

# Croydon Community School & OPTIONS

## Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- our commitment to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to misguided student behaviour.

Croydon Community School and OPTIONS is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, 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 linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school community to create and maintain a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment consistent with our school's values.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

### Contents

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2. School values, philosophy, and vision
3. Engagement strategies
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### POLICY

#### 1. School profile

Croydon Community School is a small secondary school with the capacity to enrol approximately 100 students on its current site at Mt Dandenong Rd in Croydon. The school also manages a re-engagement site at Bayswater for young people between the ages of 12 - 17 who have disengaged from schooling. Croydon Community School & OPTIONS has a rich history of providing education for students who are at significant risk of not completing secondary education. Many of our students have not experienced learning success or a sense of connectedness in mainstream education. Most of our students have attended at least one other secondary school; many have attended two or more secondary schools and multiple primary schools. Prolonged absence from school prior to enrolment here is not unusual

The school is a member of Big Picture Education Australia and has adopted the Big Picture Learning Design to engage students in their learning and to develop the whole child. At our school, advisory teachers and education support staff support young people to set personalised learning goals based upon their passions or interests.

## 2. School values, philosophy, and vision

Croydon Community School & OPTIONS Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff, and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of Honesty, Excellence, Accountability, Respectfulness and Thankfulness.

The school's vision is to graduate confident, compassionate, reliable, and resilient young people who possess a positive personal philosophy, a focus on continuing growth and pro- social skills.

The school's objective is to individualise and personalise learning for the benefit of each of our students. We work from the premise of *one student at a time in a community of learners.*

## 3. Engagement strategies

At Croydon Community School & OPTIONS we recognise that our young people reach their full potential when they are flourishing. We endeavour to develop positive relationships , emotions, health, accomplishment and purpose to engage and support our young people in their learning.

Croydon Community School & OPTIONS have 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 school wide, targeted (e.g. for a specific group of young people) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

### School wide

- Putting the student at the centre of all wellbeing and learning plans
- Setting high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, parents, and carers
- Nurturing positive relationships between staff and students to build and sustain student wellbeing
- Encouraging young people to provide feedback to advisors and school leaders about any decisions, issues and/or concerns that they may have
- Creating opportunities for young people to provide feedback to advisors about the quality of the school's teaching and learning
- Ensuring that a strength based, and inclusive school culture is developed through a Positive Education approach and commitment to Respectful Relationships Curriculum
- Welcoming parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- Analysing and responding to wellbeing, engagement, and achievement data such as attendance, Student Attitudes to School Survey, Maroondah Wellbeing Survey, Parent Opinion Survey data, student management data and school level assessment data.
- Using a personalised approach to learning based upon each students' interests, strengths, and aspirations
- Using the gradual release instructional model and a broad range of high impact teaching strategies to facilitate learning
- Incorporating our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy, including the Big Picture Design and distinguishers into our professional practice, and promoting them to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, in Town Hall celebrations and in communication to parents
- Ensuring that student attendance is monitored regularly and that attendance improvement strategies are implemented at the whole-school, cohort, and individual level
- Creating opportunities for students to collaborate in cross age classes and activities regularly
- Ensuring that all students have access to a well-resourced wellbeing team
- Engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with staff and students
- Planning and managing individual pathways for students moving into different stages of schooling
- Student leadership opportunities

- Student voice and agency

*The following targeted strategies will be used for specific groups within the school community:*

- All Koori students will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), Student Support Group (SSG) meetings and the opportunity to connect with a Koori Engagement Support Officer
- All students in Out of Home Care (OOHC) will have an IEP, SSG meetings and a learning mentor. They will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment where appropriate
- All students on the Program for Students with a Disability (PSD) will have an IEP and regular SSG meetings.
- All students from Year 9 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, advisory teachers, or other school staff each year. These may include but are not limited to bullying prevention programs, mental health programs, pro-social skill programs such as Dogs for Life
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- Staff will use restorative practices and/or a staged response to rebuild trust, respect, and care

*The following strategies may be used to support individual engagement:*

- Staff will actively work to build constructive relationships with individual students who are at risk or vulnerable
- Staff will actively work to build respectful relationships with parents/ carers of students with the view to supporting the family as a whole
- Student Support Groups are held
- IEP, Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), Safety Plan, Attendance Improvement Plan are facilitated and developed in consultation - always with the student at the centre of the planning.
- Applications are made to the Program for Students with Disabilities for eligible students
- Referrals are made to the school's Student Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services as appropriate
- Referrals are made to external agencies such as Child First, Headspace, EDVOS, YSAS and private psychologists in our partnership
- Referrals are made to Lookout School for OOHC students
- Environmental changes such as changes to classroom set up, quiet settings or alternative timetables
- Staff will use restorative practices and/or a staged response to rebuild trust, respect, and care

#### 4. Identifying students in need of support

Croydon Community School and OPTIONS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Staff will use 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
- Monitoring of attendance
- Monitoring of academic growth
- Observing changes in a young person's engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness, and motivation
- Monitoring behaviour management data including suspension data
- Engaging positively with families
- Encouraging students to self-refer or peers to refer on another student's behalf
- Consulting with the Wellbeing Team
- Engaging with external agencies including but not limited to Department of Youth Justice & DHHS

## 5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have the 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 and School Philosophy highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

### Students have the right to:

- Participate fully in their educational program
- 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
- Be treated with trust, respect, and care by other members of the school community.

### Students have the responsibility to:

- Participate fully in their educational program, with consideration made to a student's current emotional and academic needs
- Respect the right of others to learn
- Display positive behaviours towards their peers, their teachers, and all members of the school community
- Treat other members of the school community with trust, respect, and care.
- Model our school values of Honest, Excellent, Accountable, Respectful, and Thankful.

Students who have a concern or complaint about something that has happened at school are strongly encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted staff member, any member of the wellbeing team, or any of the leadership team to advocate for them.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations

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

When a student exhibits challenging behaviours, the school will use a range of strategies consistent with DET's Student Engagement and Inclusion guidelines. For example, the school will:

- Assess the behaviour and its function, influences, and triggers (including student, parents, and school wellbeing staff as appropriate)
- Consider the environmental changes that can be made to support the student
- Develop Behaviour Support Plan and/or Individual Education Plan (involving parent, carer and student)
- Explicitly teach replacement behaviours to the student
- Engage Student Support Services and/or community services to undertake assessments and/or provide specialist support
- Establish a student support group
- Implement appropriate accountability measures that are proportionate to behaviours of concern

Accountability measures may be used as part of a staged response to misguided or misplaced 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.

Accountability measures at Croydon Community School and OPTIONS will be applied fairly and consistently, with consideration given to each student's individual needs and circumstances. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Accountability measures that *may* be applied include:

- an inquiring conversation with the student/s involved
- informing a student that their behaviour is of concern
- referral to leadership (e.g. Principal /Assistant Principal)

- referral to the student wellbeing team
- restorative practices
- community service
- replacing or reimbursing for damaged property
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in 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

Croydon Community School and OPTIONS 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 volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- Including families with a student's Individual Learning Plans, SSGs, Behavioural Support Plans, IEPs,
- Involving families in school decision making
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families for example, ensuring families are referred to, and receive assistance if needed

## 8. Evaluation

Croydon Community School and OPTIONS 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 Attitudes to School survey data
- Croydon Community School student survey data
- Incidents data, including bullying incidents
- School reports/school achievement data
- Parent Opinion survey data
- Maroondah Youth Survey and/or About You Survey
- Student Wellbeing referrals data
- External agency referrals data
- Suspension data

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

References:

School wide positive behaviour support:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/improvement/Pages/swpbs.aspx>

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-engagement/policy>

Big Picture Education: [www.bigpicture.org.au](http://www.bigpicture.org.au)

Contextual Wellbeing: [www.contextualwellbeing.com.au](http://www.contextualwellbeing.com.au)

Please refer also to the school's:

- Attendance Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Camps and Excursion Policy
- Children at Risk Policy
- Data Analysis and Use Policy
- Mobile Devices, Use by Children Policy
- Professional Learning Policy
- Responding to Violent and Dangerous Child Behaviour Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy
- Student Dress Code
- Vision, Mission, Values Policy
- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy
- Child Safe Standards

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by School Council on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and will be reviewed annually or if DET guidelines change.