

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school Policy Leader on 9112 9500 or via email info@footscray.vic.edu.au

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our Footscray High 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.

Footscray High School 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.

We are a school community where every member shares responsibility to demonstrate the values of Footscray High School, in order to support an environment of high expectations, connection and safety.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Footscray High School consists of 2 year 7-9 campuses and one 10-12 campus. Footscray High School has developed close ties to the local community, and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Footscray High School is a new and contemporary multi-campus secondary school in Melbourne's vibrant, geographically rich and culturally diverse inner west.

At Footscray High School we are committed to every student having access to a world class education. Inspiring young people to develop the 'essential skills' required for their future pathways in an inclusive and positive learning environment is our priority.

We will provide all students with a comprehensive and innovative curriculum that focuses on individual growth and addresses the skills and dispositions required for citizens of the 3rd millennium. Our vision is to draw on international research and best practice to ensure that our curriculum and programs promote choice and agility to deal with complex, unknown and rapidly changing futures.

The high-tech environment will ensure new technologies are ubiquitous in everyday teaching and learning programs. The use of technologies and media will ensure students are provided with a continuous 'blended learning' environment, where direct person-person relationships are supplemented by contact with other individuals, communities, materials and learning activities remote from the school in time and space but accessed online.

Footscray High School's vision is to provide excellence in learning and teaching, achievement, innovation and self-improvement within a supportive, healthy, safe and secure environment that is inclusive of all.

Footscray High School's values are:

UNITY

Our school is built on collaboration. This is where three campuses, many cultures and infinite personal journeys unite with pride and with purpose.

We lift each other up, building on the strength and support of our whole community to achieve greatness.

RESPECT

Respect – for ourselves, our colleagues, our individual traditions and our shared future inspires us in every way.

We treat each other with care, compassion and kindness; we act with integrity; and we are engaged in making a positive impact on our world.

CREATIVITY

We embrace doing things differently because we want to make a difference.

We draw on wisdom, experience and our own original thinking to create new possibilities.

Future focused, open minded and proudly progressive, we constantly seek a better way.



ENDEAVOUR

The boldness of our vision is matched by our relentless spirit, our self-belief and the pride that comes from hard work. The enthusiasm which drives our endeavour also demonstrates our character: In the classroom and beyond, we strive to be our very best.

3. Transitions Strategies

Development of Health and Wellbeing Teams

- Each Campus will have a Health and Wellbeing team and a cross campus working group will be set up to ensure school wide implementation of the Student Health and Wellbeing Program.
- The Wellbeing and Inclusion team and Student Management team will be responsible for implementing the new schools behaviour management expectations, development of the School Wide Positive Support framework and implementation plan, consolidation of school support programs, update advice in student handbooks and websites and implementation of the Child Safe Standards strategies including the allocation of a child safety officer at each campus.

4. Engagement strategies

Footscray High School 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 (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
- 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/Vocational Major to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- Teachers at Footscray High School use an Learning and Pedagogical Model 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 Footscray High School 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 Leadership and Action Team and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Learning Community Leaders, 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 Child Safety Champion Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Leading Teachers, Assistant Principal and Campus 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:
 - o Respectful Relationships
 - o Bully Stoppers
 - o Safe Schools
- 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)
- Buddy programs, peer support programs

Targeted

- Each cohort/year group has a Learning Community Leader, a teacher responsible for their learning community, 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 from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Footscray High School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- Connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- All students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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



Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#), see:
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Referral to Student Support Services
- Referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Strategies to support International Students

- International students should contact the International Student Officer if they have any concerns.
- Footscray High School will:
 - Follow the Department International Student guidelines
 - Provide a tailored orientation and transition programs for all international students. This program will include all health and wellbeing support to ensure students understand the schools responsibilities and where to go for additional support.
 - Include easy to understand 'how to be safe for secondary students' guides.
 - Require students complete a regular survey to evaluate the schools strategies to support international students.
 - Access to translation and interpretive services as required.

Footscray High School 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 students and their parents/carers 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
- 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.

5. Identifying students in need of support

Footscray High School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Wellbeing and Inclusion team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Footscray High School 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

6. 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.



7. 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 Footscray High School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community (on school grounds and online environment), Footscray High School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

At Footscray High School disciplinary measures will 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 Footscray High School will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard. Footscray High School's staged response keeps the whole school's focus on its priorities of Mindfulness and Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships.

The staged response to Footscray High School's disciplinary measures that will 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/Assistant Principals
- Restorative practices
- Detentions
- Behaviour reviews
- 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 Executive Principal of Footscray High School 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.



8. Engaging with families

Footscray High School 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.

9. Evaluation

Footscray High School 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

Footscray High School 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 and Compass
- Included in staff induction and child safety training processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- 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 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:

- Bullying Prevention
- Child Safety and Wellbeing
- Complaints

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Policy last reviewed	2019
Consultation	School Council - October 2023
Endorsed by	Executive Principal
Endorsed on	October 2023
Mandatory minimum review cycle	2 Years
Next review date	October 2025