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Heathmont College's Bullying policy.

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

There are several factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to a breach of the behaviour standards, Heathmont College will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
- history of similar incidents and behaviours from the students involved

- the power dynamic of the behaviour
- the degree to which an intent to harm is evident
- any extenuating or provocative circumstances that may have influenced the behaviours of any involved.

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
- removal from the yard
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- 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.

The Principal of Heathmont College 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

Heathmont 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.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities 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

Heathmont 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

Heathmont 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 staff induction processes
- Included in our Staff Information Portal
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education 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](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ 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	October 2025
Consultation	School Council – October 2025 Wider school community – October 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before October 2027