



Alkira
Secondary College

Personalised learning for all. Respect for the individual learner.

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Rationale:

Student Engagement policies reflect the school community's aspirations and the unique local context of the school, which is critical to developing a positive school culture and supporting the school council's strategic aims.

Aims:

To articulate the expectations and aspirations of the school community in relation to student engagement, including; strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour. Within this context, the wider school community will promote a culture of respect, fairness, equality and thereby foster respectful relationships.

Implementation:

The School Engagement policy reflects the strategic intent of the College ... *To Secure the Entitlements of All Students*. Alkira SC will consider the following aspects towards providing a positive environment-

Student involvement-

- A school environment which provides programs and curriculum which is inclusive and empowering, valuing the positive contributions of students and creating a sense of belonging and connectedness that are conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning. This will include:
 - Expectations posters in each classroom and prominent areas of the College
 - Empowerment strategies
 - Pastoral Care curriculum
 - Values wheel
 - Positive behaviour classroom strategies
 - Positive correction

- The school will create an environment that is conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning; linked to school-wide classroom expectations. Consequences for breaching expected behaviour may take the form of (but not limited to):
 - Parent calls
 - Recess and /or lunch 'community service'
 - After-School Detention
 - Suspension
 - Expulsion (an ongoing staged response and strategies of support is linked to this means of last resort)

Alkira SC staff or any person undertaking child-connected work will not undertake any form of corporal punishment as a method of student discipline / student behavioural management (or for any other rationale). Alkira SC in line with DET requirements and morality explicitly prohibits such.

- Opportunities for students to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making will occur via Sub-School Captains, SRC and College Captains. Student voice will assist in building relationships, shared expectations and supporting policy implementation.
- Students will be engaged through dedicated classroom curriculum on behavioural expectations, where students show they are much more likely to commit to them. This will also help to build an inclusive and respectful school culture, where all members of the school community feel empowered to contribute to influencing the culture and practice.
- The school will provide social / emotional and educational support for at risk and vulnerable students identified through school staff or another.

Promoting positive student behaviour

Alkira SC will acknowledge that positive student behaviours are most effectively developed and supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices, and clearly communicated behavioural expectations. Some students exhibit challenging behaviour and require additional support and interventions to address this behaviour and to develop positive behaviours.

Challenging behaviour interferes with the safety or learning of the student/s or safety of school staff; including:

- **Withdrawn behaviours** (e.g. anxiety, school phobia, truancy, social isolation)
- **Disruptive behaviours** (e.g. tantrums, swearing, screaming or refusing to follow instructions)
- **Violent and/or unsafe behaviours** (e.g. kicking, biting, punching, fighting, running away)
- **Inappropriate social behaviours** (e.g. inappropriate conversations, stealing, property damage)

Influences on student behaviour

There are many potential influences on student behaviour and many factors that can lead to behaviour that is challenging for schools to deal with. Alkira SC will take into account the following student factors, which will require support:

- **Biophysical factors**, such as medical conditions or disabilities;
- **Psychological factors**, including emotional trauma or lack of social skills;
- **Behavioural / social factors**, including where a student's problem behaviour has been learned through reinforcement, consequences or adaptation to social practices;
- **Historical community factors** including students whose family member/s had difficult, sometimes traumatic, experiences of school and government agencies.
- **Cultural factors**, catering for cultural diversity.
- **Student group dynamics**, such as bullying and teasing or student apathy or hostility.
- **Environmental factors**, for example the level of classroom noise.
- **Classroom organisation issues**, such as inconsistent routines or inadequate materials.

Alkira SC staff will understand challenging behaviour by seeking to understand the role of behavioural triggers.

Positive Behaviour Support

Alkira SC will utilise the following strategic means to promote positive student behaviour;

- The Education Department's **Positive Behaviour Support** (SWPBS) [School-wide Positive Behaviour Support](#) as an evidence-based framework for preventing and responding to student behaviour to create a positive school climate, a culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for all school community members.
- **Restorative Practice**- used as a strategy for maintaining healthy relationships and to repair relationships that have been damaged. It may be applied at a whole-school or classroom level and in responding to challenging behaviour or bullying by individual students.
- **Bullying and peer relationship issues**- Bully Stoppers is the Department's online resource dedicated to bullying prevention, providing advice for teachers, parents and students on how to identify, respond to and prevent bullying in their school community. The College will promote a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their College environment. Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chat room, discussion group instant messaging or by any other technology method is considered cyber bullying.
- **The National Safe Schools Framework**: Alkira SC will utilise this framework as a set of guiding principles in the maintenance of a safe and supportive learning community. These principles will assist to promote student wellbeing, develop respectful relationships and a school secure from harassment, aggression, violence and bullying. For more information, refer to: [The Safe Schools Hub](#).
- **Health promotion** (Healthy Together Achievement Program). An initiative to create healthier environments for learning. It can assist schools to integrate health and wellbeing activities into strategic plans to improve student engagement and wellbeing outcomes.
- **Mind Matters**- A whole school approach to mental health promotion in secondary schools. For more information, refer to: [Mind Matters](#)

Alkira SC employs a full-time Student Welfare Coordinator who will assist with issues across a broad range of student wellbeing issues. They will provide guidance on which supports can best address the needs of vulnerable students; including:

- Supportive measure to students where absenteeism has become an issue;
- Investigating strategies and supports beyond the school (e.g.: re-engagement programs (internal / external) and other supportive services such as ARC / Oakwood / Head Space / Casey Youth Services
- Students affected by homelessness or Out-Of-Home care will have specific supportive provisions, where their absenteeism will be monitored on a case-by-case basis.

Alkira SC acknowledges within our statement of commitment that it is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Within this context it is vitally important that Alkira staff promote the participation and empowerment of all children. When children have an environment in which they feel safe, respected and comfortable, they are more likely to speak on issues of safety and wellbeing.

All staff of Alkira SC have a responsibility to provide teaching and learning environments that are free from discrimination in all forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexuality and religion.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the Alkira SC community. The safety and wellbeing of our students form a central and fundamental responsibility of our College and compliments our vision and values of: Respect, Integrity, Care and Excellence.

We are committed to zero tolerance of child abuse; including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. It is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse. Alkira SC affirms our commitment towards-

- The support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- Actively working towards listening to and empowering children.
- Creating systems to protect children from abuse and will take all allegations and concerns seriously; having mechanisms in place to ensure consistency in line with school, DET and DHS protocols.
- Promoting cultural safety and safe learning environments for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally / linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Empowering and providing an inclusive environment for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally / linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The development of a Student Engagement policy assists our legal obligations under relevant legislation including:

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of: race, religion, disability, sex, age, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), which requires government schools and their employees, to act within human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services; including decisions around enrolment, attendance, responding to behaviour concerns (including preventing the escalation of behaviours), the making of adjustments for students with disabilities, preventing and responding to bullying.

Disability Standards for Education 2005, which clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992(Cth)*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), which states that all Victorians, irrespective of the education and training institution they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, should have access to a high quality education that-

- (i) Realises their learning potential and maximises their education and training achievement;
- (ii) Promotes enthusiasm for lifelong learning;
- (iii) Allows parents to take an active part in their child's education and training.

Information contained within this policy has been obtained from DETs website, specific to Student Engagement: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/engagement.aspx>

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **October 2016**