

# STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Reviewed by School Council in Nov 2021  
Approved by the Principal in Nov 2021



## PURPOSE

Thornbury 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

Established in 1962 with only 162 students, Thornbury High School has been through many changes as it grew into the school it is today. Amalgamations of schools in the area in the late 1990s resulted in a variety of different school names, uniforms and student backgrounds at the school. In the middle of 2004 the "College" (as the school was then termed) felt that it was an appropriate time to simplify its name to better reflect other changes such as the new uniform, the new curriculum and reunited campus. The "High School" reflects the traditional academic origins of secondary education in the State and the "Thornbury" name is an accurate reflection of both its location and a reminder of its tradition.

In 2021, the school's enrolment is approximately 1100 students, including approximately 30 international students from predominantly China and Vietnam further enriching the school's standing in the international education community. The school's curriculum is founded on the key underpinnings of achievement, engagement and connection.

The school has four Principal class, 70 equivalent full time teachers and 20 Educational Support Staff working together to achieve the school's vision, the central tenets of which are:

- high academic expectations and standards
- a safe and secure learning environment
- a wide-range of opportunities for students to pursue individual and collective aspirations

## **2. ChildSafe Standards**

Thornbury High School is a child safe environment in accordance with the Victorian Government Child Safe Standards. Thornbury High activity promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment, in accordance with our legal obligations outlined in the Child Safe Standards. Thornbury High School has a Child Safe Policy consistent with the department of education, please see our website for details.

## **3. School values, philosophy and vision**

At Thornbury High School, we are proud of what we do every day to champion innovation, inclusiveness and academic excellence. Through our extensive academic and extra-curricular programs we aim to foster and inspire a new generation of respectful and resilient young people ready to face a rapidly-changing world.

Our vision centres around fundamental knowledge, skills and experiences:

- Literacy and numeracy capabilities for lifelong learning
- Rich science, technology and arts experiences
- Leadership through humanities, languages and physical education
- Success in a digital world
- Enterprise skills to problem solve, think critically and creatively, communicate and collaborate
- Our place in a global community

'Achievement and Excellence'. Our motto, visible in all our actions, represents what is critical to the education of the whole person. We value the fundamental attributes of a vibrant, quality education:

- Effort and achievement in all aspects of school life
- Active engagement in learning
- Connectedness, resilience and wellbeing
- Celebration of diversity

## **4. Engagement strategies**

Thornbury High School has developed a whole school approach to promote wellbeing and engagement for all students across the year levels. The needs of students vary at times and also change as the students develop and move through the schooling. A summary of the strategies developed aim to assist students socially, emotionally and educationally is included below:

### **Whole school approach to student wellbeing and engagement**

- The school values highlight safety and inclusion as core values and expectations of students, staff and parents to adhere to these values is incorporated into our curriculum and daily processes.
- Communication channels have been developed and are used to highlight the important of the schools core values and celebrate positive behaviours by all members of the school community. These include the school website, newsletter, Compass Newsfeed, Compass Chronicle, award ceremonies.
- Thornbury High School is recognised as a DET Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships School. The school has an action plan in place to continually develop its inclusive approach to all members of its community.
- Attendance procedures and strategies to effectively monitor, communicate and improve student absences and lateness to school.
- Analysis of and response to, student data in a variety of areas including attendance, Attitudes to school surveys, Bullying Survey, assessments, chronicle posts, detentions, suspensions.
- Delivery of a broad curriculum and pathway options for students including VCE, VCAL, VET and electives programs to ensure students choose subjects that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- Large range of extra-curricular opportunities available to students throughout the school years including:

Sport: approximately five representative sporting opportunities available to every student per term, plus our Year 7-10 boys and girls Soccer Academy and Girls Football Academy.

Performing Arts: School Production, VCE Theatre Production, Drama, Theatre Club

Music: instrumental music for all year 7+8 students, multiple bands

- Student opportunities to provide feedback on school decisions and specifically on Respectful Relationships and Child Safety. Examples: school captains, year level captains, Student Representative Council, peer support leaders, annual bullying survey, annual Attitudes to School Survey.
- Year-Level Team are a large investment by the school, with Leading Teachers (Head of Year) and two coordinators to monitor and develop the pastoral care of students.
- Access to Student Wellbeing Coordinator, school mental health practitioners, school nurse and visiting counsellors for all students via self, family or staff referral processes.

### **Targeted strategies to promote positive behaviour**

- Transitional program for all year 7 students to ensure an effective move to high school, including:
  - Primary school visits prior to starting high school by the Year 7 Team.
  - Large data collection on all students in order to develop academic, social and emotional supports for all students.
  - Orientation program aimed at familiarising students with school processes and expectations.
  - Peer Support Program allows a specific group of trained year 10 students to support year 7 students.
- Processes are in place to celebrate positive behaviours by students in a number of ways including reports, CATs, Compass chronicle posts, house points, year level assemblies and awards ceremonies.
- Year 7-10 students undertake a health education program each week with a focus on teaching specific personal, social and emotional wellbeing skills.
- Year 11-12 students undertake a personal wellbeing program each fortnight designed to further develop personal, social and emotional wellbeing skills.
- Year 10 students undertake work experience, supported by their Health teacher and the Careers Team.
- Year 9 students undertake the Morrisby Careers test to determine personal interests, strengths and possible career pathways.
- Connection with Koorie students via the Koorie Program assists indigenous students at various stages of their schooling through Wirripanda Foundation and Deadly Choices Program.
- Year 8 Mentoring Program targets specific students to assist with their personal development and provide targeted role models for these students.
- Staff Respectful Relationships Committee developed to provide ongoing assessment of the school vision, policies and procedures and ensure an inclusive and appropriate approach.
- Year 10-12 students are assisted to develop a Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) plan, with targeted goals based on specific data to assist them in creating effective career goals.

### **Individual strategies to promote positive behaviour**

- Effective data collection through transition and enrolment processes to identify students at risk and in possible need of support at an early stage.
- Monitoring and responding to individual student data such as attendance, Attitudes to school survey, Bullying survey.
- Fostering a culture of support and sensitivity to changes in a student circumstances or wellbeing.
- Referral of students of concern to Year Level Team, student Wellbeing Team.
- Student participation in mediations and restorative practices following incidents where relationships have broken down.
- Individual Compass Chronicle documentation of incidents, concerns and referrals to allow tracking of student wellbeing over time.

### **Bullying & Harassment**

Thornbury High School has zero tolerance of bullying and of harassment in any form.

The wellbeing of every child at the school is our highest priority. We acknowledge our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety. We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments. We recognise that developing a child safe environment is an ongoing process and will not be achieved in the short term. Implementing the Child Safe Standards requires an ongoing commitment. It will not be achieved in one activity or exercise.

- We:
- take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing
  - consistently respond to all incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school and ensure that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents
  - ensure that support is provided to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
  - provide regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents or caregivers about the management of incidents
  - address cyber bullying as part of our Internet / Social Media Policy

The school encourages all children to speak up when bullying or harassment is encountered.

- Advice to students:
- If you see another person being bullied or harassed, tell the person that you saw the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. If your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.
  - Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.
  - Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

**Aboriginal Students and Students from Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds**

The school understands that for Aboriginal people, culture is about family networks, Elders and ancestors. It is about relationships, languages, dance, ceremony and heritage. Culture is about spiritual connection to lands and waters. It is the way stories are passed on and knowledge given to babies and children. It is how people are greeted. It is looking for connection. It is about all the parts that bind us together.

The school recognises that creating a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture is an important first step. Symbols and images that surround a place send an important message about respect. By acknowledging the Country in which the school is located, we are demonstrating our willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures. As part of the policy review process, the school will consider whether or not 'Acknowledgement of Country' should form part of its ceremonies.

The school's Anti-Discrimination Policy describes our commitment to providing teaching and learning environments that are free from discrimination in all forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexuality and religion. Anti-discrimination extends to the school's dress code so that children are treated equally with the rights of individual children balanced against the best interests of the school community as a whole when developing and implementing their dress codes.

**4. Behavioural Expectations and Rights and Responsibilities of the School Community**

**Rights and Responsibilities of Students**

Rights	Responsibilities
Students have a right to:	Students have a responsibility to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition</li> <li>participate fully in the school's educational program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.</li> <li>demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.</li> <li>as students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater 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.</li> </ul>
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### Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Rights	Responsibilities
Parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged	Parents/carers have a responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours.</li> <li>ensure their child's regular attendance</li> <li>engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning.</li> <li>support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.</li> </ul>

### Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
Teachers have a right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment</li> <li>be informed, within privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student</li> </ul>	Teachers have a responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy.</li> <li>know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.</li> <li>know the content they teach.</li> <li>know their students.</li> <li>plan and assess for effective learning.</li> <li>create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.</li> <li>use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.</li> </ul>

### Discipline and Behaviour Management

Positive and responsible student behaviour is essential to the smooth running of the school, to the achievement of optimal learning opportunities, and to the development of a supportive and cooperative school environment. Policies and procedures relating to the discipline of students are based on principles of procedural fairness.

Schoolwide rules	Record in chronicle
1. <b>Learning</b>	
Consistently not following a teacher's instruction	1. Teacher follows Discipline procedure (Warning, Separate, Isolate; Teacher detention issued ). 2. Exit to coordinator- School detention issued
2. <b>Bullying/Harassment</b>	

	Please refer to Bullying/Harassment policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension and mediation</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Safety</b>	
	Violence towards others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension and mediation</li> </ul>
	Dangerous behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exit to coordinator- school detention</li> <li>School detention or suspension</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Abusive language</b>	
	Swearing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warning,</li> <li>School detention,</li> <li>Saturday detention,</li> <li>Suspension</li> </ol>
5.	<b>Punctuality</b>	
	Late to classes	<p>A Student late to Period 1 must have a Late Pass from an Attendance officer.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher to ensure student is marked late on the roll</li> <li>School detention after 3 unexplained lates (per term)</li> <li>Saturday detention after 6 unexplained lates (per term)</li> <li>Parent Meeting called.</li> </ol>
6.	<b>Property</b>	
	Stealing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension and counselling (police may be notified)</li> </ul>
	Graffiti/Vandalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School detention for minor graffiti,</li> <li>Suspension</li> </ul>
	Littering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean up detention</li> <li>Saturday detention</li> </ol>
7.	<b>Illegal or banned items</b>	
	Smoking (including to and from school)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School detention and notify parents</li> <li>Suspension</li> </ul>
	Having, using, sharing or selling illegal substances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify police, suspension and inquiry,</li> <li>Possible expulsion and counselling</li> </ul>
	Possessing inappropriate digital material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension.</li> <li>Police may be notified</li> <li>Wellbeing referral may be made</li> </ul>
	Aerosol cans/Energy drinks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confiscated</li> <li>School Detention</li> </ol>
	White Out/Chewing gum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confiscated</li> <li>Clean up detention</li> </ol>
8.	<b>School excursion rules</b>	
	Inappropriate behaviour on school camps, tours, sport and excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School detention or Suspension (possible ban from future activities)</li> <li>Student may be sent home at parents' cost.</li> </ul>
9.	<b>Out of bounds</b>	
	Leaving school grounds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School detention</li> <li>Saturday detention</li> </ol>
10	<b>Uniform</b>	
	Not wearing full or proper school uniform	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School detention</li> <li>Saturday detention</li> </ol>
11	<b>Headphones</b> *Unsanctioned use.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School detention</li> <li>Saturday detention</li> </ol>
	<b>School Detention</b>	

12	Students failing to comply with school rules in a Detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student exited from school detention and asked to repeat detention at a later date</li> <li>• Additional consequence given matching student behaviour</li> </ul>
	Failing to attend a School/Saturday Detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students failing to attend a school detention will receive 2 x school detentions.</li> <li>• Students failing to attend multiple detentions will receive a Saturday detention.</li> <li>• Students failing to attend a Saturday detention will receive a suspension.</li> </ul>

**\*Headphones *Learning-related exceptions***

Specific exception	Documentation (Developed by teaching staff at Thornbury High School)
For specific learning activities (class-based exception)	Unit of work, learning sequence, Compass learning task.
For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty	Individual Learning Plan, Individual Education Plan

**Guidelines for use of Thornbury High School technology**

Rule	Record in chronicle
Student misusing laptop during class time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher follows Red Exit policy (Warning, Separate, Isolate, teacher detention)</li> <li>2. Exit to coordinator- school detention</li> </ol>
Students failing to return any school owned device at the end of the school day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator notified - school detention issued.</li> </ul>
Damaging school technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exit to coordinator (school detention or suspension)</li> <li>• Parent meeting</li> <li>• Payment for repair of damage</li> </ul>
Using the laptop to access inappropriate material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exit to coordinator.</li> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Parent meeting</li> <li>• Network access may be restricted.</li> </ul>

**Guidelines for use of student-owned technology**

Laptops/devices are compulsory for students in the year 7&8 Concept program and all students in years 9&10. Students in years 11 and 12 must bring their own device to class when required by the classroom teacher, this is an equipment requirement of this class.

Students must bring fully charged devices to school as part of their classroom equipment. Bringing correct equipment to class is mandatory to create the most effective learning environment for teachers and students.

Rule	Student response	School response
Student fails to bring laptop to school	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student reports to library before school to borrow device for the day</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School can provide basic laptop for the day - Warning issued</li> <li>2. School detention</li> </ol>

	2. Student returns laptop to library at end of the day	
Student laptop has a flat battery	1. Student can charge laptop in *designated area during recess and lunch	1. School can provide basic laptop for the day - Warning issued 2. School detention
Student misusing laptop during class time		1. Teacher follows Red Exit policy (Warning, Separate, Isolate, teacher detention) 2. Exit to coordinator- school detention
Using the laptop to access inappropriate material		1. Exit to coordinator- Suspension if required 2. Parent meeting 3. Network access may be restricted.

### Guidelines for mobile phones

Refer to Mobile Phone policy for further detail.

Action	Consequences
Mobile phones are not to be used, be on or be seen in a classroom or corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Device may be confiscated*.</li> <li>● Staff member to post to Compass</li> <li>● School detention issued</li> </ul>
Using mobile phone to take photographs or video of another student at school without permission.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School detention issued</li> <li>2. Suspension</li> </ol>
Taking photos or sharing of inappropriate material at school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Suspension</li> <li>● Police notified</li> </ul>

\*A staff member may choose to confiscate a mobile phone during school hours. This staff member will make the device available for the student to collect at the end of the school day. If a staff member instructs a student to hand over a mobile phone and the student refuses to hand over the item, the relevant disciplinary provisions will apply

### Attendance

- The school has developed the mandatory prerequisite Admission and Enrolment Policies to support student attendance.
- Students are expected to attend school every day during normal school hours unless there is an approved exemption.
- The school will record attendance every period.
- The school will use Compass, CASES21, eCASES21 to record student attendance.
- Parents/carers are required to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school.
- The school will record in writing the reason (if any) given by the parent/guardian and determine if the explanation is reasonable.
- The school has a specific strategy for following up immediately when unexplained absences exceed a set number of days.
- Poor or irregular attendance will be a matter for the Student Welfare Officer or similar senior person in the school.
- The student's absences will be recorded on the Student Report Card.



## 8. Evaluation

Thornbury 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:

- attitudes to school survey data
- bullying survey data
- incidents data (Compass)
- wellbeing referral data (Compass)
- school reports
- parent survey
- CASES21
- SOCS

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

References:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx)

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/policydev.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/policydev.aspx)

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx)

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/suspensions.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/suspensions.aspx)

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/expulsion.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/expulsion.aspx)

Child Safe References:

Creating a Child Safe Organisation Guide p.16

An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards State of Victoria, DHHS November 2015  
and

Protect – Identifying All Forms of Child Abuse in Victorian Schools 2016

Persons reading this Student Engagement Policy should also refer to the school's Anti-Discrimination Policy, Attendance Policy, Bullying & Harassment Policy, Duty of Care Policy, Equal Opportunity Policy, Internet Use/Social Media Policy, Koorie Education Policy, Mobile Phones, Use by Children Policy, the Students at Risk Policy and the Child Safe Standards.

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in November 2021 and is scheduled for review in November 2022/23.