



# Brookside College: 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 College's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Brookside 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 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.

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## POLICY

1. School profile

Brookside College is located in Caroline Springs on the lands of the Wurundjeri People and the Kulin Nation. Although the College and the community it serves is less than 20 years old, learning communities have taken place on this land for more than 30,000 years.

Founded as part of the multi-campus Caroline Springs College in 2000, Brookside College became a separate legal entity in 2012. Since its formation the College has gained a strong reputation as a caring and community minded learning school built on a commitment to student-centred learning and inclusive education.

Today the College has an enrolment of 1200 students aged 5 to 15 years and a staff of 130. Ours is a culturally and ethnically diverse community with 55% our children coming from a language background other than English. One per cent of our children come from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. As a College we celebrate the richness that diversity brings to a community and ensure our educational programs give voice to the different experiences of our families.

The College is committed to developing happy, healthy and resilient children and we have invested significantly in allied health expertise and a range of specialist intervention programs underpinned by the Berry Street Education Model, Rights, Resilience and Respectful relationships and School Wide Positive School Behaviour practices. Approximately 10% of our students have their learning adjusted to meet their additional needs.

In 2019 we opened our new dedicated Student Wellbeing and Intervention Centre, 'The Hub' in order to further our commitment to inclusive positive education.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Brookside 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 Rights, Respect, Resilience and Relationships at every opportunity.

Our Vision: Brookside College empowers every learner to fulfil their potential and positively shape the future.

Our full Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available on the Brookside College website at;

<https://brooksidecollege.vic.edu.au/>

## 3. Engagement strategies

Brookside College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We use the Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework to structure our work with students and families. Tier 1 strategies provide universal support for *all* students. Tier 2 strategies provide group support to specific cohorts where *some* students require support. Tier 3 strategies provide individualised support for the few students with more complex needs.

We acknowledge that over time the cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs of students will change as they grow and learn and we are inclusive and responsive in our response.

### **Tier 1: For All Students**

Brookside College implements a range of strategies that support and promote the engagement and wellbeing of all students. These can include:

- 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
- create 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 survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum program to ensure that students interests, strengths and aspirations are met
- teachers at Brookside College use the Brookside Instructional Model as a framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Brookside 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 College'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 school events, sport, music programs, peer support programs and cross-curricular activities
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team, School Nurse, Year Group Leaders, 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:
  - Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships
  - The trauma informed Berry Street Education Model
  - Bully Stoppers
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

**Tier 2: For some students**

Brookside College implements a range of strategies that support and promote the engagement and wellbeing of identified groups of students. These can include:

- ensure each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator responsible for their year, 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
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- ensure all students in Out of Home Care are appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and are referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- ensure wellbeing and health staff undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- ensure staff apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

### **Tier 3: For the few students**

Brookside College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement and wellbeing. 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
  - 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

Brookside College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported cognitively, emotionally, socially and physically. The Student Wellbeing Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies that identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Brookside College utilises the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social, physical 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
- family referrals
- contact with external agencies

#### 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:

- be safe and respect the safety of others
- to be included
- to be empowered through their learning
- to value and demonstrate fairness

Students have the responsibility to:

- appreciate the strengths, talents and passions of themselves and others
- lead by example
- respect individual differences
- be present, centred and grounded

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

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 Brookside College's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Brookside College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the action taken by teachers and other school staff.

A range of consequences, including sanctions, 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. At Brookside College consequences are applied fairly and consistently. Students are always provided with an opportunity to be heard.

*Consequences 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 Coordinator*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*
- *behaviour reviews*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

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 at Brookside College and will not be used in any circumstance.

## **7. Engaging with families**

Brookside College values the input of parents and carers, and we 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 website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- 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**

Brookside College collects 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
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related policies including *Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards*, etc can be found on the Brookside College website at;

<https://brooksidecollege.vic.edu.au/>

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in January 2019 and is scheduled for review in January 2021.