

Student Wellbeing & Engagement



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the School Office on 03 8552 0583 or 03 98713275

Purpose

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

Avenues Education 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 excursions.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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Policy

1. School Profile

Avenues Education is a South East Victoria Region (SEVR) outreach government school that works in partnership with Child Youth Mental Health Services (Alfred & Eastern Health CYMHS). CYMHS refer students to Avenues Education to provide targeted educational services for individual and groups of students experiencing social, emotional, and/or mental health difficulties in accessing education. CYMHS provides a comprehensive range of psychiatric assessments and services for children, youth and families experiencing mental health, social, emotional, behavioural and developmental difficulties and refer to Avenues Education for a range of educational interventions. Students participating in Avenues Education retain enrolment in their school of origin. Depending on the program and individual health needs, students undertake sessions with Avenues Education either at their school of origin or at Avenues Education locations.

Avenues Education provides tiered support directly to SEVR schools, including mental health prevention and promotion activities, school capability building sessions and professional learning as well as consultation and liaison.

2. School Values, Philosophy and Vision

Avenues Education is an innovative government school that provides targeted educational services for students experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties in accessing education. We provide schools with tiered interventions to assist them in recognising and responding to the mental health needs of students and reduce the barriers to engagement in learning. We work in partnership with Child and Youth Mental Health Services to provide students with the necessary skills to access educational pathways.

We are dedicated professional teachers and staff who are committed to positive student mental health outcomes. We continually strive to provide a range of supports that reflect the complex mental health needs of children and youth in our community.

Our Statement of Values is available online at our website: <http://www.avenuesed.vic.edu.au/>

3. Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

Avenues Education has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students referred to 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 our students will need specific social, emotional or educational support to access education. The needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole school), targeted (group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal: *whole school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion*

- 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 session and base school attendance, student and parent feedback survey data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to engage in programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations as well as explicitly teaching coping regulation and help seeking strategies
- teach our instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all supports
- teachers undertake 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 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 are acknowledged and communicated to parents
- monitor student attendance at Avenues Education sessions 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 IEP's and students surveys
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships, Zones of Regulation, Prevent-Teach-Reinforce, Safe Schools

Targeted: *specific strategies to address particular needs*

- each teacher is responsible for monitoring the health and wellbeing of students in their program area and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all students will be assisted to develop an IEP with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- 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 through the implementation of individualised learning programs
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through the implementation of individualised learning programs
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTQI+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQ Student Support
- 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 having an Individual Educational 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 individual education plans
- each teacher will provide health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, base school teachers or other school staff
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- teachers provide tiered support directly to schools including mental health prevention and promotion activities, school capability building sessions, professional learning, consultation and liaison

Individual: *student specific strategies that enable educational access*

- teachers work with students to explicitly teach coping, regulation and help seeking strategies
- teachers utilise the curriculum to explicitly teach students the skills they need to engage in learning in various learning environments
- teachers work with students and their school to develop IEP, BSP's, safety plans and return to school plans

- teachers participate in SSG's at student's base school as needed ([Student Support Groups](#), [Individual Education Plans](#) [Behaviour Support Plans](#))
- teachers utilise various DET programs and services to support their work with students ([Program for Students with Disabilities](#), [Mental health toolkit](#), [headspace](#), [Navigator](#), [LOOKOUT](#))
- teachers build positive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to their complex individual circumstances
- teachers work with the student and their parent/carer to develop strategies to assist the student engage with learning
- teachers can facilitate further student referral to school-based wellbeing supports and appropriate external supports (i.e. council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, other child and adolescent mental health services, Child First, re-engagement programs such as Navigator, alternative settings)

Where necessary we will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances, health and wellbeing
- collaborating with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student (where appropriate)
- monitoring individual student attendance at Avenues Education Programs (sessions/group) and supporting the base school to develop plans to improve attendance in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- supporting the facilitation of 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 our support

Avenues Education is committed to providing support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Teachers develop and implement strategies to help identify students in need of our support and enhance their access to targeted assistance.

CYMHS refers students to Avenues Education to provide targeted educational services for students experiencing social, emotional, and/or mental health difficulties in accessing education. We use various information and tools to identify students in need of our support including personal, health and learning information gathered upon referral, attendance records, academic performance, observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation and through engagement with their families/carers.

5. 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.

6. Student Behavioural Expectations and Management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

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, we 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 implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from support.

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 and repair the relationships.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as withdrawing the student from the session and explicitly teaching expected behaviour
- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension of support
- withdrawal of support

Suspension, withdrawal (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.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

7. Engaging with Families

Avenues Education values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capabilities 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, strategies and supports
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students

8. Evaluation

We 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/Parent/Partner Survey Data
- Incident Data
- Individual Education Plans
- Return to School Plans
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Progress Measures

We 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

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and withdrawal (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 your related policies including 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

- Child Safety Policy
- Bully Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	March 2024
Consultation	School Council – 22 nd May 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before March 2026