



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Epping Secondary College on 9401 2599.

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.

Epping Secondary College 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 and management;
 7. Engaging with families;
 8. Evaluation.
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1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Epping Secondary College is located in the City of Whittlesea in the northern suburbs of Melbourne approximately 20 kilometres north of Melbourne's Central Business District. The school was founded in 1976.

The school's permanent facilities include applied learning, science, technology, arts, physical education spaces and a large central courtyard. A significant number of portable buildings exist on the site. At the commencement of 2021, a new Senior School Centre opened, incorporating six classrooms, a shared senior study space and several staff offices. The sporting grounds include a full-size synthetic soccer pitch, small grass oval and resurfaced tennis and basketball courts.

Student enrolments in 2025 are 972 with the school having seen a steady increase in school enrolments over the last decade.

Student enrolment numbers are forecast to decline over the following 7 years, due to the opening of new secondary schools in outlying suburbs.

The school's 2025 Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.4991 and the Student Family Occupation (SFO) index was 0.6090.

The 2025 staffing profile of Epping Secondary College includes a Principal, four Assistant Principals, 6 Leading Teachers, 6 Learning Specialists, 76.2 teaching staff and 30.4 full time equivalent Education Support (ES) staff.

The school's F-10 curriculum framework incorporated the eight learning areas required by The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 aligned with the Victorian Curriculum.

Senior secondary programs lead to choices of the Victorian Certificate of Education, the Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major and Victorian Pathways Certificate qualifications. A range of VET options are also available to all students. Epping Secondary College offers a VET Beauty course onsite.

In 2021 the School Review process identified three highlights across the schools operations and these included:

A POSITIVE CLIMATE FOR LEARNING

Epping Secondary College had continued to develop and implement a range of programs, policies and procedures to develop a Positive Climate for Learning. A major focus has been the reintroduction of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support System (SWPBS) into the school during 2022 supported by a clear matrix of expectations, updated school values and a suite of supporting

documents and shared positive behaviours for the college community to work towards.

The initiative was designed to combine with a restorative approach to repair relationships when there were difficulties and a more consistent approach across the school for managing student behaviour. The school's Wellbeing Team is instrumental in providing a range of both proactive and reactive programs, supports and interventions to a broad range of students across the school.

This orientation towards an improved positive climate for learning is reflected in improved Attitudes to School Survey results across the past three years.

LEARNING CULTURE

A key school highlight is the work undertaken on the development of a strong learning culture, where staff and students are at school to learn and grow – academically, socially and emotionally.

This initiative is designed to build a culture that enables daily interactions between students and staff that carries positive intent.

Staff regard and concern for students is evident in observations, interactions and the significant number of staff that go above and beyond to support student learning.

DIVERSITY OF PATHWAYS

The college has implemented several programs from Years 7 to 12 to support student learning at point of need. The Accelerated Cluster Education (ACE) program support students to access deeper learning in a clustered approach, ensuring they keep connection with the broader cohort who they travel through their schooling with. The school facilitates a raft of support programs for students who require learning support. These programs included Quick Smart Literacy, the Learning Support Program, Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support (MYLNS) and in 2021 the Tutor Learning Program.

As students enter the later years the college offers an array of tailored pathways to support student aspirations through and beyond school. These include:

- Future Directions: for students who may be struggling academically with Year 10 and are looking to develop personal learning & life skills at Year 11. ;
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- VCE Vocational Major or the Victorian Pathways Certificate: for students who may want to focus on a traineeship, apprenticeship or further study following their secondary school years;
 - VCE: for students keen to follow a university pathway or keep a broad range of options available for after they complete their formal schooling;
 - Careers Focus VCE: for students seeking the option of VCE whilst wanting to leave their options for traineeship, apprenticeship and further study open.

SCHOOL VISION, PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

2. VISION

Epping Secondary College strives to enable and equip all young people to reach their full potential - of being curious and acquiring new knowledge and skills; of forming strong, valuable, healthy relationships; of participating in creative expression; and of building strong mental and physical wellbeing.

PHILOSOPHY

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

VALUES

Respect: We treat all individuals with respect. Our relationships are based on trust and mutual respect. We recognise the differing circumstances and needs of our students and are dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for all.

Resilience: We strive to successfully adapt to challenging experiences and tasks through emotional, social, academic, and behavioural perseverance.

Care: We value community, build empathy with each other, and we act with integrity and compassion.

3. WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Epping Secondary College 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 programs, VCE, VCE VM & VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
 - teachers at Epping Secondary College use an Instructional Model Framework 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 Epping Secondary College 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 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 is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and 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 student focus groups and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
 - create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
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- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team 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
 - Safe Schools
 - programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
 - opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
 - peers support programs
 - 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 year group has a Year Level Leading Teacher and Year Level Coordinator/s, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, 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. Epping Secondary College provides a Koorie student group, program and protected meeting place for the school's Koorie students, in offering support and cultural connection.
 - our English as an additional language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
 - we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through the school's Wellbeing Team
 - we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQA+ Student Support. Epping Secondary College offers a support group for LGBTIQA+ students through the school's Wellbeing Team, acknowledging awareness and support days
 - 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 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 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
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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
- 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](#)
- 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
- Epping Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
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Individual

Epping Secondary College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These 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 an Individual Learning 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 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/carer, 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/carer
 - engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
 - running 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.
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4. Identifying students in need of support

Epping Secondary College 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. Epping Secondary College 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.

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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's SWPBS Positive Behaviour Matrix.

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, Epping Secondary College 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 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:

- Warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate;
 - Teacher-controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour;
 - Withdrawal of privileges;
 - Referral to the Year Level Coordinators;
 - Restorative practices;
 - Detentions;
 - Behaviour support and intervention meetings;
 - Suspension;
 - Expulsion.
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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 Epping Secondary College 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.

7. Engaging with families

Epping Secondary College 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/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website;
- Maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy;
- Involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities;
- 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.

8. Evaluation

Epping Secondary College 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;
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- School reports;
 - Parent survey;
 - Case management;
 - CASES21, including attendance and absence data;
 - SOCS.

Epping Secondary College 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 and via Compass;
- Included in staff induction processes;
- Included in transition and enrolment packs;
- 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;
 - Expulsions – Decision.
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**Further
Information**

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to 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 and Wellbeing Policy
 - Bullying Prevention Policy
 - Inclusion and Diversity Policy
 - Statement of Values and School Philosophy
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**Policy Review
and Approval**

Policy last reviewed	May 2025
Consultation	School Council Consultation
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	May 2027
