

# Student Engagement and Discipline



## Policy

### Rationale:

Student engagement is influenced by a wide range of factors. GWSC recognises that a vibrant and positive College culture with a shared enthusiasm for learning is key to successful student outcomes. Intentional design and creative and thoughtful planning are essential to achieving this.

### Aim:

GWSC ensures that student engagement is underpinned by policies reflecting the following acts: The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), The Disability Standards for Education 2005, Discrimination Act 1992 and The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic). This policy should be read in conjunction with *Ministerial Order 870- Child Safe Standards*, and the College's *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety*.

### Implementation:

#### Student involvement-

- A College environment which provides programs and curriculum which is inclusive and empowering, valuing the positive contributions of students and creating a sense of belonging and connectedness that are conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.
- The College will create an environment that is conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning; linked to College-wide classroom expectations. Consequences for breaching expected behaviour may take the form of (but not limited to):
  - Parent calls
  - Email and Compass notifications
  - Recess and /or lunch 'community service'
  - Lunch-Time or after-school detention
  - Suspension
  - Expulsion (an ongoing staged response and strategies of support is linked to this means of last resort)
- The college will also, where appropriate, pair consequences with discussion and reflections that follow the Restorative Practices Framework.

GWSC staff or any person undertaking child-connected work will not undertake any form of corporal punishment as a method of student discipline / student behavioural management (or for any other rationale). GWSC in line with DET requirements and morality explicitly prohibits such.

- Opportunities for students to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making will occur via Captain and leadership roles, Principals Advisory Group (PAG), Student Representative Council and College Council. Student voice will assist in building relationships, shared expectations and supporting policy implementation.
- Students will be engaged through dedicated classroom curriculum on behavioural expectations, where students show they are much more likely to commit to them. This will also help to build an inclusive and respectful College culture, where all members of the College community feel empowered to contribute to influencing the culture and practice.
- The College will provide social / emotional and educational support for at risk and vulnerable students identified through College staff or another.

### **Promoting positive student behaviour**

GWSC will acknowledge that positive student behaviours are most effectively developed and supported through relationship-based whole-College and classroom practices, and clearly communicated behavioural expectations. Some students exhibit challenging behaviour and require additional support and interventions to address this behaviour and to develop positive behaviours.

Challenging behaviour interferes with the safety or learning of the student/s or safety of College staff; including:

- **Withdrawn behaviours** (e.g. anxiety, College phobia, truancy, social isolation)
- **Disruptive behaviours** (e.g. tantrums, swearing, screaming or refusing to follow instructions)
- **Violent and/or unsafe behaviours** (e.g. kicking, biting, punching, fighting, running away)
- **Inappropriate social behaviours** (e.g. inappropriate conversations, stealing, property damage)

### **Influences on student behaviour**

There are many potential influences on student behaviour and many factors that can lead to behaviour that is challenging for Colleges to deal with. GWSC will take into account the following student factors, which will require support:

- **Biophysical factors**, such as medical conditions or disabilities;
- **Psychological factors**, including emotional trauma or lack of social skills;
- **Behavioural / social factors**, including where a student's problem behaviour has been learned through reinforcement, consequences or adaptation to social practices;
- **Historical community factors** including students whose family member/s had difficult, sometimes traumatic, experiences of College and government agencies.
- **Cultural factors**, catering for cultural diversity.
- **Student group dynamics**, such as bullying and teasing or student apathy or hostility.
- **Environmental factors**, for example the level of classroom noise.
- **Classroom organisation issues**, such as inconsistent routines or inadequate materials.

GWSC staff will understand challenging behaviour by seeking to understand the role of behavioural triggers.

### **Positive Behaviour Support**

GWSC will utilise a variety of DET support measures to promote positive student behaviour; which may include the following-

- **Restorative Practices:**

The College is committed to the use of restorative practices with students to aid in the resolution of issues with peers and teachers. Restorative Practices:

- Are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness (Bond et al. 2001, Fuller 1999).
- Promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy (Hopkins 2002).
- Involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution (Braithwaite 2001b)
- Promote relationship management rather than behavior management (Cameron & Thorsborne 2001)
- Separate the deed from the doer (Marshall et al. 2002).
- Are systematic, not situational (Armstrong 2004).
- Are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied (Morrison 2002).

- **Bullying and peer relationship issues**- Bully Stoppers is the Department's online resource dedicated to bullying prevention, providing advice for teachers, parents and students on how to identify, respond to and prevent bullying in their College community. The College will promote a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their College environment. Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chat room, discussion group instant messaging or by any other technology method is considered cyber bullying.

- **The National Safe Schools Framework:** GWSC will utilise this framework as a set of guiding principles in the maintenance of a safe and supportive learning community. These principles will assist to promote student wellbeing, develop respectful relationships and a College secure from harassment, aggression, violence and bullying.

GWSC employs Student Wellbeing staff who will assist with issues across a broad range of student wellbeing issues. They will provide guidance on which supports can best address the needs of vulnerable students; including:

- Supportive measure to students where absenteeism has become an issue;
- Investigating strategies and supports beyond the College
- Students affected by homelessness or Out-Of-Home care will have specific supportive provisions, where their absenteeism will be monitored on a case-by-case basis.

GWSC acknowledges within our statement of commitment that it is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing College environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Within this context it is vitally important that GWSC staff promote the participation and empowerment of all children. When children have an environment in which they feel safe, respected and comfortable, they are more likely to speak on issues of safety and wellbeing.

All staff of GWSC have a responsibility to provide teaching and learning environments that are free from discrimination in all forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexuality and religion.

**Child protection is a shared responsibility** between all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the GWSC community. The safety and wellbeing of our students form a central and fundamental responsibility of our College.

**We are committed to zero tolerance of child abuse;** including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. It is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing college environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse. GWSC affirms our commitment towards-

- The support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- Actively working towards listening to and empowering children.
- Creating systems to protect children from abuse and will take all allegations and concerns seriously; having mechanisms in place to ensure consistency in line with College, DET and DHS protocols.
- Promoting cultural safety and safe learning environments for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally / linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Empowering and providing an inclusive environment for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally / linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The development of a Student Engagement and Discipline Policy assists our legal obligations under relevant legislation; including:

***Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*** which prohibits discrimination on the basis of: race, religion, disability, sex, age, gender identity and sexual orientation.

***Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)***, which requires government schools and their employees, to act within human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services; including decisions around enrolment, attendance, responding to behaviour concerns (including preventing the escalation of behaviours), the making of adjustments for students with disabilities, preventing and responding to bullying.

***Disability Standards for Education 2005***, which clarify and make more explicit the obligations on Colleges and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*(Cth). The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

***Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)***, which states that all Victorians, irrespective of the education and training institution they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, should have access to a high quality education that-

- (i) Realises their learning potential and maximises their education and training achievement;
- (ii) Promotes enthusiasm for lifelong learning;
- (iii) Allows parents to take an active part in their child's education and training.

Information contained within this policy has been obtained from DETs website, specific to Student Engagement:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/College/principals/spag/participation/Pages/engagement.asp>  
[X](#)

### ***Rights and Responsibilities of Students***

Students have a right to:

- Work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition.
- Participate fully in the College's educational program.

*Students have a responsibility to:*

- Participate fully in the College's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the College community.
- Uphold the Vision and Values of the College
- Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.
- As students' progress through College they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole College community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.
- Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the College's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the College community.

### ***Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/carers***

*Parents/carers have a right to:*

- Expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged.

*Parents/carers have a responsibility to:*

- Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours.
- Ensure their child's regular attendance.
- Engage in regular and constructive communication with College staff regarding their child's learning.
- Support the College in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

## **Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers**

*Teachers have a right to:*

- Expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to work effectively.
- Be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student.

*Teachers have a responsibility to:*

- Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy.
- Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.
- Know the content they teach.
- Know their students.
- Plan and assess for effective learning.
- Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.
- Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.

## **College Actions and Consequences**

### **Guiding principles:**

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-College and classroom practices.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- Understanding the student's background and needs
- Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- Providing consistent College and classroom environments
- Scaffolding the student's learning program.

### **Broader support strategies will include:**

- Involving and supporting the parents/carers.
- Involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators.
- Tutoring/peer tutoring.
- Mentoring and/or counselling.

- Convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour.
- Developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans.
- Providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts.
- Involving community support agencies.

### **Discipline Procedures-**

The College may from time to time be required to discipline students for inappropriate behaviour. Consequences may include:

- Parent calls
- Compass notifications and emails
- Recess and /or lunch 'community service'
- Lunch-Time or after-school detention
- Suspension
- Expulsion (an ongoing staged response and strategies of support is linked to this means of last resort)

GWSC staff or any person undertaking child-connected work will not undertake any form of corporal punishment as a method of student discipline / student behavioural management (or for any other rationale). GWSC in line with DET requirements and morality explicitly prohibits such.

These guidelines are underpinned by *Ministerial Order 625*

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/College/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx> provides links to all DET suspension and expulsion proformas

### **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle

This policy was ratified in March 2018

This policy will be reviewed in March 2021