**STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

**Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Hume Valley School.

Ph: 9309 3477

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

1. our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
2. expectations for positive student behaviour
3. support available to students and families
4. our school’s policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Hume Valley 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.

**Scope**

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

**Contents**

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

**Policy**

1. **School profile**

Hume Valley School (HVS) is a Victorian State Government Specialist School that addresses the educational needs of students diagnosed with a mild to moderate intellectual disability in the North-Western suburbs of Melbourne. The school vision and purpose is to create an inclusive, child safe and vibrant learning community where all students are valued and the educational programs enable them to achieve their full potential. HVS is a culturally diverse and inclusive community with 61% of families having a language background other than English (LOTE), the largest LOTE backgrounds being Arabic, Turkish & Assyrian. The school also has a relative representation from the Koorie community, with 5% of students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Hume Valley School has approximately 370 students enrolled from Prep to Year 12 and approximately 120 staff members, including Learning Specialists and multidisciplinary Therapy and Student Wellbeing Teams. Our school comprises of three campuses, Koroit Campus (Years P-1 & 7-10), Narrun Campus (Years 2-6) and Tanderrum Way Campus (Years 11-12). Implementing the schools Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO), HVS follow the main areas for student engagement and wellbeing, student achievement, excellence in teaching and learning, community engagement in learning, professional leadership and positive climate for learning.

1. **School values, philosophy and vision**

At Hume Valley School our vision is to lead Special Education through exemplary and innovative practice, valuing “Respect”, “Responsibility” and “Resilience”. Students will achieve their personal best through meaningful educational experiences and a whole school approach based on current research, progressive practice and partnerships with the wider community. Every child deserves to receive the best education possible regardless of special needs, and the focus at Hume Valley School is to develop an environment which fosters quality learning opportunities for all students. Our aim is to make a difference in the life of every child that we are privileged to have the opportunity to educate. All children are rightly afforded the same opportunity for education, regardless of their needs, abilities, background, culture, gender and sexual orientation.

1. **Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

Hume Valley School 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
* deliver a broad curriculum including VET and VPC programs to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
* teachers at Hume Valley School use High Impact Teaching Strategies 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 Hume Valley 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 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
* behaviour expectations are explicitly taught and acknowledged in the classroom with positive point stickers, weekly certificates, prizes and activities
* student achievement is encouraged, reinforced and celebrated at sub-school assemblies and within 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 Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their Teachers, Sub-School leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
* all students are encouraged to speak to their Student Wellbeing Team, Sub-school Leaders Assistant Principals 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
  + Bullying Prevention
  + Safe Schools
* programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. community connections, active schools’ program, targeted wellbeing programs)
* opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime groups and 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 Sub-school has a Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their sub-school as well as a designated wellbeing staff member, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their specific cohort, 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 a second language students and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through personalised learning support plans, student support groups, connecting with CALD communities and upskilling staff
* we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through trauma informed practice, inclusive classrooms, high impact teaching strategies and classroom behaviour support
* 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy) and take positive action to eliminate discrimination or harassment of students on the basis of their sex, gender or sexuality
* all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/policy) 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 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy), 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
* 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/international-student-program/guidance/supporting-students-learning-and-engagement-section-7)
* 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. Hume Valley School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Hume Valley 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 student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
* developing a Re-engagement 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 The Orange Door
  + 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 an additional disability
  + in Out of Home Care
  + with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

1. **Identifying students in need of support**

Hume Valley School 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. Hume Valley 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 data
* engagement with families
* Internal referrals from staff

1. **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, 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 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.

1. **Student behavioural expectations**

* Behavioural expectations of students are visually represented on our School Wide Positive Behaviour Matrix
* Behaviour expectations are categorised under each of our 3 School values of respect, resilience and responsibility
* Behavioural expectations are explicitly taught, modelled and acknowledged
* 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, Hume Valley School 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 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:

* Communicating to a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
* teacher controlled consequences such as, moving a student in a classroom
* responses to misbehaviour are chosen to be reasonable and proportionate
* restorative practices
* 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 Hume Valley 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.

1. **Engaging with families**

Hume Valley 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
* involving families with curriculum-related activities and celebration days
* 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

1. **Evaluation**

Hume Valley 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

Hume Valley 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
* Included in staff induction processes
* 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/guidance/1-suspension-process)
* [Expulsions - Decision](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/guidance/decision)

**Further information and resources**

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

* [Attendance](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/policy)
* [Student Engagement](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-engagement/policy)
* [Child Safe Standards](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy)
* [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/policy)
* [Students with Disability](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy)
* [LGBTIQ Student Support](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy)
* [Behaviour - Students](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/policy)
* [Suspensions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy)
* [Expulsions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy)
* [Restraint and Seclusion](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy)

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

* Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
* Bullying Prevention Policy
* Child Safety Code of Conduct
* Child Safety Responding & Reporting Obligations Policy
* Inclusion and Diversity Policy

**REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s annual review cycle.

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| **Mandatory review cycle** | 1 year |
| **Policy last reviewed** | April 2025 |
| **Consultation** | April 2025  First Aid, OHS Principal Nominee, PCT, School Council |
| **Approved by** | Principal |
| **Next scheduled review date** | **April 2026** |