

Beaufort Secondary College



Student Engagement & Well-Being Policy

Produced in consultation
with the school community

To be read in conjunction with
*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools –
Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*

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1. School profile statement

Values, Beliefs and Expectations

Beaufort Secondary College acknowledges its responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

Our school's values form the basis of staff and student interaction and student behavioural expectations. They were developed by our school community in conjunction with Beaufort Primary School, Trawalla Primary School and Buangor Primary School.

- Caring*
Giving love and attention to people and things
- Tolerance*
Respecting differences and not expecting others to think, look, speak or act just like you
- Consideration*
Being thoughtful about other people and their feelings
- Friendliness*
Taking an interest in people and going out of your way to make other feel welcome
- Co-operation*
Working together for the good of everyone
- Truthfulness*
Always being honest, in your words and actions
- Fairness*
Treating people equally and not showing favouritism
- Loyalty*
Staying true to people

We believe that:

- All students are capable of learning
- Students learn in different ways, and
- Learning occurs best when people feel safe, engaged, challenged and supported

School Profile

Beaufort Secondary College is a small secondary school situated in the rural town of Beaufort. The college's current enrolment is approximately 150. Around two-thirds of students travel to school by Government contract school bus, with the remainder being from families who reside in the township of Beaufort.

Socio-economic circumstances have changed significantly within the district over the last 20 years. There has been a decline in employment in local businesses and service industries based in Beaufort. The school has a diverse student population with a many students coming from single parent, low income families. This has led to the development of a strong emphasis on student wellbeing and engagement.

2009 SFO Index is 0.5803. Approximately 55% of families receive EMA/Youth Allowance. 32% of students come from single parent families, whilst an increasing percentage comes from blended families. In 2009, the school has one Koorie student.

Demographic data suggests that the school's enrolment will remain stable in the foreseeable future.

Beaufort Secondary College has a strong commitment to individual student engagement and well-being, and works towards all students reaching their full potential through connectedness to the school community, resilience and self confidence. This has resulted in outstanding parent, staff and student opinion survey results over the past four years.

2. Whole-school prevention statement

The foundation of our positive school culture is the active participation of all members of the school community so they feel valued, safe and secure; are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school; and have every opportunity to meet their personal and educational potential. A key component of the College's approach to prevention is teaching positive behaviours and the use of logical consequences to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

The school consults with students, parents, support organisations and the broader community on an ongoing basis to ensure we are responsive to students' social, emotional, cognitive and cultural needs.

Student voice is encouraged through a range of student leadership opportunities – the Student Representative Council, student leadership positions and student representation on the School Council and various planning committees. Students have multiple opportunities to input into the creation of their educational experience, including the physical learning environment, which provides them with a sense of ownership and allows them to feel safe and supported in the environment they have created. The college continues to build on the opportunities for our students to take on meaningful responsibilities both within the school and the broader community.

Our positive school culture is also predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. To support this, teachers are actively engaged in developing classroom practices to ensure that our pedagogy and curriculum engages all students by recognising and responding to their diverse learning needs. Effective teaching, inclusive and engaging curriculum and respectful relationships between staff and students are promoted through the development of innovative pedagogy using the E5 instructional model and VELs.

Prevention Programs & Approaches

Background

The college's small student population allows a high level of individual care and attention. This flows through to all aspects of student management.

Staffing Structure

The college's Assistant Principal/Student Manager leads a small team that consists of Year level Coordinators, School Nurse and Chaplain. They foster a cohesive and consistent approach to student management where issues are followed up and dealt with promptly. When necessary, a referral will be made to DEECD Student Services or outside agencies.

Attendance

Beaufort Secondary College operates under the assumption that full attendance is a key to engagement because it maximises every student's ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach effectively. The college has actively embraced the "It's not OK to be Away" approach and has adopted a number of strategies to support it. For example, an ESO staff member contacts the parents of all absent students on most days.

Restorative Practices

A number of senior staff members are trained in the use of restorative practices. As a result, the school is committed to the use of restorative practices in dealing with discipline issues and as a basis for classroom student management. We believe that restorative practices are effective because they:

- facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness
- promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy
- involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution
- promote relationship management rather than behaviour management
- separate the deed from the doer
- are systematic, not situational
- are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied

Intensive literacy teaching

Beaufort Secondary College has developed intensive literacy improvement strategies that have been implemented as part of its improvement agenda. Two literacy aides are employed to assist classroom teachers, and the college's makes effective use of community volunteers to work with individual students (the "Bridging the Gap" program)

Inclusion, Wellbeing & Transitions

Beaufort Secondary College is committed to implementing strategies in line with the Grampians Region Youth Options Guarantee, including:

- Inclusive education provision arrangements to engage young people in learning to year 12 or equivalent – a broad range of curriculum options.
- The allocation of a mentor and development of a MIPS plan for every student in years 10-12.
- Supportive intervention for those young people identified as potential early leavers to prevent early leaving
- Transition support for early leavers to and between education and training providers or to employment with structured training
- Provision of support for the reintegration into education or training of early leavers who have previously disengaged from education or training prior to gaining year 12 or equivalent qualifications.

Professional Learning

Teacher professional learning is given high priority at Beaufort Secondary College to ensure the strategies and approaches adopted are implemented with integrity.

Supporting Positive Behaviour and Relationships

The college requires the active involvement of parents in the learning and behaviour of each student. It seeks to foster this cooperative approach with parents through reports, parent-teacher interviews, phone calls, meetings and the use of diaries.

In encouraging and building this cooperative approach it is acknowledged there will be behaviours and events that occur that compromise this ideal. When this occurs the college will use a restorative approach to repair damaged relationships with individuals and groups. Where appropriate the college will inform and involve parents in these processes through a student support group.

Classroom Programs

A number of programs have been designed to promote and reinforces student engagement, high attendance and positive behaviours – specifically the years 7-10 Health and Human Relations programs. Others include “Mind Matters” and the “Baby Program”.

Student Extension and Leadership Programs

Included here are such programs as “Mindshop Excellence”, MUNA (Model United Nations Assembly) and a year 8 extension program conducted by video conferencing with Donald HS.

Other Approaches

These include individualised flexible learning, behaviour and attendance plans. They also include, where necessary, broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work placements and programs such as “Link Up”.

3. Rights and responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles

- Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.
- Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

Beaufort Secondary College is committed to giving effect to its legislative responsibilities as outlined in sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 below.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

Under the act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of such things as age, gender identity, impairment, physical features, pregnancy, race, religious belief or sex.

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter sets out a list of rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- Freedom
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

3.4 Students with Disabilities

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

Beaufort Secondary College works with students with disabilities and their parents via program support groups to ensure that, as far as possible, such students can participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

3.5 Bullying and Harassment

a. Definitions

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) that is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

b. The effects of harassment and bullying

These can be serious, and include:

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- the lowering of self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- ultimately, reduced career prospects

c. Examples of Harassment

Harassment may be subtle or explicit.

Explicit (obvious):

This includes:

- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
- Displays of sexually graphic material– pornography.
- Requests for sexual favours.

Subtle (Less obvious, but more common):

This includes:

- Offensive staring and leering.
- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
- Questions/comments about another's sexual activity.

- Persistent comments about a person's private life or family.
- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body.
- Offensive name calling.

d. Examples of Bullying

Some examples of bullying include:

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person's property
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks
- "cyber-bullying" - a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings)

e. Tackling Bullying and Harassment

Beaufort Secondary College aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. It acknowledges that all persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

- The college takes a proactive approach to the issue of student safety through its educational program. Our Health and Human Relations program seeks to develop resilience in students as well as an awareness of individual rights and responsibilities.
- The college encourages students who are being harassed or bullied to take a proactive role in stopping the behaviour. They are encouraged to inform the person they believe is bullying them that the behaviour is unwelcome and should stop, then discuss the matter with the Student Welfare Co-ordinator, School Nurse or Chaplain.
- Concerns will be taken seriously and confidentially maintained.
- The school will thoroughly investigate allegations of bullying and harassment.
- Where it is found that bullying or harassment has occurred, the aim will be to ensure that the behaviour stops. In doing so, a range of strategies may be used, including:
 - Mediation and/or restorative justice approaches,
 - Counselling of the parties,
 - Punishment under the Student Code of Conduct.
- Extreme forms of sexual harassment may be reported to the police and can lead to criminal prosecution.
- As far as cyber-bully is concerned, it is important that students are made aware that involvement in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:
 - the language used and what is said
 - how others are treated

- respecting people's property (eg copyright)
- visiting appropriate places
- Students are made aware that behaving safely online means:
 - protecting one's own privacy and personal information (i.e. students being aware of 'stranger danger')
 - selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
 - protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
 - being proactive in letting someone know if there is something is 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.
- f. Witnesses to Bullying and Harassment

The school expects students and parents to work with the school in dealing with bullying/ harassment. Witnesses to bullying and harassment who do nothing to stop it may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully. Rather, they should take a proactive stance by advising the victim to report the incident to an appropriate person, support him or her and even express disapproval at the behaviour.

3.6 Rights and Responsibilities of Members of the School Community

A student's behaviour affects the educational, social, emotional and physical development of himself/herself and those around him/her. Every student has the responsibility to respect the rights of other students. We also expect students to make other students feel welcome, and treat other members of the school community in accordance with our school values.

Actively teaching students whole school engagement, attendance and behavioural expectations creates a highly predictable environment that allows students to understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from each other.

Staff members have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are aware of the processes to use when, or if necessary. The school welfare and discipline is based on a proactive, restorative justice approach across the whole school. Parents are kept informed where necessary. Staff members ensure that students and parents/carers have a clear understanding of what is expected from the school.

The college's rules, including those related to bus travel, are consistent with the following rights and responsibilities.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying or harassment, they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition, <input type="checkbox"/> be treated with respect and fairness as individuals, and <input type="checkbox"/> participate fully in the school's educational program, and expect a learning program that meets their individual needs 	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Participate fully in the school's educational program <input type="checkbox"/> Attend regularly <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate respect for the rights of other students, including the right to learn. This will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. <input type="checkbox"/> As they progress through school, increasingly take responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Generally, display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Parents have a right to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged, <input type="checkbox"/> a positive and supportive approach to their child's learning, and <input type="checkbox"/> communication and participation in their child's education and learning 	<p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours, <input type="checkbox"/> build positive and respectful relationships with other members of the school community, <input type="checkbox"/> ensure their child's regular attendance, <input type="checkbox"/> engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning and other issues, <input type="checkbox"/> support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, accept the school's judgement where the school has been required to make a judgement on a particular issue

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Teachers have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment <input type="checkbox"/> be informed, within privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student, <input type="checkbox"/> apply, with discretion, the college's rules and consequences <input type="checkbox"/> receive respect and support from the school community 	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Build positive relationships with students as basis for engagement and learning, <input type="checkbox"/> fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement this policy, <input type="checkbox"/> have knowledge of the differing ways in which students learn and how to teach all of them effectively, <input type="checkbox"/> know the content they teach, <input type="checkbox"/> plan and assess for effective learning, <input type="checkbox"/> create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments, <input type="checkbox"/> use a range of teaching strategies and resources to create stimulating, safe and meaningful learning and engage students in effective learning, and <input type="checkbox"/> treat all other members of the college community with respect, fairness and dignity

4. Shared expectations

Beaufort Secondary College shares high expectations with the whole-school community. We believe these shared expectations should be:

- jointly negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, including students
- clear and specific
- focused on positive and pro-social behaviours
- focused on prevention and early intervention
- supported by relevant procedures
- consistent, fair and reasonable
- linked to appropriate actions and consequences.

Our school's **expectations** include:

- inclusive teaching practices
- accessible educational provision for all students
- parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success
- provision of appropriate student services
- development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.

5. School actions and consequences

Beaufort Secondary College has, in place, a number of prevention programs and approaches to minimise the occasions when discipline strategies are necessary (see Section 2 above)

The college's expectation is that student behaviour will, in the first instance, be managed effectively by classroom teachers with support from Year Level co-ordinators or Assistant Principal/Welfare co-ordinator.

Emphasis is placed on positive consequences and reinforcement for meeting high expectations in preference to reinforcing negative behaviour. The development of a positive and high achieving environment is important in promoting student engagement and well being.

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

Students are encouraged to be honest at all times and to accept responsibility for their actions. They are also encouraged to take advantage of all opportunities and to participate fully and positively in their educational experience.

The college emphasises actions and consequences that are fair and consistent and have an educational role. Its aim is to foster positive relationships and retain the dignity and self esteem of the student.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to, taking into consideration:

- students' backgrounds and needs
- the need for a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- the need for consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding of students' learning program.

As indicated above, restorative justice approaches will be used through the school.

Where disciplinary action is deemed necessary, the consequences upon students will be incremental – i.e. staged - and will be applied fairly and consistently.

Discipline procedures – Suspension and Expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, Beaufort Secondary College follows the procedures listed in section 4.3 of the DEECD guidelines published in *“Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines”*. Appendices 12 to 18 of the guidelines provide flowcharts and proformas for use in suspension and expulsion procedures.

Exclusion is used only:

- Where other measures have been implemented without success,
- Where the wellbeing or safety of other students is at risk, or
- Where it is the only appropriate course of action given the gravity of the student's behaviour

Consequences that will be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- The imposition of work tasks, including yard duty
- Withdrawal from class - where a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class. In such a situation, the student will be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed of such withdrawals.
- In-school Suspension – where withdrawal from class is for one or more day and the student, whilst still at school, is isolated from other students.
- Detention – where teachers require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. In such a situation, the Principal will ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the detention.
- Convening of a support group (See Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for the process required).

References

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/codeofconduct.htm
School Accountability and Improvement Framework	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm
Effective Schools are Engaging Schools	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm
Safe Schools	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/default.htm
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eoo/eoact.htm
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf