
Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

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.

Blackburn 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 helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our School acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked with our school values.

SCOPE

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

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POLICY

1. School profile

Blackburn High School is a vibrant, innovative, caring and inclusive coeducational Government school for Years 7-12 that provides a comprehensive education to all students and is located in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, about 16 km from the CBD. The behaviours and actions of all members of the School community are referenced to our Values of: Respect, the Pursuit of Excellence, Citizenship and to the School Learning Norms. We are proud of our academic and co-curricular programs that provide opportunities for all students to reach their potential. We have a 66 year history of delivering a dynamic educational program that empowers students to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning and where effort as well as achievement are acknowledged and celebrated. Our excellent reputation in the community has evolved through the hard work of staff, students and parents working together with a belief that we are a premier school where learning is a lifelong pursuit.

The House System at Blackburn High School provides four learning communities that foster a sense of connectedness and belonging and stronger partnerships with the parents. The school day begins with a 20-minute Mentor session with students from Year 7-12 followed by four 70 minute periods throughout the day.

We provide a comprehensive, challenging curriculum that encourages a strong work ethic, as well as many out of class opportunities that enhance student school life. These co-curricular activities include clubs, camps and tours, our highly acclaimed instrumental music program, the stellar sport program that includes Sport Leadership and the Duke of Edinburgh programs, the languages program

with student exchanges to France and our sister school in Germany and Art exhibitions of student work.

The School has a well established student leadership program that extends from year 7 to year 12 and includes not just School Captains and Student Representatives from each class, but elected student leaders across a range of areas deemed important to students including: House, Environment and Sustainability, Performing Arts, Sports, Music, International Students, Wellbeing and Social Justice and Debating. Students in these positions work with school leaders and their peers to lead initiatives that better our School's culture and awareness of issues important to students and the wider school community.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our School's vision is to create a dynamic and inclusive community where all students grow together to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.

The Blackburn High School motto *Ad Lucem Crescimus* "Growing towards the light" articulates our shared vision that has focused on enabling our teachers, education support staff and students to learn and grow together. Our School Values of Respect, Pursuit of Excellence and Citizenship together with our Learning Norms, express the expectations, attitudes and behaviours for all members of our School community.

SCHOOL VALUES

RESPECT

Of oneself, others and of learning are displayed through honesty, integrity, consideration and the celebration of diversity in a safe and inclusive environment. We teach students to have due regard for the opinions, feelings, wishes and rights of others.

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Students are supported to reach their full potential by developing wide-ranging skills and capabilities, and to show growth academically, personally and socially. We value and celebrate effort and

achievement. We motivate students to do their best, at whatever level that may be, by nurturing a culture of striving for excellence which in turn opens up the pathways to success.

CITIZENSHIP

Students are encouraged to become active and informed citizens through their participation at a local, national and global level. We teach students the skills and knowledge to understand and engage with the world they live in.

This is demonstrated through involvement in the rich opportunities within the school and wider communities. Students are supported to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, their relationships with others and their participation in all aspects of their school life.

LEARNING NORMS

- We enter class on time, prepared and willing to actively contribute to our learning
- We learn from our mistakes
- We challenge ourselves and others to do our best

Our Statement of Values is available online at:

<https://www.blackburnhs.vic.edu.au/our-school/school-values/>

3. Engagement strategies

Blackburn 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.

Whole School Engagement Strategies

- 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/Carer Survey data, student management data and school level assessment data.
- deliver a broad curriculum including VCE, to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations. (Students can study external VCAL and VET programs.)
- teachers at Blackburn High School use High Impact Teaching Strategies to ensure that an explicit, common and shared model of instruction that is evidenced-based, is incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Blackburn 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 is 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.
- transition programs are carefully planned to support students moving into different stages of their schooling.
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, their House and formally in School assemblies and communication to parents.
- student attendance is monitored and attendance improvement strategies are implemented at a whole school, House and individual level.
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about School operations through a range of Student Leadership Teams. Students are also encouraged to speak with their classroom teacher, Mentor Teacher, a person from the House leadership team and/or Wellbeing

team, as well as an Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.

- opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students are created through Blackburn's Got Talent, the Mentor Program and House Performing Arts Festival, as well as through sporting carnivals, music programs and clubs.
- All students are welcome to speak to the Student Wellbeing team, their Mentor Teacher, a House leadership team member, Assistant Principal 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, their parents and staff are partners in learning
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - The Mentor Program
 - Respectful Relationships' Committee and programs
 - ESmart
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions are developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs). These are coordinated through the House Leadership and Wellbeing teams.
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. House activities, sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

Targeted Engagement Strategies

- each House has Mentor Groups, where the Mentor Teacher and House leadership team will monitor the learning, health and wellbeing of students in their Mentor Group/House, and act as a point of contact for students and their parents who may need additional support,
- all students from Year 9 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for

their future. This program is delivered through the Mentor Program.

- all Koorie students are connected with their House Leader and an Assistant Principal.
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Mentor Teacher who will be supported by their House Leader, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment.
- the student's Mentor Teacher, Classroom Teacher and the Wellbeing team 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. This is mainly through the Mentor Program.
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach when working with students who have experienced trauma.

Individual Engagement Strategies

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plan
- Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to the Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Blackburn High School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These include:

- building constructive relationships with students and their parents/carer, where a student is at risk or is vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances.
- The child's Mentor Teacher communicates with and/or meets with the student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with School. At times, a member of the House leadership team and/or an Assistant Principal will also attend this meeting.

- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan.
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up, Mentor Group and/or House.
- referring the student to:
 - their Mentor Teacher, a member of the House leadership team and/or Wellbeing team.
 - 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
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Blackburn High School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The child's Mentor Teacher, House leadership team and Wellbeing team play a significant role in

developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Blackburn 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.

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. We are also a Respectful Relationships' School.

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 House leadership team of Wellbeing team.

6. Student behavioural expectations

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 Blackburn High School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our School community, Blackburn High School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines

(<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/behaviour/engagement/Pages/engagement-policy.aspx>). Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and/or House leadership teams.

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:

- educating the student about respectful and ethical behaviour and our community standards and expectations.
- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate through an educative conversation.
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour. This may include a student conducting their learning in a space outside the classroom until the student is able to guarantee they are able to learn in a way that our school community expects.
- withdrawal of privileges

- referral to their Mentor Teacher, House leadership team and/or an Assistant Principal.
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

- Student Progress Conferences.
- School Newsletter.
- Weekly Newsfeed.
- Information evenings.
- Celebrating sports achievements, Presentation evenings, etc.

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our School and will not be used in any circumstance.

7. Engaging with families

Blackburn 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 XUNO portal.
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff guidelines. Parents/carers will communicate in the first instance with Mentor Teachers.
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities.
- involving families in School decision making where appropriate, especially School Council members who work on the sub-committees.
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families.
- including families in Student Support Group meetings and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Blackburn 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. Data is analysed by House Leadership and Wellbeing Teams and reported to School Council. Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- Wellbeing
- Transition
- student survey
- incidents
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- BHS Statement of Values and School Philosophy,
- BHS Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safe Standards Policy

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