WODONGA MIDDLE YEARS COLLEGE

Policy Origin: _____ **Last Reviewed: 23/06/2022**

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our college 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 college's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Wodonga Middle Years College (WMYC) 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 college acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our college 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

Wodonga Middle Years College (WMYC) was established in February 2006 as a co-educational college catering for students in Year 7-9. The College is located on two campuses (Felltimber and Huon). The Flying Fruit Fly Circus School is part of the Wodonga Middle Years College and is located at Felltimber Campus and enrols students from Year 3 to Year

9. WMYC also has a satellite campus called Choice Learning, which is a joint venture between the Middle Years College and Junction Support Services through the Navigator Program.

We specialise in middle years schooling. We have around 1000 students across both campuses. We pride ourselves on having strong links to our community and feeder primary schools. We have a rigorous transition process to ensure we have continuity of learning for our students.

We have an executive principal that links Wodonga Middle Years College to Wodonga Senior Secondary College. This ensures we deliver a seamless program from year 7 to 12, where all staff from both college's work together to deliver state of the art programs and learning.

Our college is culturally diverse, and we strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers all students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially. The school also has a strong Koorie community and representation. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive college community.

Students attend their local campus ensuring we build strong and connected communities. Most students walk or ride to school.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Wodonga Middle Years College Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our college community. Students, staff, and members of our college community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, resilience and aspiration at every opportunity.

We proudly implement the School Wide Positive Behaviour program.

Our college's vision is that all government secondary schools in Wodonga are student focused learning communities. Our graduates will display confidence, be optimistic about their future and be committed to personal achievement and global citizenship.

Our Statement of Values is available online at:

https://www.wmyc.vic.edu.au/our-college/policies/

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Wodonga Middle Years College *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 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 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*
- *teachers at Wodonga Middle Years College use a consistent 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 Wodonga Middle Years 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 college'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 and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal 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 the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, House 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*
    - *Bully Stoppers*
    - *Safe Schools*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or 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 college community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.*

<u>Targeted</u>

- *Each student has a House Leader and Assistant House Leader, 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*
- *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 – refer to our Reconciliation Action Plan for further information*
- *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 through regular SSG meeting and liaising with community agencies*
- *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 [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students]*
- *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*
- *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 college staff each year*
- *staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*
- *students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: International Student Program*
- *all students from Year 7 to 9 have a CARE teacher to act as the students' advocate and support*

Individual

Wodonga Middle Year 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, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst*
    - *Re-engagement programs such as Navigator*

Where necessary the college 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 Education 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

Wodonga Middle Years 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Wodonga Middle Years 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*

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our college 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 college'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 college 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 The Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our college's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

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 Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our college community, WMYC 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 college staff.

Our college 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 college will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- Give a verbal and non-verbal cue, warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- Give feedback to student of how to modify their behaviour
- Given a restorative reflection card to be completed outside of classroom
- Referral to the House Leader
- Restorative conferences
- Detentions
- Behaviour review conferences
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Referral to our behaviour modification group (Bounce)

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 Wodonga Middle Years 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 college.

7. Engaging with families

Wodonga Middle Years 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 college community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our college policies and procedures, available on our college 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 college activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in college 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

Wodonga Middle Years 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 college 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

Wodonga Middle Years 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 college's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from college 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

The following college policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Child Safe Policy
- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Bullying Prevention Policy
- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2022
Consultation	School council – June 2022 Students – 09/06/2022 Staff – June 2022 School community – June 2022
Approved by	Principal (23/06/2022)
Next scheduled review date	22/06/2024