

School Policy

Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy

1. School Profile Statement

This Policy applies to all students who are referred to Avenues Education through the Alfred Child and Youth Mental Health Service (ACYMHS) or the Eastern Health Child and Youth Mental Health Service (EHCYMHS).

Avenues Education is a F-12 multi-site school that provides educational services to the ACYMHS located in SEVR and the EHCYMHS located in NEVR.

CYMHS settings are multi-disciplinary and offer a comprehensive range of psychiatric assessments and services for children, young people and families experiencing difficulties related to social, emotional, behavioural and developmental problems.

The teachers at Avenues Education work as members of the CYMHS multidisciplinary teams to provide educational services and support to the children and young people. The teachers are also involved in consultation, liaison and professional development to schools and other agencies.

Education programs based on DET guidelines are provided at each site and in an outreach capacity. The primary focus of these programs is to support the emotional and behavioural goals as identified by CYMHS. Services offered include educational, and/or vocational assessments and individual or group programs to address student needs.

Avenues Education is committed to providing a safe and stimulating learning environment to our students and continuing our strong partnership with ACYMHS and EHCYMHS.

2. Vision, Mission and Values

Avenues Education's vision is to be an innovative organisation that provides high quality educational support to students through our mental health partnerships.

Our Mission is to help improve our students' life opportunities through the provision of innovative, high quality, educational supports, to support the educational engagement and learning outcomes of our students through our collaborative partnerships with Alfred Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) and Eastern Health Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) and to provide opportunity and capacity for educational growth and vocational pathways. We acknowledge the importance of Child Safety and protecting children from abuse.

We are dedicated to the recruitment and retention of specialised teachers and staff who are committed to positive student mental health outcomes.

We continually strive to provide customised services that reflect the changing trends in mental health care for children and youth in our community.

The agreed school values are Professionalism, Engagement, Advocacy, Inclusion and Innovation.

3. Rights and Responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- Freedom
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural Rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights.

All DET employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:

- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights

3.4 Students with disabilities

The Australian Human Rights Commission in the section on rights for people with disabilities outlines three key rights around education;

- Appropriate educational provision
- Appropriate provision of resources
- Social Integration as an aim of education.

The Disability Standards for Education (2005) The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), stipulates that due to a disability; "It is unlawful to refuse or fail to accept application for admission, it is unlawful to include in terms or conditions on acceptance discrimination, it is unlawful to deny or limit access to any benefit provided by the authority, it is unlawful to expel the student, it is unlawful to subject the student to any other detriment, it is unlawful to develop curricular or training with content that will exclude the person from participation or any other detriment and it is unlawful to accredit curricula or training courses that have such content. It is not unlawful to discriminate against a person in respect to admission where the education institution was established for persons with a particular disability and the person does not have that disability".

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) includes amongst other things in its definition of disability "total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions" and "a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour."

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

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) 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 realises their learning potential and maximises their education and training achievement, promotes enthusiasm for lifelong learning and allows parents to take an active part in their child's education and training.

As a school working in partnership with Mental Health Services, Avenues Education does not enrol any students, instead we accept referrals from CYMHS services. All referrals are prioritised with students not currently attending school or at risk of expulsion being considered as a priority.

Avenues Education will ensure that all students will have the same participation opportunities across all of the programs. This may involve making adjustments to how the material is taught, what materials are used and how the students are assessed. The curriculum at Avenues Education is designed to meet the individual needs of the students, either individually or in groups.

All Avenues Education students have access to a clinical Case Manager who ensure clinical and other support services are made available to the student.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with a disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate fully in education and training and to be included on the same basis as other students. This can be reformulated as removing barriers to learning. An adjustment/removal of a barrier is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment/removal of a barrier is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability / specific needs
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, the student's family, the student's CYMHS clinician, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or the family of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the family of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student's participation and inclusion in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and;
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>To the best of their ability taking into account their current mental health,</p> <p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate fully in the school'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 school community.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participate fully in the school's educational program Be included in the school's culture and community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school 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.
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Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Parents/carers have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged Expect that their children will be included in the schools culture and community. 	<p>To the best of their ability taking into account the student's current mental health,</p> <p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 school staff regarding their child's learning and develop a positive relationship with the school. Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Support the school to understand the unique needs and strengths of their child so that the school can work to ensure inclusion. Be involved, as needed, in the formulation of education adjustment plans.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Teachers have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student 	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a good knowledge of all policies that relate to student learning and engagement and wellbeing. Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively. Know the content they teach. Know their students including the

	<p>individual needs and strengths which impact on inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Deliver quality programs which respond to student needs.
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Rights and Responsibilities of Principal Class

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>The Principal Class have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect that they will be able to run an orderly, cooperative and inclusive school. • Be informed, within privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student. 	<p>The Principal Class have a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the teaching staff have access to all policies that relate to student learning and engagement and wellbeing and the necessary PD to support their implementation. • Oversee planning and assessment for effective learning including review of education adjustment plans. • Ensure the provision of educational programs for students with disabilities/individual needs. • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments. • Provide teachers with a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning. • Ensure school wide consistent reflection and improvement.

4. Shared Expectations

Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

The school's values are based on the Australian Government's nine values, for Australian schools, which are:

Care and Compassion

Care for self and others

Integrity

Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds

Doing Your Best

Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence

Respect

Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view

Fair Go

Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society

Responsibility

Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment

Freedom

Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others

Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion

Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

Honesty and Trustworthiness

Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

School expectations include:

- inclusive teaching practices
- accessible educational provision for all students
- parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success
- provision of appropriate student services
- development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.

Diversity in the school community

The school aims to address diversity by:

- maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community
- attracting highly skilled and diverse staff, making the school a preferred employer
- increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce
- enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs

5. School Actions and Consequences

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and group practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic groups and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of group and whole school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

Attendance will be monitored and recorded by the teachers within the Avenues Education programs.

Inappropriate behaviours 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 school and group environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

Broader support strategies could include:

- working in partnership with CYMHS to meet the individual needs of the student.
- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways and/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 – suspension and expulsion

Students are not enrolled at Avenues Education and attend sessionally from their mainstream school. Avenues Education works to support the student and the mainstream school within areas of Student Engagement.

The Avenues Education Student Code of Conduct 2016 outlines that this is a unique school and as such requires a distinctive Student Code of Conduct. As a multi-site school Avenues Education works in partnership with both the ACYMHS and the EHCYMHS. Avenues Education teachers are working with students in group programs both with and without CYMHS clinicians, in the Adolescent Inpatient Unit and in their school environment in both Primary and Secondary schools across the SEVR and NEVR regions.

This Student Code of Conduct aims to provide guidelines which are applicable for students in a variety of settings and across a variety of circumstances.

The Code of Conduct is based on the principles that both staff and students have

- The right to be safe.
- The right to work, learn and interact.
- The right to feel valued and respected.

The purpose of the student code of conduct is to:

- Provide a safe learning environment for students and staff
- Enable the resolution of discipline matters at a school level
- Promote a healthy school culture that permits high levels of progress and personal achievement.

Refer to the Avenues Education Student Code of Conduct for School Rules and responses to unacceptable behaviour.

It is a requirement of the Department of Education that this Policy include the statement that Corporal Punishment is not permitted at any time within Avenues Education.

Note: This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Avenues Education

- **Bullying Prevention Policy**
- **Cybersafety Policy**
- **Equal Opportunity Policy**
- **eSmart Policy**
- **Student Code of Conduct Policy**

References

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines	https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf
Effective Schools are Engaging Schools	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/legislation.aspx
Student Health and Safety	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/default.aspx
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/multirightchart.aspx http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/Pages/default_eeo.aspx
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/legislation/Pages/act2006.aspx
VIT Codes of Conduct and Ethics	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities/conduct-and-ethics

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's two year review cycle.

This policy was last updated on August 2018 and is scheduled for review on August 2020.