



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.

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, where student participation is encouraged and valued, 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.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
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7. Engaging with families
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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 the 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 4% of the Year 8 cohort in any school can be allocated places in Year 9 at selective entry schools (10% for P–9 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. Wellbeing and 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.

Universal

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

- Consistent and high expectations of all staff, students, parents/carers and members of the community
- Creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive

- 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. In the case of changes to the tutorial staff, student leaders will mentor and support the junior students.
- Creating an inclusive, engaging, and supportive school culture through whole-school events, including student and community-led assemblies that celebrate success and promote a respectful, cohesive, and positive Nossal community.
- Create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- 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 Learning Model to ensure teaching staff have a shared model of instruction that is evidence-based and incorporates high-yield teaching practices. Agentic learning is central to the model, which encourages students to set goals, make choices, and take ownership of their learning journey. This approach fosters deeper learning, increased engagement, and better preparation for lifelong learning.
- 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 Programs, 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, Head of House Advisor Committee and membership on School Council, year group meetings, contributing to and providing feedback on decisions about school operations through forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their

teachers, Heads of House, Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.

- 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.
- 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
- 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
- Program, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific need or behaviour
- Providing extensive opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sporting teams, clubs, instrumental music program)

Targeted

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

- The Director of the Middle School and VCE is responsible for the oversight and management of key events specific to the year level, which promote positive behaviour and inclusion
- Year 9: Nossal Extended Research Project (NERD Project), iWeek
- Year 10: Work Experience, Proactive programs that focus on student interest such as Study Sensei and also study skills programs which are supported by Nossal Alumni
- 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 based on reflective activities, individual Morrisby reports and access to careers counselling
- the provision of support for Koorie students by a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) as determined by NHS in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- the early identification of EAL students as part of their transition into Year 9, in order to facilitate their ongoing support throughout their studies.
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ through the provision of staff and counselling support for the school’s student-led QSA, and through whole school acknowledgement of diversity and inclusion such as the celebration of IDAHOBIT, Wear it Purple. We follow the Department’s policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#).
- an appointed Learning Mentor for all out-of-home-care students, and an Individual Education Plan which may include referral to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment as required
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans. Attempts will be made to apply for Disability Inclusion Profile funding in consultation with students and parents.

- 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. Number of Nossal staff are trained in the Berry Street Trauma Informed Modules; these strategies are implemented within the classrooms as needed. There are a number of staff who also have completed the Mental Health First Aid Course.

Individual

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 within the context of formal [Student Support Groups](#), [Individual Education Plans](#) and through other invitations extended by members of the Wellbeing Team
- Developing an [Individual Education Plan](#), Attendance Plan, Return to School Plan and/or a [Behaviour Support Plan](#) in appropriate circumstances to support the student in addressing their engagement or wellbeing concerns
- Nossal High School 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 a student and their parents/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
 - Developing an Individual Education Plan, Attendance Plan, Return to School Plan, Behaviour Management Plan and/or a Risk Management Plan
 - Considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example, changing the classroom set up
- Referring identified students to:
 - Student-based wellbeing supports
 - [Student Support Services](#)
- The Department's [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
 - 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](#)
 - Other mental health supports drawn from the [Mental health toolkit](#)

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
- with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring
 - as well as to other Department programs and services such as:
 - [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
 - [Mental health toolkit](#)
 - [headspace](#)
 - [Navigator](#)
 - [LOOKOUT](#)

4. Identifying students in need of support

Nossal High School 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Nossal High School 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:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- 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.

Our Complaints Policy provides further information about raising a complaint or concern.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy

Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy

Racism will be managed in accordance with our [Addressing and Preventing Racism policy](#)

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Nossal High School 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 implements positive and restorative practices, which are 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
- referral to the Head of House
- restorative practices
- Nossal Service Duties or detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- 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 by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

7. Engaging with families

Nossal High School 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 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

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
- incident data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- mental health practitioner data
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

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

Under the VRQA's Guidelines to the Minimum Standards for School Registration, schools are required to have *evidence* of how they communicate this policy to staff, students, parents, guardians and the school community. One way of producing this evidence is to include this Communication section in the policy. An alternative or additional method is to list all your school's policies in a spreadsheet and outline the communication method your school uses next to each policy.

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.

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](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2025
Consultation	School Council, June 2025 Nossal Newsletter: July 2025
Approved by	Tracey Mackin, Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2027