



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Statement of Context and Purpose

All students have the right to receive a quality education, provided in a safe, caring and supportive environment. At Huntingtower, we work in partnership with parents to help our students to become thoughtful, happy and resilient individuals who love learning and find their schooling stimulating and challenging.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure our learning community aims to:

- Provide an opportunity for all students to reach their learning potential
- Ensure the safety of staff and students
- Promote student and staff wellbeing
- Foster confidence, responsibility and self-discipline
- Assist students who may exhibit challenging behaviours to accept responsibility for themselves and their actions
- Provide a social framework allowing every student to learn and succeed
- Cultivate clearly articulated and reinforced core values on which communication and behaviour is based
- Provide a number of key programs and strategies to support the development of resilience, independence and self-discipline

Huntingtower is committed to providing a culturally safe, inclusive and child-safe environment in accordance with Ministerial Order No. 1359. The School has zero tolerance for child abuse, racism and discrimination in any form and is committed to actively identifying, confronting and addressing behaviours that undermine safety, dignity and inclusion.

Application

This Policy assists Huntingtower staff members and parents in regard to formal consequences applied in respect of the child's/young person's inappropriate behaviour. This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safe Identifying, Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy and other related child safety policies.

Philosophy

Showing kindness towards self and others is central to the Huntingtower school culture. Recognising the unlimited potential of every child, we focus on everyone's spiritual nature as a reflection of Love. Our students come from a diverse range of backgrounds and all bring with them a desire to learn, to contribute to their community and to give to the world.

Our environment is one that encourages excellence at every step and in every endeavour. We identify in students their unlimited ability as expressions of divine Mind; they all have infinite intelligence. The school aims to reinforce positive behaviours by encouraging a growth mind set in staff and students. The expression 'You get more of what you expect' is at the core of behaviour management.

Core Values

The School's endeavour is that students should be able to:

- Learn without distraction or interference from others
- Work in a safe environment
- Feel safe from harassment, bullying and discrimination
- Be shown respect by their peers and school personnel
- Be empowered to take responsibility for their behaviour and progress

The School's core values of kindness, optimism and unlimited potential form the cornerstone of the positive relationships forged amongst students and teaching staff at all levels within the school. These values also provide the foundation for the kind of responsible behaviour expected of our students when at school and when representing the school and in the wider community.

The School explicitly recognises the cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and is committed to fostering a culturally safe environment in which their identities, cultures and strengths are respected and valued. The School affirms its commitment to actively preventing and address racism in all forms.

Wellbeing Framework

The School's wellbeing framework includes the following areas of activity where the school aims to offer wellbeing support for our students.

Prevention

- The majority of our work occurs in the prevention area, as this reduces the demand required in the other areas
- Child Safe Standards are aligned with the prevention area and guide hiring procedures and encourage protective behaviour education, which try to shield a child from sexual assault/abuse/harassment
- Mindfulness, gratitude and empathy education provided falls within the prevention area
- These programs empower students to learn to protect themselves, advocate for themselves and know when to seek assistance
- Students are provided with age-appropriate education programs that promote respectful relationships, consent, and sexual abuse prevention
- The School embeds strategies to promote cultural safety, diversity and equity across all programs. This includes actively supporting Aboriginal students to express and enjoy their cultural rights, equipping staff and students to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to wellbeing and safety and implementing measures to identify, confront and address racism.

Early Intervention

- Identify and target at risk individuals as early as possible to minimise problems or disruptions
- Ensure the provision of support for individuals at crisis point so that they can regain confidence, reduce impact and avoid any disruption to their schooling
- What is needed?
 - Clear referral procedures (both internal and external referrals)
 - Ensure care and consistent approach across all wellbeing situations
 - Clear communication between all relevant stakeholders
 - Clear notetaking/documentation

- Yearly staff training in Mandatory Reporting, the Reportable Conduct Scheme, Duty of Care (including but not limited to, understanding the balancing of the Privacy Act v's Duty of Care responsibilities)

Restore Wellbeing

- Our aim is to manage incident/issues and limit impact so that those affected by incidents or crisis are supported to minimise risk and promote improved health and wellbeing
- Teachers trained in best practice approaches
- Our evacuation and lockdown procedures/drills are part of this area, as they are designed to limit the impact of possible events

Code of Behaviour

It is expected that students will strive to:

- Foster a positive learning environment by:
 - practising honest and trustworthy behaviour
 - being well prepared for each lesson and activity
 - completing set work to the highest personal standard and meeting assessment deadlines
 - approaching teachers if work is not understood, if a class is missed or if they will find it difficult to meet a deadline
 - following instructions
 - participating positively and cooperatively in class discussion and activities
 - expressing oneself in a respectful manner and accepting the rights of others to hold views different from their own
 - participating in the School's programs, including attending camps, excursions and incursions unless special exemptions apply
- Promote a positive school culture and climate by:
 - being polite and courteous to all members of the School Community, visitors to the School and to one another
 - being punctual to all commitments
 - not engaging in any form of bullying, whether physical, verbal, in writing or through the use of digital technology
 - not engaging in racism, discrimination, harassment or vilification on the basis of race, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or any other protected attribute
 - wearing their uniform in a manner which is consistent with the School's policy
 - not possessing or using cigarettes, alcohol, drugs or such prohibited substances of any kind
- Maintaining a safe and clean school environment by:
 - ensuring their own safety and the safety of others
 - respecting the privacy of others
 - ensuring that school equipment is handled carefully and that buildings and furniture are cared for
 - respecting the School's property and assisting in the maintenance of neat, tidy locker areas and surroundings
 - contributing to a litter free school environment
 - recycling where appropriate

Responsibilities of Teachers

Teachers at Huntingtower can expect to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment and to be respected as professionals who have the best interests of the students always at heart.

Teachers have a responsibility to:

- Teach according to the prescribed Huntingtower curriculum, employing effective pedagogy and a variety of teaching methods
- Model respect, fair treatment and problem-solving behaviours
- Use language that emphasises positive thought patterns
- Communicate clear expectations about the nature of work to be completed, in line with school's pedagogy approaches. Keep students informed about their progress regularly
- Know and follow the School's policy and guidelines
- Promote high expectations about learning achievement and acceptable patterns of behaviour in all students
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to enhance learning outcomes and to support the wellbeing and conduct of the student
- Respond to colleagues and parents in a professional manner
- Respect differences in gender and the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students
- Take into account the impact of physical and intellectual disability, trauma and disadvantage on the learning process and make adjustments appropriately
- Address any issues of sexual harassment, racism or bullying in a prompt and professional manner
- Develop classroom management strategies which support the participation of all students
- Promote culturally safe practices, actively challenge racism or discriminatory behaviour and support the diverse needs of students including Aboriginal students, students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students unable to live at home and students who identify as LGBTIQ+

Responses to Inappropriate Behaviour - Secondary School *(See Guidelines for full response)*

Students are encouraged always to strive by exercising self-discipline, respecting the rights of others and taking responsibility for their own actions.

When behaviour is inappropriate, the School responds by directly addressing the behaviour with the student concerned and, if appropriate, with the parent.

Students are entitled to procedural fairness. This means that where concerns about inappropriate student behaviour are identified, a student will be given an opportunity to respond to those concerns before a decision has been made that the behaviour occurred (and consequences should follow). Ordinarily this opportunity will be provided in person when the concerns are raised with the student and may occur at the time the behaviour is observed. In some cases, the School may decide to give the student time to consider the concerns and provide a response at a later date (either in person or in writing, at the School's discretion).

Responses to inappropriate student behaviour are applied with the following in mind:

- Responses will be determined by the nature of the inappropriate behaviour and the context in which it occurred
- Responses should be consistent in application
- Responses should be sensitive to any special circumstances
- Responses should address any harm done and work to restore positive relationships wherever possible, which in some cases may result in restorative practices being emphasised instead of discipline

Students have the right to raise concerns or complaints about safety, wellbeing or inappropriate behaviour. Concerns relating to child safety will be managed in accordance with the Child Safe Identifying, Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy. Students may raise concerns with a trusted staff member and will be supported in doing so.

Responses to Inappropriate Behaviour - Junior School *(See Guidelines for full response)*

Junior School students at Huntingtower are encouraged to develop self-discipline, demonstrate respect for the rights of others and take responsibility for their own actions.

When behaviour is inappropriate, the School responds by directly addressing the behaviour with the student concerned and, if appropriate, with the student's parents. Students in the Junior School are also entitled to procedural fairness.

Responses to inappropriate student behaviour are applied with the following additional considerations for Junior School students:

- Try to correct inappropriate behaviours with affirmation of the correct behaviours
- Encourage students to reflect on poor behaviours and consider the ways they can be reversed
- Encourage students to employ the positive strategies discussed in assemblies, classes and special programs in relationships with others
- Deal immediately with unkind behaviour and help students to distinguish between isolated incidents and repeated unkind behaviour, with a **resolution** in mind

Junior School students will be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand their rights including their right to feel safe and to speak up about concerns. Staff will respond in a child-focused and culturally safe manner.

Procedures for suspension, expulsion and exclusion

The Principal reserves the right to suspend or expel a student who is engaged in repeated inappropriate behaviour, or who engages in serious inappropriate behaviour inconsistent with the School's values (or obligations to protect the health and wellbeing of the School's staff and students).

Ordinarily, the Principal will only exercise this right after giving the student and the student's parents an opportunity to respond to the School's concerns about the student's behaviour and the consequences that should follow. However, in certain cases the Principal may temporarily suspend a student while that opportunity is being afforded.

A decision by the Principal to suspend, expel or exclude a student from the School can be appealed by the student's parent(s) to the Board. Any appeal should be made in writing within 7 days of the Principal's decision, emailed to the Principal's Executive Assistant and addressed for the attention of the Board.

In exercising disciplinary powers, the School will ensure decisions are fair, proportionate, culturally safe and consistent with the School's obligations under child safety, anti-discrimination and privacy legislation.

Communicating Consequences

Parents will be informed about any formal consequences applied in respect of their child's inappropriate behavior. Where considered appropriate by the School, such as where expulsion is being considered, parents will be invited to attend a meeting with their child and the School before decisions are made.

The student diary is signed daily by parents of students in the Junior School. It is a significant form of communication to parents about issues which the School feels need to be brought to their attention.

Families are encouraged to participate in decisions affecting their child's wellbeing and safety including behaviour management and support planning. The School consults families and the broader school community in the development and review of child safety policies and practices.

Diversity and Equity

Huntingtower upholds equity and respects diversity in policy and practice. The School pays particular attention to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Students with disability
- Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- International students
- Students who are unable to live at home
- Students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ+)

The School ensures that information, support and complaints processes are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand for all members of the School community.

The School regularly consults with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy to support culturally safe wellbeing and engagement practices.

Governance, Risk Management and Review

The School's Board is responsible for endorsing and overseeing the implementation of this Policy and all child safety practices. The Board reviews child safety and wellbeing risks annually and following any significant child safety incident.

Staff, volunteers and members of the governing authority engaged in child-connected work receive annual training appropriate to their roles, including child safety obligations, reporting requirements and cultural safety practices.

The School maintains a Child Safety Risk Register that identifies risks in physical and online environments, including activities conducted offsite and services provided by third parties. Risk controls are monitored and reviewed annually.

The School ensures that its online environments and digital platforms promote safety and wellbeing and are governed by endorsed policies on online conduct and online safety.

The School reviews and evaluates its child safety policies, procedures and practices at least annually and after any significant child safety incident. The Board oversees this review process.

Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic issues to inform continuous improvement. Outcomes of relevant reviews are communicated to staff and where appropriate, to the School community.

Related Policies and legislation

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Guidelines

Communication

This Policy is available to staff, parents, students and the School community via the School's website. In addition, relevant aspects of this Policy will be raised at staff and student meetings and highlighted in Bulletins and newsletters.

Evaluation

Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing are created, maintained and disposed of in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards. Staff and volunteers are informed of their information-sharing and recordkeeping obligations.

The Principal is primarily responsible for monitoring Huntingtower's overall compliance with this Policy, which will be reviewed as part of Huntingtower's policy review cycle (and otherwise as and when required).

Authorisation

This policy was authorised by the Principal March 2015
Reviewed September 2022, February 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026
Date of next review February 2027