



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.

University 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.

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

The University High School caters for approximately 1,600 students, most of whom reside in the local area. A proportion of the school's enrolment comes from further afield, either as students in the Elizabeth Blackburn School of Sciences or SEAL program, or because of sibling claims. The school population has broad socio-economic, cultural and ethnic diversity and the school has a genuine commitment to nurturing this diversity. The school is constantly evolving, valuing the rich traditions of the past and the challenges of the future. The school acknowledges a dynamic community of staff, students and parents, who focus on the school with active partnerships. We value a sense of individual worth and achievement, the comprehensive well being of the whole person and the pursuit of excellence.

The Sub School Structure

For pastoral care of students and for administrative effectiveness, The University High School is divided into four subschools: Coleman, Gulam, Johnston and Triggs. The four sub-schools have been further divided into a middle and senior sub-school. When a student enters the school in Year 7 they are allocated into a sub-school and remain with the sub-school until completion of their VCE. Each subschool has a head and four coordinators who attend to the administration, scholastic and pastoral care needs of all students. The sub-schools also form the basis for the school's major sporting competitions, athletics and swimming.



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2. School values, philosophy and vision

Since its establishment in 1910, The University High School has built a distinctive tradition. The school is constantly evolving, valuing rich traditions of the past whilst embracing the challenges of the future.

A Dynamic school community, active partnership between staff, students, parents and the broader community enhance student learning and opportunities. The school focuses on developing individual worth and achievement, the comprehensive wellbeing of the whole person and pursuit of excellence.

The school's core values are:

- **Individuality:** *A focus on individual self-worth, achievement and the comprehensive wellbeing of the whole person.*
- **Diversity:** *Valuing a range of teaching and learning partnerships that broaden and enrich the skills and knowledge of all students.*
- **Excellence:** *Excellence in teaching and learning.*

New students readily adopt the school's culture of respect for learning and the individual. Classroom environments are characterised by positive student-teacher relationships.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <https://www.unihigh.vic.edu.au/index.php/our-community/principal-s-welcome/values-and-vision>

3. Engagement strategies

The University 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.

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*
- *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, VCE and VET programs to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *Teachers at University 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 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*



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- *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. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Sub-school coordinators, 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 Student Leadership groups*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Mental Health Practitioner, Sub-school 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 Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) positive behaviour support with our staff and students*
- *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)*

Targeted

- *Each sub school has 4 sub-school coordinators and a Head teacher responsible for their sub-school, 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*
- *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*
- *Connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer*
- *All students in Out of Home Care will be 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*
- *University High School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan*
- *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*
- *Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*

Individual

University High School 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 Education 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*



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- *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

[This section should include detail about how your school will identify students in need of support.

The text below is included as a sample only:]

University High School 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. University 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.

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.



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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, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with University High School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, University High School 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 implement 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 Coordinator
- 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 and Training.

The Principal of University High School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.



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

7. Engaging with families

University 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 school 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

University 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.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

University High School 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
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included in student diaries (7-10) so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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:



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- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- <https://www.unihigh.vic.edu.au/>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2021
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2023