



# Nossal High School

## Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



### HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Nossal High School on 03 8762 4600 or [nossal.hs@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:nossal.hs@education.vic.gov.au).

### 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.

Nossal 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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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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### POLICY

#### 1. School Profile

Nossal High School opened in 2010 and is part of the Select Entry Network of government schools. Nossal High School is located in a significant growth area on the south-eastern edge of Melbourne within the City of Casey Education Hub on the Federation University Campus site at Berwick.

The school is fully academically selective and has been purpose designed to provide a flexible and stimulating adult learning environment with access to state-of-the-art facilities and an ICT rich platform allowing for collaboration, independence and extension. The school is uniquely sited on the grounds of Federation University allowing for sharing of facilities, joint programs and partnership arrangements.

Berwick railway station is a short walk from the school and public bus services traverse Clyde Road.

The school has a co-educational enrolment maximum of 832 students in Years 9 to 12 (208 per year level).

Enrolment in this school is through a standard selection process applicable to all four government selective entry schools. The selection process involves an examination which is overseen by VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority) and takes place in June of the preceding year. Applications for enrolment at the school will be open from February to May to all students in (the equivalent of) Year 8 in both government and non-government schools. A maximum of 5% of the Year 8 cohort in any school can be allocated places in Year 9 at selective entry schools. Merit selection of 85% of the students is on the basis of the centralised and independently administered entrance examination. Secondary selection criteria will see the other 15% of eligible students allocated places, 10% through demonstrable equity criteria and 5% at the discretion of the school. A preference system is in place for students applying for more than one of the select entry schools.

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

Nossal High School is committed to being an innovative, inclusive and dynamic educational environment. We challenge ourselves to be creative and critical thinkers with good communication skills and the resilience necessary to succeed in an ever-changing world. We build skills, self-confidence, leadership abilities and community spirit through a rigorous, rich and varied curricular and co-curricular program. We want our graduates to be ambitious, ethical and responsible citizens who conduct themselves with humility and compassion.

Nossal is a school that:

- Leads and develops leadership
- Creates and cultivates creativity
- Is respectful and fosters respectful citizenship
- Inspires and seeks inspiration
- Is ethical and develops ethical behaviours
- Pursues excellence and celebrates individual progress
- Develops resilience and independence and nurtures wellbeing
- Encourages a strong work ethic with an emphasis on personal growth

## **3. Engagement strategies**

Nossal High School 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.

The whole of school strategies which promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- Consistent and high expectations of all staff, students and parents/carers and members of the community
- Prioritising positive relationships between staff and students through the implementation of a strong vertical Tutorial structure and delivery of consistent Nossal Time programs (Whole School and 9Time), recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- Maintaining a vertical Tutorial structure whereby tutorial staff remain (where possible) with their tutorial group for the four years at Nossal High School
- Creating a school culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive through whole school events including student and community led whole school assemblies that celebrate success and promote a respectful, cohesive and positive Nossal community
- Providing opportunities for parents/carers to partner with the school in supporting their students' learning through special events including the Year 9 Meet and Greet evening, Parent Student Teacher Conferences, Open Nights, Foundation Assembly and communication platforms including Compass, email and phone contact.
- Transparent analysis and response to a range of school data relating to attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data led by the Executive Leadership Team, Wellbeing Team and teaching/Education Support staff.
- Catering for highly able students who are aspiring to academic and tertiary pathways through the consistent and transparent application of the NHS Acceleration Policy, enabling students to choose subjects and

programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.

- Use of the Nossal High School Instructional Framework to ensure teaching staff have a shared model of instruction that is evidenced-based and incorporates high yield teaching practices
- Adoption of 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 and AITSL (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers)
- Key underpinnings of the Nossal High School Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy being fully incorporated into the curriculum structure and promoted to students, staff and parents/carers so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- Carefully planned transition programs which support students moving into different stages of their schooling including Orientation Day, iWeek, Camps, the Careers and Pathways Program, Nossal Time, 9Time and the Commencement program
- Acknowledgement of positive behaviours and student achievement through the awarding of points towards the Sir Gustav Nossal Medallion encouraging student involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Acknowledgement of positive behaviours and student achievement in the classroom, and more formally in school assemblies and through communication to parents (for example Compass posts, Academic Award Certificates mid-year, Speech Night, House Awards)
- Monitoring of student attendance and implementation of attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level as advised in the NHS Attendance Policy.
- Active encouragement of Student Voice at Nossal High School through the Student Representative Council, contributing to and providing feedback on decisions about school operations through forums.
- Encouragement of students to speak with all staff particularly their tutorial teachers, Head of House, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through vertical Tutorial group structure, Year 9 Peer Mentoring, School Production, Inter-house sporting events (athletics, cross country, swimming, House Performing Arts Festival) and music programs
- Supporting students experiencing difficulty in relating to others or with specific issues, to seek advice and assistance from any member of staff including their Tutorial teacher, Head of House or the Student Wellbeing Counsellors. Students have the opportunity to anonymously seek support for themselves or others using the “Report a Concern” function on Teams. Parents/carers are also encouraged to make appointments to support their student’s learning, engagement and wellbeing.
- Developing curriculum, supported by programs including Respectful Relationships, eSmart, Bully Stoppers, Safe Schools, which focuses on student engagement and strengthening the relationships between our staff and students
- Providing extensive opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sporting teams, clubs, instrumental music program)

The targeted (year group specific) strategies which promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- a Year Level Coordinator responsible for the oversight and management of key events specific to the year level which promote positive behaviour and inclusion
  - Year 9: City Week, iWeek
  - Year 10: Work Experience
  - Year 11: Formal, School Jackets, Mock Interviews
  - Year 12: Formal, Final Assembly, End of Year activity
- support in career planning and the development of a Career Action Plan specific to all students (Year 9-12), including targeted goals and action plans for their future
- the provision of support for Koorie students by a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) as determined by NHS
- an appointed Learning Mentor for all out-of-home-care students, and an Individual Learning Plan which may include referral to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment as required
- the distribution of relevant information to Year 10 students during Camps and Pathways Week (March) relating to Work Experience and Work Safe Modules, along with assistance to students in planning their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- annual Professional Learning for the Wellbeing Team and all teaching staff to build their capacity in the areas of health promotion and social skills development for the effective delivery of Social Emotional Learning

- capability curriculum during Nossal Time and in response to the needs identified by student wellbeing data
- staff participation in trauma-informed Professional development to support their work with students who have experienced trauma

The individual engagement strategies which promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- building constructive relationships with all students
- Identifying students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances through the effective and school wide use of Compass Chronicle entries based on attendance and/or wellbeing concerns
- providing opportunity to meet with the 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 in appropriate circumstances to support the student in addressing their engagement or wellbeing concerns
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring identified students to:
  - Student Wellbeing Counsellor
  - 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 a plan to address this in collaboration with the student and their family
- running Student Support Group meetings for 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**

Nossal High School encourages all students to reach their full potential by providing them with challenging educational experiences within an environment that develops the student physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially.

The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to identify students in need of support and to enhance student wellbeing. The Wellbeing Team in conjunction with the Principal Class Team and all staff at Nossal High School cater for the health and wellbeing needs of all students.

Nossal High School uses the following information 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 monitored by the Tutorial teacher and subject teacher
- academic performance as informed by assessment processes and reports each term
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- Nossal Service Duty and suspension data, as appropriate
- Documentation referring to 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, free

from harassment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Nossal High School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education and have the right to equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- to be supported in times of need
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- be committed to the Nossal High School Vision and Values
- ensure that NHS is a child safe environment and actively promoting the safety and wellbeing of all students.
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community in alignment with the NHS Bullying Prevention Policy, specifically not engaging in any form of verbal or physical harassment or discrimination against any member of the school regardless of gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, culture or religion
- work collaboratively to create a school environment where respectful and safe behaviour is expected of everyone
- model positive behaviour to other students
- behave in a safe and responsible manner which may include but is not limited to:
  - not climbing on school buildings or furniture
  - walking and not running in corridors or near buildings
  - not playing ball games inside buildings, except for the gym when directed
  - ensure that digital technologies are used effectively, safely and responsibly in accordance with the NHS Digital Technologies Policy
  - not leaving classrooms or the school premises without permission in accordance with the NHS Attendance Policy
  - not riding bicycles, skateboards etc. within the school grounds
  - not possessing or using cigarettes, alcohol or other illegal drugs at school or while travelling to or from school
- respect ourselves, other members of the school community and the school environment including:
  - not littering, graffiti and other forms of vandalism
  - not stealing or borrowing the property of others without permission
  - leaving classrooms neat and tidy
  - not chewing gum
  - leaving bags and other personal items locked in your locker
- actively participate in school by:
  - being punctual to class
  - attending all set classes
  - seeking additional help from teachers when required
  - completing all set classwork and home study to the best of their ability
  - regularly checking Teams each day to be informed of relevant communication and activities
  - bringing all necessary equipment to class.
  - attending and actively participating in all school events and activities
- not disrupt the learning of others and make the most of our educational opportunities by respecting the rights of the teacher to teach and the students to learn
- comply with the School Council decision on Dress code, all students must wear neat, correct school uniform (NHS Dress Code Policy).
- comply with the Department of Education and Training (DET) regulations all students must obey any lawful instruction of the Principal or teachers.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents/carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

Parents/carers and students are welcome to make appointments directly with their Head of House, the Director of House and Wellbeing or the Student Wellbeing Counsellors.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently in alignment with the Nossal High School Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the Conduct and Expectations of our school community as outlined in the NHS Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy, the school will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's [Student Engagement Policy](#).

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. All inappropriate behaviours must be logged on Compass chronicle and resolved.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- consequences determined by the teacher such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff
- referral to the Head of House, Director of House and Wellbeing or Student Wellbeing Counsellors
- restorative justice sessions
- Nossal Service Duty
- behaviour reviews and contracts
- suspension
- 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 Nossal High School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

## 7. Engaging with families

Nossal High School values the input of parents/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/carers in our school community.

We create successful partnerships with parents/carers by:

- ensuring that all parents/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website

- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff
- providing parent/carer volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities (Orientation Day, Uniform Shop, Foundation Assembly etc)
- involving families in school decision making through the forums of School Council, the Parent and Friend Association and Parent Opinion Surveys
- including families in conversations concerning their student and their academic performance, wellbeing concerns and attendance issues and developing action plans to support students.

## 8. Evaluation

Nossal 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:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS
- COMPASS reports
- Wellbeing Team records re students of concern

Nossal High School 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 and on TEAMS
- Included in transition and enrolment packs and on TEAMS
- Included in the student handbook so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

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

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Nov 4 2021
Consultation	School Council Nov 23 2021; PFA Dec 1 2021; SRC Nov 26 2021; Wellbeing Nov 9 2021
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before November 2023

## APPENDIX A: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

Restorative Justice means that when things go wrong, we need to:

- Involve those responsible for and those affected by the behaviour in solving the problem
- Provide support to all parties
- Give strong messages about what is acceptable and unacceptable.

### Restorative dialogue

There are six stages to such a dialogue:

1. **Engagement:** both parties are invited into the dialogue
2. **Reflection:** encourages thoughtfulness and empathy
3. **Understanding** how people have been affected, i.e., that harm was done or hurt caused
4. **Acknowledgement** of the harm or hurt and possible apology
5. **Agreement** on making a plan to fix things
6. **Arranging a follow-up** to make sure the plan is working

### Restorative conversation questions

To the person(s) who caused harm:

- We're here to talk about...
- Can you tell us what happened?
- What were you thinking? What was in your head/in your mind?
- Was it the right thing/wrong thing to do?
- Who has been affected/upset/harmed by your actions?
- In what ways?
- How has this affected you?

To the person(s) harmed:

- What did you think when it happened?
- What have you thought about since?
- How has it affected/upset/hurt/harmed you?
- What has been the worst thing?
- What is needed to make it right/to make you feel better?

To the person who caused harm:

- Is that fair? Can you do that? What else do you need to do to make things better? How can you fix this?
- To the person harmed:
- Is that ok? Do you agree?
- Is that fair?

To both:

- How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?
- Is there anything I can do to help?
- Is there anything else you would like to say?

*Formally record agreement/congratulate them for working it out. Arrange time to follow up/meet again to see how things are going and whether progress has been made.*