

ORBOST COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact main reception.

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.

Orbost Community 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. Student wellbeing is the responsibility of all staff working in a whole school context. Our approach to student wellbeing requires us to differentiate between student needs. We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

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

POLICY

1. School profile

Orbost Community College is located on the former site of Orbost Secondary College which was first established in 1912. It is located approximately 370km kilometres east of Melbourne, close to the Snowy River. We have 350 students enrolled from Foundation to Year 12 and 60 school staff members.

Orbost Community College was established as a single entity in 2024 to serve the Orbost Community. We are committed to creating safe, welcoming and inclusive classrooms. Students will be supported to develop social and emotional skills that will enable them to be connected and engaged in all areas of school life.

Our school grounds back onto farming lands and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Most students that attend our school live locally and tend to walk, bus or ride their bike to school.

Orbost Community College has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services. The school has strong representation from the Koorie community, and we are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

Our learners' experiences and outcomes are at the centre of Orbost Community College. We work together to provide specialised, individual, and flexible learning pathways – whether it be music or arts, sport, farming, automotive, or getting young people ready for the workforce.

Orbost Community College is an education hub for our learners, their families, and the broader community.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Orbost Community College's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community.

Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, resilience and responsibility at every opportunity.

Our school's Vision - Creating bright futures for our learners and our community.

Our school's Purpose – Together, we create a place of connection, learning and opportunity.

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available on our school platform: Compass and our website.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Orbost Community 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.

Our learners' experiences and outcomes are at the centre of Orbost Community College. We strive to create a supportive educational environment for students to continue education from Foundation to Secondary schooling.

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 and as a staff, we will be responsive to the changing needs of students.

Orbost Community College is an education hub for our learners, their families and the broader community.

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

Universal

- teaching of the school values and the expected behaviours
- positive behavioural management strategies which will be established at the beginning of each year for each class in consultation with students and will be provided to parents
- number of school programs promoting a safe, secure environment will be conducted throughout the year, e.g., Life Education Program takes place on an annual basis in Junior School with a focus on positive self esteem
- thorough playground supervision and prompt responsiveness adhered to when playground situations arise
- attendance and punctuality encouraged and closely monitored
- commitment by parents/guardians to work in partnership with the school on issues around student wellbeing
- 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 and VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Orbost Community College use the 'Elements of an Effective Lesson' an instructional 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 Orbost Community 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 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 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 year group meetings 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 buddy programs, school plays, athletics, music programs, buddy chair and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Year Group Leaders, Sub School Leader and two Coordinators, 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 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
 - Bully Stoppers
 - 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)
- 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

- Orbest Community College has funds set aside to utilise speech and counselling specialists
- a chaplain is employed for student and family support
- Orbest Community College conduct regular Parent Support Meetings for students with disabilities
- Orbest Community College implement the DE guidelines on Student Engagement, including suspensions, parent complaints and student support.
- each sub school (F-6, 7-9 and 10-12) has a Sub School Leader and two Coordinators, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their sub school, and act as a point of contact for students who may require additional support
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to plan their work experience, develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- 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, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Student Wellbeing teams 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
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- 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 where required, student support groups and individual education plans

Individual

Orbost Community College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can 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
 - Behaviour Support Plans
 - appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst/Orange Door
 - re-engagement programs such as Navigator as well as to other Department programs and services such as:
 - [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
 - [Mental health toolkit](#)
 - [headspace](#)
 - [Navigator](#)
 - [LOOKOUT](#)

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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Orbost Community College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially.

There are three student wellbeing teams at Orbst Community College one for each sub school (F-5, 6-9 and 10-12) and each includes a school leader and two coordinators. These staff monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their sub school, and act as a point of contact for students who may require additional support. Wellbeing teams are overseen by assistant principals with responsibility for student engagement and wellbeing across F-12.

In addition, the Student Wellbeing teams plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Orbst Community 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. We believe that all students have the right to learn and that all teachers have the right to teach. Everyone has the right to feel physically and emotionally safe.

Teachers have a responsibility to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment in their classrooms. All students have a responsibility to behave in a manner that allows others to learn and teachers to teach. Our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy 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

The Classroom Management Procedures and Values in Action are available on the school platform Compass and school website.

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy and the Student Code of Conduct. Orbest Community College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated within the college 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, Orbest Community 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 sub school leader
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion.

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.

The Principal of Orbost Community 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

Orbost Community 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 have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school platform Compass and the college website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- 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

Orbost Community 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 - Compass
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS.

Orbost Community 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 our communication platform: Compass
- included in staff induction processes
- referred to 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](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department’s Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):
 - [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](#)
- Related Policies:
 - Child Safety Policy
 - Bullying Prevention Policy
 - Inclusion and Diversity Policy
 - Statement of Values and School Philosophy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Duty of Care Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	April 2023
Consultation	To be reviewed and approved by new school council once established
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	April 2025 – to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 1-2 years thereafter.