



## Student Welfare and Wellbeing Policy

### Introduction

Student Welfare and Wellbeing at Hunter Valley Grammar School is structured around the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework.



**The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework ([source](#))**

The school ensures equity of access through clear and robust structures of support and embracing difference through inclusive practices, structures and approaches. The fostering of student agency, autonomy and mastery are central to the work of the school, which includes providing opportunities for students to have a voice in decisions that affect them and equipping them to be agents of change. Leadership at the school plays an active role in building a positive culture where the whole school community feels like they belong because they feel heard, seen and valued.



Central to HVGS' approach to student welfare and wellbeing are holding staff and students to account for embodying the school's values for life: *responsibility, integrity, compassion, gratitude, optimism, respect, citizenship and courage*. In addition, as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, all members of the HVGS community are supported to live the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. We expect students and staff to be Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-Minded, Caring, Risk-Takers, Balanced, Reflective.

This policy supports the implementation and embedding of the NSW Child Safe Standards.

## Purpose

The Student Welfare and Wellbeing Policy is an overarching policy that guides all decision-making in relation to students at HVGS.

## Scope

This policy applies to all students at HVGS from ELC to Year 12 and is to be implemented consistently by all staff in the school.

## Policy

Student welfare encompasses everything that Hunter Valley Grammar School does to meet the personal, social and learning needs of our students and to enhance their wellbeing. It involves recognising, valuing and developing each student as a unique person and fostering a culture of civility, care and mutual respect.

HVGS is committed to building the systems and structures that ensure everyone is cared for, valued, and recognised for their unique identities and experiences. This involves building and sustaining a strong culture of trust and shared ownership for the flourishing of students and staff. At HVGS we know that when staff and students feel like they belong, have a sense of agency at school and feel that their perspectives are valued, learning happens for everyone.

## Guiding Principles

At HVGS all staff have a duty of care to ensure students are safe and to pro-actively identify and report behaviours and attitudes that may impact a child's safety and welfare.

Student welfare and wellbeing is enhanced at Hunter Valley Grammar School through:

- Fostering a connected, whole school (ELC to Year 12) culture;
- Maintaining open, green spaces that connect students to the natural environment;



- Providing diverse pathways to excellence;
- Creating a safe, secure and caring environment where all members of the community feel like they belong;
- Differentiating instruction to ensure equity of access to the curriculum;
- Cultivating a restorative culture;
- Embedding positive behaviour practices across the school;
- Holding students and staff to account for embodying the HVGS “Values for Life” and the IB Learner Profile;
- Actively creating opportunities for student voice and agency;
- Providing timely and relevant professional learning for staff.

## **School Culture**

All members of the HVGS community are responsible for building a positive school culture where difference is valued and championed, and students and staff can engage in controversy with civility. The HVGS Wellbeing Statement describes the expectations of all in the community:

*At HVGS, wellbeing is visible. We see it in inclusive, respectful relationships and resilient attitudes.*

*Wellbeing is valued. We embed opportunities to develop strengths in ways that have lifelong impact.*

*Wellbeing is intentional. We connect ourselves to community through courageous and compassionate actions that foster belonging.*

## **Structures to support student welfare and wellbeing**

HVGS has a strong “team around the child” model to ensure pro-active and responsive approach to student welfare and wellbeing.

This includes:

- *A whole school wellbeing team* that ensures a strategic approach to student welfare. This team includes the Principal, Heads of Student Services, Gifted and Talented Coordinators, Head of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, and representatives from the Senior and Junior School Wellbeing Teams.
- *Senior School and Junior School Wellbeing Teams* that focus on individual and cohort wellbeing and welfare needs. These teams meet at least weekly.
- *Crisis Management Teams* – these teams form as required and the composition of the team is determined by the nature of the crisis. However, the Principal, the relevant Deputy Principal - Head of School, the Compliance Manager and a Psychologist are present in any crisis management team.
- *Mentors in Senior School and Classroom Teacher in Junior School* – who are tasked with holistic oversight of the students under their care.



A *Student Referral System* is in place to enable staff to refer students of concern to the relevant Wellbeing Team, and to enable appropriate levels of escalation. The guiding principle of the Student Referral System at HVGS is to empower teachers to address behaviour as it arises anywhere on the Campus.

The Junior and Senior School Wellbeing Teams are required to keep staff informed about any interventions in place for students.

Data from the Student Information System is regularly accessed the Wellbeing Teams to ensure data-informed decision-making about cohorts and individuals, as well as to generate strategic priorities.

HVGS has a strong team of psychologists to provide targeted and responsive interventions and wellbeing programmes across ELC to Year 12, and to enable capacity building for students and staff.

## ***Approach to Behaviour***

At HVGS we believe all staff and students have a right to work and learn free from physical, social, emotional and psychological harm. We also believe that each child's learning journey is unique and not all students are able to regulate their emotions and behaviours in the same way at the same time.

HVGS adopts a *Positive Behaviour for Learning* approach, as [outlined by the NSW Department of Education](#). HVGS has clearly stated behaviour expectations for students and staff that are aligned to the HVGS Values for Life and developmentally appropriate. Students are supported to meet these expectations through explicit teaching and modeling of positive behaviours, and the use of shared language.

At HVGS we assume that students can and want to do well at school and behave in line with the school's values but may not yet have the skills or competencies to do so. The school provides explicit support to help these students develop the required skills and competencies, while expecting students to demonstrate a willingness, and commitment, to growth. It is an expectation that all students will own their behaviour, the consequences of their behaviour and seek amends for the impact their behaviour has on others.

All students are not permitted to engage in illegal or intimidating behaviour on school grounds (including vaping), accessing pornography or other inappropriate material, or bringing any devices or weapons to school which threaten the safety of others.

Students who do not meet behaviour expectations are engaged in restorative processes. At HVGS the goal is to build student capacity to reflect on their conduct, understand the power of language to create and erode trust, and to develop the tools to "talk it out" as a means of building understanding and setting goals for the future.

Consequences for not meeting behaviour expectations vary depending on the severity



of the behaviour. Developmentally appropriate procedures for addressing behaviour challenges are available in each school. Context will be taken into account when dealing with challenging behaviours and determining the consequence for these behaviours.

Consequences for major behaviour issues will be determined in consultation with the Principal. The goal of HVGS' positive behaviour model and use of restorative practices is to prevent problematic behaviour before it arises.

Parents are partners in the positive behaviour journey and staff will communicate in a timely, regular and consistent way with the parents of a child who has engaged in challenging behaviour, and with those children impacted by these behaviours.

### ***Inclusive Education***

All learners are entitled to an inclusive and supportive environment with quality teaching that is accessible and builds on their individual strengths. At Hunter Valley Grammar School education for students with specific learning, emotional and physical needs focus on the whole child, respecting the individual and valuing differences. As part of our community, all students have the right to equity, to learn with their age peers and to be engaged in learning that is appropriate to their skills and needs.

The Student Services Program at Hunter Valley Grammar School aims to:

- foster an inclusive environment for students and their families and carers;
- enhance the confidence and self-esteem of all students, particularly those who experience learning, emotional and physical difficulties;
- support teachers with embedding high quality differentiated instruction in their classrooms;
- facilitate all students' effective participation in the curriculum, and the School as a whole;
- nurture a culture of valuing difference.

At HVGS Student Support Services encompasses academic support, psychologists, Gifted and Talented Coordinators and teachers, and the Head of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education.

Student Support Services work actively with sectional wellbeing teams to providewrap-around care for students.

### ***Inclusion and Anti-discrimination***

HVGS strives to cultivate a climate where difference is valued and embraced, and students and staff "become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right" ([from IBO Mission Statement](#)).

At HVGS support is given to staff and students to move up the Intercultural Development Continuum from Denial and Polarisation to Acceptation and Adaption by



explicitly teaching intercultural competencies.

In accordance with relevant legislation, discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances at the school. HVGS strives to protect staff and students from discrimination on the basis of:

- race, colour, descent, nationality, national origin, ethnicity or ethno-religious origin;
- religious belief or activity;
- political belief or activity;
- disability or impairment;
- sex, relationship status, pregnancy or breastfeeding;
- sexuality or gender identity;
- language or
- age.

To support an inclusive culture, HVGS

- provides all students and prospective students with equal opportunities to comparable access, services and facilities, and the right to participate in education, training and activities of the School without discrimination;
- employs strategies and programs that are designed to ensure that all students are protected from discrimination and harassment;
- takes complaints of discrimination or harassment seriously and will investigate any complaint fully and confidentially;
- aims to ensure that any person making a complaint and any witness to alleged unlawful discrimination or harassment shall not be victimised or unfairly treated in any way by the School as a consequence of making the complaint or offering evidence; and
- makes accessible relevant policies to students, staff and parents.

### ***Supporting Wellbeing through Student Attendance***

Regular attendance at school is an indicator of student wellbeing. The school has procedures in place to process, monitor and address student absences and to conduct regular reviews of student attendance data to determine students who are at risk.

It is the requirement of parents under Section 22 of the Education Act (1990) to ensure their child is enrolled in a school, or registered for Home Schooling. All students who are enrolled at HVGS, regardless of their age, are expected to attend School whenever instruction is provided.

The School partners with parents to promote regular attendance, put in place interventions as needed, and to implement the procedures required by relevant legislation.

The School maintains a register of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school, which includes information for each student as required by Section 3.8 of



the NESA *Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual*.

Where the parents of a student of compulsory school age seeks an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, the Principal will process the parent's application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education.

## Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:

- [NSW Exemption from School Guidelines](#)
- [Children and Young Persons \(Care & Protection\) Act 1998](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) inc [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Civil Liabilities Act 2002](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)
- [Education Act 1990](#)
- [Education Amendment \(Non-Government School Registration\) Act 2004](#)
- [Children and Young Persons \(Care & Protection\) Act 1998](#)
- [Child Protection \(Working With Children\) Act 2012](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)

Relevant and related documents, including:

- [Grievance Resolution Policy](#)
- Behaviour Management Levels Junior School
- Behaviour Management Levels Senior School
- [ICT Conditions of Use Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Policy](#)
- Student Leadership Procedures
- Student Council Guidelines
- [Student Attendance and Exemption Policy](#)
- [Guidelines for dealing with Student Absences](#)

## Resources

The School will provide the appropriate resources and structure to facilitate the implementation of this policy.



## Contacts

Governance Officer: Compliance Manager

Accountable Officer: Principal

## Responsibilities

The Deputy-Principals - Heads of School in conjunction with the Principal will be responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

Position	Responsibility
Board	The Board is the Approver for this Policy
Principal	Ensuring this policy is implemented.

## Evaluation

The Board is responsible for evaluating compliance with the policy. Evaluation will be facilitated by means of:

- a. Principal's Report to Board Meetings;
- b. Minutes from Board Committee Meetings;

## Document information and review

This policy document will be reviewed at least every two years. Review Due: 26 November 2025

Policy Code: POL-SWW-001  
 Approved By: Board  
 Approval Date: 22 November 2023  
 Effective From: 1 December 2023

## Approval history

No	Effective	Approved by	Amendment
1	1 December 2023	Board	New Policy – replaces Welfare Policy