



# St. Arnaud Secondary College

## 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.

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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

St. Arnaud Secondary College is situated in St Arnaud, an old mining town, approximately 250 kms north-west of Melbourne. In 2022 it has an enrolment of 139 students.

St. Arnaud is 135 kms north-west of Ballarat on the Sunraysia Highway, midway between Bendigo and Horsham, both of which are an hour's drive. It is a rural town of approximately 2000 people, originally established as a gold mining community in the mid 1800's, but now acts as an agricultural processing and service centre for the surrounding dry land farming community. Employment in the town is dominated by semi-skilled agricultural related businesses and like most other country areas, St. Arnaud is experiencing population decline.

The College services an area with a radius of approximately 25 km's from the town, with up to 40 students travelling by bus to and from school. The nearest secondary providers are at Donald (38kms), Charlton (45kms) and Wedderburn (45kms). The school has two main feeder schools, St Arnaud Primary School and St Patrick's Primary School. There have been occasional enrolments from outlying primary schools. The school is associated with the North Central School's Cluster, a group of 8 schools which funds and operates a Cluster Centre at Charlton, the geographical centre of the area. This centre allows and offers a range of subjects, particularly in Technology and VET which none of the participating schools could offer independently. The college is also a proud member of the St. Arnaud Learning Alliance which currently comprises of St. Arnaud Primary School, St. Arnaud Early Childhood Precinct and the Northern Grampians Shire. It is this group that has worked to bring the 'Resilience Project' to St Arnaud.

The College currently has 19 teaching staff and 8 education support staff.

The College offers core curriculum at Years 7 to 9. Year 9 students also access the North Central Trade Training Centre (NCTTC) one day a week for a full year. Year 10 now aligns with Year 11 and 12 block facilitating access to VCE for Year 10 students. VET subjects are accessed through the NCTTC and VCAL is offered at Years 11 and 12. School based apprenticeships are also offered and undertaken. Senior students are counselled and supported through the College with the help of the North Central LLEN.

A range of extra-curricular programs are offered including an instrumental music program, a Year 7 to 10 camps program, Environmental Week and extensive access to a range of sports. These activities aim to support the development of social skills, teamwork and leadership which are aimed at building a sense of community and environmental awareness, as well as a heavy focus on our 'School Values' of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience.

The school takes great pride in our facilities and it has clean and well presented.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

St. Arnaud Secondary College values are:

- RESPECT – students, staff and parents show, respect for others and themselves.
- RESILIENCE – students, staff and parents develop practical wellbeing strategies to build resilience
- RESPONSIBILITY - students, staff and parents take responsibility for their actions and learning.

“Strive High, Then Higher”

The College values excellence in teaching and learning, which provides for equity, challenges and satisfies all students.

The principles that will underpin our approach will be the engagement of students in their learning and lifelong strategies by using innovative thinking and inquiry-based learning in real life situations.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <https://www.starnaudsc.vic.edu.au>

**Corporal punishment is prohibited at St. Arnaud Secondary College and will not be used in any circumstance.**

## 3. Engagement strategies

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at St. Arnaud Secondary College use an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons

- teachers at St. Arnaud Secondary College 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
- 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 and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school athletics, and buddy support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Year Group 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 positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Resilience Project
  - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs, respectful relationships, leadership)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. SRC, sports teams, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

### Targeted

- each year group has a Homegroup teacher and Year Group Coordinator, 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
- St. Arnaud Secondary College 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

Links to information on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library such as:

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan when required
- 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
  - 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**

St. Arnaud Secondary College is fully aware of its responsibilities under the **Child Safe Standards** – Ministerial Order 870 - effective from August 1 2016, and will take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of children.

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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. St. Arnaud Secondary College 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:

- Be valued and be treated with respect
- 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.

Students have the responsibility to:

- regulate their own behaviour
- 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**

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

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 St. Arnaud Secondary College's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, St. Arnaud Secondary College 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
- Withdrawal from class
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension both internal and external
- 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 St. Arnaud Secondary College is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.*

#### Agreed discipline procedures that teachers may use:

- “Three strikes you are out.”
  - The student who breaks class rules on three separate occasions is to be removed from the classroom.
  - The student should not be left outside the classroom, without consideration of ‘duty of care’ issues.
- Student sent to YLC/SMC:
  - The student is escorted by another student to the Year Level Coordinator with a Performa outlining incident.
  - The class teacher may send a student with a Performa to the YLC / AP / P requesting assistance in extreme cases. If YLC unavailable, student sent to AP / P.
  - The class teacher should complete a written report for the YLC. This should include events leading to the exiting of the student from the class, including both the actions of the student, and the management strategies employed by the teacher.



- If the student refuses to leave the classroom:
  - Send another student to get assistance from YLC / AP / P or any other teacher in the staffroom.
  - If the student poses a danger to the class, escort the class from the room, and send a student for assistance.
- Steps for the Re-entry of a student to the classroom:
  - The YLC, teacher and student must meet out of class time and negotiate the return of the student.
  - The YLC will monitor the re-entry of a student to the classroom, and document that this has happened.
  - The YLC will monitor repeat offences and alert the AP / P of when they occur.
  - If the student refuses to discuss the behaviour, arrangements will be made for the student to enter Time Out.
  - Where Occupational Health and Safety issues are involved, the student will only be permitted to return to class on the signing of a contract.
- Re-offending Students
  - When a student is sent to the YLC for a second time, the YLC or AP / P will contact parents, as the College recognises the importance of parental involvement in the modification of student behaviour.
  - The AP will make arrangements for the student to enter Time Out, if deemed appropriate.
  - YLC and AP/P discuss each case individually, and a decision will be made including but not limited to, whether the student is placed in "Time Out", suspended, or parents requested to collect the student from school. This will vary, depending on the circumstances.
- Offensive / Threatening Language
  - Mandatory Time Out or Suspension will occur when the student swears, with intent, at a teacher or another student.
- Out of class inappropriate behaviour
  - Incidents in the school ground should be reported to the YLC initially.

## **7. Engaging with families**

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 all families have a College staff mentor
- 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**

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 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/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

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

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

School related Policies - <https://www.starnaudsc.vic.edu.au>

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	April 2022
Consultation	Student Representative Council Staff School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date - note that the recommended minimum review cycle for this policy is 1 to 2 years	2024