



HIGH EXPECTATIONS NO EXCUSES

Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policies

**CASTERTON SECONDARY COLLEGE IS COMPLIANT WITH
THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS**

**CASTERTON SECONDARY COLLEGE IS COMMITTED TO DIVERSITY
THROUGH A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR SCHOOL
COMMUNITY**

**CASTERTON SECONDARY COLLEGE IS COMMITTED TO CREATING A
SCHOOL COMMUNITY WHERE ALL MEMBERS OF OUR SCHOOL
COMMUNITY ARE WELCOMED, ACCEPTED AND TREATED EQUITABLY
AND WITH RESPECT REGARDLESS OF THEIR BACKGROUNDS OR
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES SUCH AS RACE, LANGUAGE, RELIGIOUS
BELIEFS, GENDER IDENTITY, DISABILITY OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION
INCLUDING THE NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER CHILDREN SO THAT THEY CAN PARTICIPATE, ACHIEVE
AND THRIVE AT SCHOOL**

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

Updated 16/2/21

Ratified by School Council: 15/3/21

Review date: 2023

Respect - Accountability - Persistence

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

Casterton 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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1. School profile

Casterton Secondary College was opened on its current site in 1955 and is nestled in a picturesque valley surrounded by rolling red gum hills. The Glenelg River meanders through the township. Casterton is 353km. west of Melbourne and is approximately 70 km. from Hamilton and Mt. Gambier. Casterton Secondary College services the needs and provides opportunities for the people of Strathdownie, Dergholm, Coleraine, Merino and Casterton.

We have 120 students enrolled from Year 7 to 12 and 30 school staff members including a school nurse and sub-school leaders.

Our school grounds are extensive and well maintained, providing an inviting environment to the College community and visitors. Our students come predominantly from rural or related backgrounds; there are low levels of students born overseas and very few students of Koori background.

Casterton Secondary College has developed close ties to the local community, and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School vision, values and philosophy

Vision

Our school's vision is to achieve the best academic outcomes for all students, with a focus on promoting responsibility for the acquisition of skills, knowledge and positive personal qualities through a dynamic learning environment that engages students and prepares them for their future.

Values

Respect – for self, consideration for others, consideration for the environment, consideration for other's views and cultural differences and empathy

Accountability – taking responsibility for all our actions, learning and decisions.

Persistence – Pursuing excellence through focus and concentration, curiosity, tenacity and endurance. – Underpins internal motivation and life- long learning.

Philosophy

Casterton Secondary College's moral purpose is to prepare students to contend with a very dynamic 21st century in which creativity, cooperative work, connectedness to the world and adaptability are key features. The school aspires to provide a contemporary approach to teaching and learning in its purposeful learning environment.

The school values of respect, accountability and persistence sit at the centre of our work and complement the school's belief in high expectations of all students and a commitment to hard work.

The programs of, and teaching in, the school will support and promote the principles and practices of Australian democracy including a commitment to:

- An elected government.
- The rule of law.
- Equal rights for all before the law.
- Freedom of religion.
- Freedom of speech and association.
- The values of openness and tolerance.

Statements which affirm the school's principles and values are found on the school website, in the vision of the school and in policies.

Mantra

High Expectations – No Excuses

3. Engagement strategies

Casterton 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 Casterton Secondary College use the school's Instructional Model and associated frameworks to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction that is evidenced-based, and incorporates high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Casterton 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 Student Voice and other forums including PLC staff and School Council meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Sub-School Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the School Nurse, Sub-School Leaders, Assistant Principal and the 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 Restorative Practices
- assist with the development of a positive self-image
- encourage a positive attitude towards involvement in community affairs and acceptance of a responsible role as a member of society in the peer group, the local community, the Australian community, and the global community
- provide opportunity for students to develop their academic, social and physical potential (i.e. sports teams, clubs, and recess/lunchtime activities).
- expose the students to the range of ethical, moral, cultural and social values and standards of society.
- regularly unpack the school values of Respect, Accountability and Persistence.

Targeted

- each year group has a Sub-School Leader, home group teacher/s responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of those students, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- all students from Year 7-12 engage in a careers program and 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 Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Casterton Secondary College assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by the Careers Coordinator
- relevant 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

Casterton 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
- 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 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

Casterton Secondary College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing and Leadership teams play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies that help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Casterton 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, teachers etc

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, 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
- uphold our school values of Respect, Accountability and Persistence

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 member of the school leadership team.

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 with Casterton Secondary College's Bullying & Harassment Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Casterton Secondary College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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 relevant Sub-School Leader
- restorative practices

- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion
- removal / suspension from work placements

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

7. Engaging with families

Casterton 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 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
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with 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

Casterton 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, SOCS, DHHS, Child First.

Casterton Secondary College Bullying & Harassment Policy

Casterton Secondary College recognises the right of all students and staff to feel safe within the school environment.

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons. (Rigby 1996).

Harassment

Harassment is negative behaviour displayed by one person/s to another on the basis of differences. Differences may include: gender; race; cultural/religious beliefs; sexual orientation; ability/disability and socio-economic status.

Examples

Physical

Verbal

Extortion

Visual

Exclusion

Sexual

Racial

Cyber

Aims of the policy

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with staff, students and parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To provide a clear framework for both students and staff around the management of bullying issues within the school.
- To outline the primary prevention programs and initiatives conducted by the school to enhance student and staff safety and wellbeing.

a. Raising awareness / prevention programs

ACTIVITY	YEAR LEVEL	RESPONSIBILITY
Policy explained/reviewed at the beginning of each new year	All	Home Group Teachers via the Student Planner & at assemblies
Year 7 students to participate in the Tolerance and Respect Program	7	Nurse
Student relationship matters discussed at weekly Welfare & Discipline team meetings, and Leadership meetings	All	Welfare & Discipline team
Policy to be distributed to parents annually through the school newsletter	All	Admin.
Policy presented to new staff as part of new staff induction program		Assistant Principal
Respectful relationship awareness posters to be placed in prominent places around the school	All	Nurse
Bullying Audit to be conducted annually	All	Student Attitudes to School Survey
Articles aimed at raising awareness of relationship issues will be included in school newsletter as the need arises	All	Nurse

b. Commitment to students

- Casterton Secondary College staff will take all reported incidents of bullying seriously.
- All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated.
- The person displaying bullying behaviours will be spoken to and may be subject to the discipline procedure as outlined in this document.
- All students who have reported incidents of bullying will be contacted over the weeks following the incident to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

c. Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of bullying behaviour

- Wherever possible, incidents of bullying behaviour occurring within the classroom will be managed by the classroom teacher and reported to the relevant sub school leader.
- All incidents requiring follow-up or further intervention will be reported to the Sub-school Leaders or the Assistant Principal.
- Where either students or a staff member believes that a student requires support student will be referred to the relevant sub-school leader.
- All incidents of bullying are to be reported to the appropriate person as soon as possible after the incident occurs (yard duty teacher, front office, sub-school leader, AP, or Principal).

d. Procedures for dealing with students who have been involved in a bullying incident

- All students involved in an incident will be interviewed. This includes the student being bullied, the student/s bullying and students who may have witnessed the incident.
- Where it is established that a bullying incident has occurred the Principal, Assistant Principal and/or the relevant Sub-School Leader will apply any or all of the following consequences:
 - Parents of both parties will be informed of the incident.
 - Students may receive lunchtime detentions.
 - Students may receive either an in school or out of school suspension for 1 – 5 days depending on the severity of the incident.
 - Parents have the right to approach the Police in situations where they believe a criminal act involving bullying or harassment has occurred.

Child Safe Policy

Casterton Secondary College has developed and maintains a culture of zero tolerance towards child abuse. Casterton Secondary College recognises a responsibility to comply with Ministerial Order 870.

Aims of the policy

To ensure that all Casterton Secondary College students are safe and protected from child abuse in all school environments, during and outside school hours. The policy recognises the diversity of all children including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

Implementation of Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safety

At Casterton Secondary College we believe Child Safety encompasses matters related to:

- protecting all children from child abuse
- managing the risk of child abuse
- providing support to a child at risk of child abuse
- responding in an appropriate manner to incidents, allegations or reports of child abuse

At Casterton Secondary College Ministerial Order 870 is implemented through familiarisation and adherence to the policies and procedures listed below in accordance with PROTECT: Protecting children and young people from abuse is our responsibility:

- This Child Safe policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Child Abuse in Victorian Schools
- Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse – Four critical actions
- The Welfare committee consisting of the Principal (Mrs. Walker), Assistant Principal (Mr. Webb), Senior School Leader (Miss Newell), Middle School Leader (Mrs. Barton), School Nurse (Miss Kelleway) oversee Child Safety.

The following policies also exist to support Child Safety at Casterton Secondary College:

- Accident Incident reporting procedures
- Risk Assessment
- Anaphylaxis policy
- Bullying and Harassment policy and procedures
- Care arrangements for ill students
- Communication of school policies, procedures and schedules policy
- Critical incident plan
- Distribution of Medication policy and procedures
- Electronic Devices policy
- Emergency Management Plan
- Emergency prevention check list
- 1st Aid policy and procedures
- Excursions policy and procedures
- ICT Acceptable Use policy
- Inclusion and Diversity policy
- Mandatory Reporting policy and procedures
- Student Inclusion and Engagement policy
- Student Health policy
- Student Welfare policy and procedures
- Supervision and Duty of care policy

A comprehensive New Staff Induction program ensures that staff, new to Casterton Secondary College, are familiar with the above policies and procedures.

Programs are run by Health teachers, Home Group teachers as part of our Extended Home Group program, Outside Agencies to promote student safety, student rights and responsibilities, student empowerment and participation.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Casterton Secondary College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Casterton Secondary College will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Casterton Secondary College will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes

- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances

Discipline Policy

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES are embedded into our school community. Restorative Practices focus on repairing the damage caused and restoring relationships between student/student and student/teacher.

An indication of the approach to discipline being used

- The following beliefs guide our approach:
- Consistency and fairness, always taking into account the reasons for a student's misbehaviour.
- The student, teacher and/or sub-school leader should work together towards a solution to a problem situation involving parents when appropriate.
- It is important to find long term solutions to ongoing behavioural problems.
- Raising awareness of what the student is doing wrong, why it is wrong and the consequences of their actions on themselves and others.
- The use of a process of mediation and resolution rather than imposing sanctions.
- Positive reinforcement should be given to improve self-esteem eg. Sports awards, academic awards, reward certificates, acknowledgement of student achievement in newsletter, Casterton News, at assemblies etc.
- Students must be prepared to accept responsibility for their actions.

An indication of the sanctions being used

When a discipline problem occurs, options available to teachers include:

- Referral to Senior and Middle School Leaders
- Establishment of behavioural and harassment agreements
- Detention for unacceptable behaviour occurring outside the classroom and within the classroom for behaviour which does not result in being removed from the class.
- Students may be placed at the back of a small senior class to facilitate the exclusion of students when classroom behaviour warrants this. Withdrawal from classes is another option which may be employed.
- Restorative conferences with individual students and teachers or with a whole class would occur before sanctions are applied.
- Extreme cases may result in suspension, inquiry or removal from the school within Department of Education and Training guidelines.
- ***Corporal punishment is prohibited.***

In class discipline procedures

- Each teacher will discuss with students of the class, rules under which the class will operate
- If a student breaks a rule(s) the teacher may:
 - remind the student that the behaviour is against the rules
 - shift the student to another part of the room (isolate if possible)
 - conduct a Restorative conference with the student at end of class
 - run a lunchtime or recess detention
 - involve the relevant Educational Leader in the Restorative conference
 - refer the student to a small senior class to facilitate the exclusion of students when classroom behaviour warrants this until a Restorative conference is held

If a student continually breaks class rules and there is no resolution after the Restorative Practices process, parents will be requested to attend an interview to discuss the measures to be taken. These may include:

- Withdrawal from that class for a set period or on a permanent basis
- Referral to the Student Counsellor and/or the School Nurse
- Counselling from School Support Services
- Suspension and expulsion in extreme circumstances

School Based Apprenticeships and Training (SBAT) and Structured Work Place Learning (SWPL)

Students undertaking further education and training outside the College are expected to represent the College in a positive manner and adhere to our College values. Students who behave in an unsafe, inappropriate manner or do not keep abreast of concurrent school work may be withdrawn from their work placement.

Student Welfare Policy

At Casterton Secondary College we recognise that student welfare is a responsibility of all members of staff. Sub-school Leaders will be responsible for the students in their levels. We hope to create an environment that is seen to be caring and where teaching and learning is maximised for all students.

We recognise these basic student needs:

- the basic physiological needs;
- the need for safety and security which is met by being in a suitable, predictable, orderly and non-threatening environment;
- the need to belong and to receive acceptance and approval from others;
- the need for self-esteem and to experience a sense of personal worth;
- the need to know and understand one's environment;
- the need to become what one is suited for and to develop one's own identity

The College has a Welfare & Discipline Committee consisting of:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Middle School Leader
- Senior School Leader
- School Nurse

The Welfare & Discipline Committee will support staff in carrying out their welfare functions, assess the welfare needs of the school, engage in forward planning and ensure that staff, expertise and resources are made available to all students.

The Committee will allow other members of staff to make a significant contribution to the student welfare program and prevent it becoming dependent on one person.

The Welfare & Discipline Committee will:

- involve the staff body in activities designed to foster the well-being of students;
- include all support staff in a coordinated approach to student welfare
- establish effective communication processes with administration;
- establish effective communication processes with any relevant school council sub-committees
- identify students' needs and formulate recommendations to the curriculum policy-making

Personnel, Organisations, and Structures Available to Support Student Welfare Include:

- Middle School Leader
- Senior School Leader
- Fast tracking
- Education Support Staff
- Careers teacher
- First Aid
- Student Voice
- Coordinators of special programs eg Literacy, Talented Students, Transition programs
- Class teachers
- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- School Nurse
- Outside Agencies

Programs to support students include

- Lunchtime class
- Supervised after school homework
- Lunchtime activities
- Targeted intervention programs
- School camps and excursions
- Mentoring
- Pastoral Care Programs

- Extended Home Group program

Particular Curriculum directions include:

- Personal Development units in Physical Education / Health and Health and Human Development classes
- Respectful Relationships

Specific Policies related to student welfare include:

- Bullying and Harassment policy
- Mobile Phone, Smart Watches and Electronic Devices policy
- Drug Policy
- EO Policy
- Mandatory Reporting policy
- Response to critical incidents, such as a death in the school community
- VCE & VCAL policies
- Promotion policy
- 90% attendance policy

Practices and Procedures indicating concern for student welfare.

- Discipline Policies - In class procedures, Out of class procedures
- Report writing
- Personal interactions
- Parent interviews
- Attendance monitoring
- Referral to appropriate agencies for assistance
- State Schools relief
- Curriculum Partnership days for Grades 4, 5 and 6

A program budget is prepared for Student Welfare to ensure adequate resourcing of programs and to provide emergency funding for students.

Home Groups

It is important that students at all levels receive adequate pastoral care.

Our Home Group system hopes to assist in providing this.

Home groups will be used for:

- parent contact
- monitoring attendance
- developing life skills
- information dissemination

Drug Policy

Purpose

Casterton Secondary College aims to develop and maintain a health-promoting environment. The possession, use, selling and distribution of substances such as tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, vape pens, inappropriately used prescription drugs and all illicit drugs at school constitutes a health and safety risk and a breach of school rules. For the purpose of this policy, all of these substances will be referred to as drugs.

The inappropriate and illegal use of drugs in schools is a social, health and legal problem that puts not only the students and their peers, but also the school at risk. This issue needs to be addressed in accordance with protocols established between the Department of Education and Training, and the Victorian Police Force.

Policy

Casterton SC will provide a school environment that is free of illicit drugs, and safe for all staff and students. The College will provide students with appropriate drug education prevention, intervention and mitigation programs as a component of the curriculum. This approach will be a whole-school harm minimisation approach to drug education within the College. The college will form a network and strengthen communications with community and government agencies involved in drug harm minimisation.

Casterton SC will provide a supportive environment that involves and engages parents and the wider community in drug related curriculum and welfare issues. The College will provide appropriate social and emotional support to parents and students when necessary and inform parents of the school's drug policy.

The College will develop and review drug related school-based policies and procedures for staff to deal with drug related issues, including crisis management.

Drug Education

Casterton SC will take reasonable measures to protect students in our care from reasonably foreseeable risks of injury, including risks associated with illicit drugs. Harm minimisation is the prevailing approach that our school adopts in the implementation of our comprehensive drug education prevention and intervention program for all students. Harm minimisation aims to prevent and reduces the harms associated with the use of drugs.

A drug education prevention and intervention program for all students will be delivered through curriculum programs and learning areas as appropriate, and programs such as Driver Education, community workshops and case management as appropriate.

Prescribed Medication or Medicinal Drugs

Medication must be prescribed by a doctor and parents/carers will need to complete the necessary DET documentation.

Unsanctioned Drug Use

It is unacceptable that any student or staff member use, possess, supply or be under the influence of illicit drugs at school, at a school function or in the vicinity of the school or its students. Despite the best efforts of our staff, the use of illicit drugs may still impact upon our school. It is incumbent upon a school to act whenever cases of drug use or illegal or criminal activity occur or are suspected to have occurred at school.

The school community will be made aware of the government policy banning smoking/vaping, consumption of alcohol or the use of illegal drugs in the Department's buildings and school grounds. Refer to DET policies. Visitors found using or under the influence of impermissible drugs will be asked to refrain or leave the premises in line with the Department's school policy and the police contacted.

School Responses to Drug Related Incidents

In all drug-related incidents the following principles will apply:

- The safety and welfare of the affected person and others directly or indirectly involved will be our primary concern.
- Other students will be isolated from the situation.
- First aid and reassurance will be provided as needed.
- Medical assistance and support will be sought if required.
- The school principal will be informed immediately.
- Any drugs or paraphernalia that can be easily collected will be safely gathered.

- The parents/carers of the student/s involved will be contacted.
- Relevant services will be notified if appropriate.
- Principal to notify police if appropriate.
- Assistant Principal will notify the DET Incident Support and Operations Centre
- A case management team will be established to document the events, develop communication strategies, to coordinate supports and interventions, to consider sanctions, coordinate an education plan, and monitor and evaluate the student/s progress and future directions.
- All situations will be carefully considered before deciding on the response.
- The needs of the student will be considered, whilst also taking into account the needs of the school as a whole.
- Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation.
- Support agencies and the police will be involved as appropriate and in keeping with legal requirements.
- A range of responses will be considered including disciplinary and counselling/supportive.

Decisions in Response to all Drug related Incidents

Decisions about the response will depend on the severity of the situation, for example: whether the issue is one of a series or a first time and whether the student involved is putting themselves and others at risk. Key staff will decide whether a disciplinary and/or counselling action should take place.

The principal's legal duty is to ensure that the school environment is, as far as practicable, safe and free from risks. Any action taken will be in line with the school's behaviour policies. Teachers have a duty of care to pass on information to the principal if they have knowledge about illicit drug use by students or members of a student's family irrespective of whether the use is confirmed, suspected or likely to occur, or occurs on or outside school grounds. Under this duty of care staff cannot promise unconditional confidentiality to students.

Principals must advise the local police contact person when they have knowledge of an alleged criminal offence, including the possession, use and distribution of illicit drugs. If formal action is to be taken against a student by the Victoria Police, the police will make arrangements for them to attend a local police station accompanied by an appropriate adult for an interview. In exceptional circumstances a student may be arrested or interviewed by the Victorian Police at the school. An appropriate adult should be present during interviews.

Any student who is absent from school due to drug use or the resultant treatment will be supported with an Individual Learning Plan as determined by the Assistant principal and relevant Sub-School Leader in consultation with teachers, parents/guardians or the school's appointed case manager.

The principal will inform students and parents via newsletters and the Student Code of Conduct that school lockers and desks are school property and may be searched without notice. Students suspected of illicit drugs in school bags or personal clothing are to be separated from other students and supervised while the police are contacted. A teacher or principal can conduct an immediate search of a school bag or clothing in the company of another responsible adult if there is imminent danger that the student is likely to use an illicit drug without warning while the police are contacted – *refer to addendum (student searching) at the end of this policy.*

The college may consider a range of responses including:

- Supporting pupils in school and referral to specialist agencies
 - Support is provided for pupils who have concerns about their own or their family's drug use or who are at risk or drug misuse, as well as for those who have been involved in an incident which is in breach of school rules. Support is offered by the Education Department Social Worker and/or Psychologist, Adolescent Health Nurse and college wellbeing staff. If specialist support is needed, we will make referrals to the appropriate community agencies/specialist programs for young people.
- In-school behaviour programs
 - In some circumstances a student involved in a drug-related incident will have a behaviour programme coordinated in consultation with the Assistant Principal, relevant Sub-School Leader and the parents/carers.
- Counselling
 - Pupils may be offered counselling at school or if needed a referral to a specialist service will be made.
- Sanctions
 - Where school rules are breached, sanctions will be given. The type of sanction will depend on the nature and degree of the offence. Relevant staff will make decisions about sanctions consistent with

the college policies. The Principal will report all serious incidents to the Incident Support and Operations Centre in line with the Department of Education and Training guidelines.

Working with Parents

The school welcomes parents/carers who wish to share their concerns about drugs. We involve parents/carers when reviewing the drugs policy. Parents/carers will be informed immediately if their child has been involved in a drug-related incident.

Visitors to the College Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol

If a visitor to the college is suspected of being substance affected on the premises, staff should remain calm and notify the Principal or Assistant Principal to speak to the visitor and escort them off site. Should staff be concerned about discharging a student into the care of a parent/carer suspected of being substance affected the Principal or Assistant Principal should be informed immediately to undertake an assessment of the situation. Should there be concerns for the safety of the child, a Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection notification must be registered.

Staff Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol

The Region and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Emergency Services will be notified of critical incidents via the 24-hour DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

Police Involvement

If an illegal (or suspected illegal) drug has been found on the school premises, on a student or an illegal drug deal is taking place, the police will be contacted. We will call 000 in an emergency. We have strong links with the local police and aim to involve them in the drug education curriculum and policy reviews.

Addendum

This addendum is in accordance with the Education and Training Reform Amendment (School Safety) Act 2011, *Banning, Searching and Seizing Harmful Guidelines*.

Searching for and Seizing Harmful Items

If a principal has reasonable suspicion that a harmful item exists, the principal has the power to search for and seize such an item under sections 5.8A.3 and 5.8A.4 of the Act.

When determining whether reasonable suspicion that a harmful item exists and as such whether a search for a harmful item should be carried out, the following factors should also be considered:

- the likelihood that a search will uncover a harmful item
- whether it is likely that the harmful item will be used by a student
- the source and veracity of information regarding the presence of a harmful item.

If a student seeks to obstruct a search, the principal may:

- if the principal believes that there is an immediate threat to the safety, security or wellbeing of a student or staff member, contact Victoria Police
- If there is no immediate threat to the safety, security or wellbeing of a student or staff member, parents/carers will be contacted to alert them to the circumstances and require the item not to be brought to the school in the future.

If a principal reasonably suspects that a search will uncover a firearm or a prohibited weapon, the principal should contact Victoria Police and only conduct a search if:

- the principal reasonably suspects that there is a threat to the safety, security or wellbeing of a student or staff, which in the reasonable opinion of the principal requires immediate action to be taken to reduce that threat, and
- the search can be carried out in a manner that does not unduly threaten the safety of the principal, student(s) or other school staff, and
- other reasonable actions have been considered, including the practicality of Victoria Police carrying out the search.

The Act does not allow for a student to be physically touched or patted down by the principal to search for a harmful item. Principals are not permitted to search a student but may ask a student to turn out their pockets, open any bag, locker or other item, and to disclose whether or not a student is in possession of a harmful item. A student who does not comply with a direction to open a bag or locker or to turn out their pockets should be subject to school disciplinary procedures. If the principal believes the student is concealing a harmful item under their clothing, the principal should use his or her discretion as to whether to call Victoria Police.

Attendance Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to

- ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction
- ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
- explain to school staff and parents / carers the key practices and procedures Casterton Secondary College has in place to
- support, monitor and maintain student attendance
- record, monitor and follow up student absences

Scope

This policy applies to all students at Casterton Secondary College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Casterton Secondary College, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Definition

Parent / carer – includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child, including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

Policy

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

Daily attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Casterton Secondary College during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Example School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Casterton Secondary College for particular activities

Both schools and parents / carers have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day. Casterton Secondary College believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance. Our school will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents / carers to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Casterton Secondary College parents / carers are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents / carers will communicate with the relevant staff at Casterton Secondary College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents / carers will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Casterton Secondary College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by: Newsletter articles (eg *It's Not Ok to Be Away*), Home Group attendance ladder, Roll marking on XUNO at HG meetings and every lesson, office staff contact parents daily when students are recorded as absent, meetings with parents / carers and students to discuss attendance concerns, return to school plans.

Our VCE / VCAL policy has additional rules for VCE / VCAL students.

Recording attendance

Casterton Secondary College must record attendance in Home Group meetings and in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Casterton Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by Home Group teachers at Home group meetings each morning and by subject teachers each lesson using XUNO and is then exported into CASES by the office staff.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent / carer must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents / carers should notify Casterton Secondary College of absences by:

Contacting the front office by Phone, XUNO message or email.

Sending a note to the front office with the student on his / her return to school

Note of explanation in Student Planner

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent / carer, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Casterton Secondary College will notify parents by phone or XUNO message. Casterton Secondary College will attempt to contact parents / carers as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

Casterton Secondary College will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The principal will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for the purposes of the parent / carer meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Casterton Secondary College considers that the parent / carer has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexcused absence**'.

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent / carer for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent / carer to address causes and support the student's return to school
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent / carer notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents / carers will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, Casterton Secondary College will work collaboratively with parents / carers, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing an Attendance Student Support Group
- implementing a Return to School Plan
- implementing an Individual Education Plan
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from relevant Sub-school Leader

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, will endeavour to provide this support when it is required,

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Casterton Secondary College decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent / carer, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school, the principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
- the parent / carer has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
- measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown and:
- the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
- no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Attendance](#)
- [School intranet](#)
- Review cycle and evaluation