

# **Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy**



**To be read in conjunction with the  
“DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance Information”**

# **Williamstown High School**

Updated September 2019

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1 SCHOOL PROFILE**
- 2. WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION STATEMENT**
- 3 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
- 4. SHARED EXPECTATIONS**
- 5. SCHOOL ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**
- 6. LINKS TO RELATED POLICIES AND SUPPORT MATERIAL**

## **1. SCHOOL PROFILE:**

Williamstown High School was established in 1914 and today it is one of Victoria's oldest and most distinguished state government secondary schools. Proud of our history, but with an eye firmly on the future, we prepare our students to be thoughtful, successful, productive adults and responsible global citizens. The historical importance and traditions of both Williamstown and our High School are valued by the community and are reflected in our crest which shows the anchor and the motto 'Hold Fast'. The school is set on two campuses that are within a ten minute walking distance and both campuses uphold the strong traditions and reputations with exciting programs and unique settings.

Williamstown High School caters for more than 1400 students from Years 7 to 12. The Bayview Campus caters for our Year 7 to 9 students whilst our Pasco Campus caters for our Year 10 to 12 students.

At Williamstown High School education provides a dynamic learning culture that promotes integrity, innovation and the individual. As a school community we value:

- Excellence and creativity in our achievements and ambitions.
- Integrity and honesty in our actions and relationships.
- Diversity in our curriculum, in each other and in our community.
- Strong and open communication between our school and our homes, and between our teachers, our students and our families.
- A commitment to social justice and a passion to protect and improve our environment and our community.

Our focus on individual growth and success, together with our emphasis on support and connection, encourages students to 'Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be a Learner'. Our students are provided with many opportunities to excel, these include universal academic excellence, sport, visual and performing arts, debating, leadership, environmental issues and a strong instrumental music program. There are numerous ways in which students can showcase their talents to both the local and broader school community and these events also serve the purpose of bringing the school community together to celebrate student achievement.

Williamstown enjoys a strong sense of community, working together to develop supportive and strong home school partnerships, depth in our extracurricular activities, a flourishing student leadership program and outstanding performances in the arts, debating, cultural, sporting and artistic achievement. We encourage the highest standards of our students in their diverse pursuits for personal excellence. We believe that high expectations will empower students to be responsible for their own learning. Our outstanding academic results and focus on the development of the whole person makes Williamstown High School the school of choice.

## **2. WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION PROGRAM:**

As a learning community, Williamstown High School values and supports the learning, engagement and wellbeing of our entire school community and prides itself on implementing whole school initiatives that contribute to, strengthen and reinvigorate the school's historical commitment to student achievement. The school is committed to fostering a positive, productive and pedagogically engaging school culture through embedded School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS). SWPBS is the framework that underpins and influences all actions connected with student engagement and wellbeing at Williamstown High School. SWPBS provides educational leaders with a school improvement framework for ensuring the learning environment and school culture is focused on creating positive relationships, outcomes and engagement for all.

Through implementing preventive, positive and proactive programs we ensure that the diverse student body is provided with multiple opportunities to actively contribute to the creation of a stimulating, purposeful and challenging educational experience. Fostering student voice and promoting student leadership are areas of focus for the school. Our extensive engagement and wellbeing related policies assist in ensuring early preventative supports are implemented and a wide range of strategies aimed at catering for all learners are woven into the educational experience for our students.

Our school values and understands the need for consistent review of programs and initiatives. The school is determined to consistently and continually consider how to provide innovative, best practice learning experiences and SWPBS plays a key role in building the inherent learning capabilities of our students. SWPBS focuses on data and inquiry to drive continuous improvement in the school's engagement and wellbeing processes. We work towards ensuring that every student at Williamstown High School is awarded a dynamic learning culture that promotes integrity, innovation and the individual.

Williamston High School is committed to promoting respectful relationships and gender equality for all members of our school community.

Williamstown High School aims to achieve this by a whole school approach. Efforts are needed at multiple levels in order to achieve positive and sustained cultural change. This will include providing our school community with broad exposure to key messages across the curriculum, policies and practices of the school.

### **3. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

The rights and responsibilities of all members of the Williamstown High School community take into account the following legislation:

- The Equal Opportunity Act (2010)
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- *The Education Training and Reform Act (2006)* – including the 2015 Child Safe amendments

#### **Equal Opportunity Act**

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 provides protections from discrimination in public life in Victoria. It provides avenues for people to resolve discrimination disputes and outlines the Commission's role in helping government, business and the community to identify and eliminate discrimination. Under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, it is against the law to discriminate against a person on the basis of:

- Age
- Breastfeeding
- Marital status
- Political belief or activity
- Religious belief or activity
- Disability
- Industrial activity
- Parental status
- Pregnancy
- Sex
- Employment activity
- Expunged homosexual conviction
- Gender identity
- Lawful sexual activity
- Physical features
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity and ethnic origin)
- Sexual orientation
- Personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of these personal characteristics.

It is also against the law to sexually harass someone.

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 covers discrimination in employment, education, accommodation, clubs, sport, goods and services, land sales and transfers, and local government, as well as sexual harassment.

#### **The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act**

Williamstown High School acknowledges and adheres to the Charter of Human Rights.

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- Freedom
- Equality
- Respect
- Dignity

The Charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- The right to privacy and reputation
- Cultural Rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights.

All DET employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions.

#### **The Disability Discrimination Act**

The Disability Standards for Education Act 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- The nature of the student's disability
- Any adjustments that have been provided previously
- Their preferred adjustment
- Any recommended or alternative adjustments

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- Costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum.
- Costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers.
- Benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

#### **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

Williamston High School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. In its planning, decision-making and operations Williamstown High School will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behavior towards children
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and professional development.
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

#### **Bullying Prevention Policy**

Every person in our school community; students, teachers and other staff, families and members of the local community has the right to feel safe and have a sense of belonging. A person who bullies another is denying them that right. The school will take all the necessary steps to ensure every person's right to feel safe is delivered. The involvement and commitment of the whole school community is required to achieve a culture in which safe and respectful schools are everyone's concern and responsibility.

#### **Context**

Bullying is when a person or a group of people deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance in a repeated manner over time. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

Bullying may occur because of perceived differences including but not limited to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age, economic status or the holding or

expression of particular personal or political views. Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. It can continue over time and is often hidden from adults. It can continue overtime, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken.

<b>There are several types of bullying. For the purpose of this policy see the definitions below:</b>	
Direct physical bullying	Includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property
Direct verbal bullying	Includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
Indirect bullying	Is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, and encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.
Cyberbullying	<p>Is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. It can include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Flaming</b> (online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages)</li> <li>• <b>Harassment</b> (repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages)</li> <li>• <b>Denigration</b> (posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage their reputation or friendships)</li> <li>• <b>Outing</b> (sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online)</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion</b> (intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group )</li> <li>• <b>Cyber-stalking</b> (repeated intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear)</li> <li>• <b>Sexting</b> (the creating, sharing, sending or posting of sexually explicit messages or images via the internet, mobile phones or other electronic devices by people, especially young people).</li> </ul> <p>Williamstown High School provides specific advice to students about cyber-safe behaviours that help prevent cyberbullying. As such, this policy works in conjunction with the <b>WHS Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy</b> and <b>WHS Acceptable Use Agreement</b> (an agreement which requires students and families to agree to positive online behaviours designed to reduce and eliminate cyberbullying).</p>

When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

<b>Bullying is not:</b>	
mutual conflict	An argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem
social rejection or dislike	Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others
single-episode	Acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation – while unacceptable are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

## Guiding Principles

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
- All new students and staff will be informed of the bullying prevention policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.
- All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
- Our school organises preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Staff professional learning will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing proactively with these issues.
- Support will be provided to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour.
- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Bullying Prevention Policy.

## Key Behaviour Expectations

All members of the school community are expected to model appropriate behaviours as set out by the college values and the school wide positive behaviour expectations as outlined in our locations matrix and learning tasks matrix. We believe that the importance of positive personal relationships is one of the key underpinning values of the Williamstown High School community and this is represented in our school community rights and responsibilities.

### Be Respectful

Respecting self and others, school and community property. This includes valuing the diversity of individuals in the school community and valuing the ideas of others.

### Be a learner

Maintain a learning culture that provides the opportunity for all individuals to maximise their academic and social growth. This includes developing responsible young people and adults motivated by a passion for lifelong learning and active participation in society.

### Be Safe

Provide a safe and secure learning environment that enables all students to fully participate in all aspects of school life.

#### Everyone has the right to:

Be treated with respect without discrimination.

Equal opportunity.

Develop a positive self-image and have positive interactions with the wider school community.

Feel safe and not suffer interference to person, property and educational opportunities.

#### Everyone has the responsibility to:

- Be polite in all dealings with members of the school community.
- Show empathy for other members of the school community and act accordingly.
- Display positive behaviours that show respect for self, community and the environment.
- Celebrate achievements of members of the community.
- Ensure student learning is at the forefront of everything we do at the school.
- Behave in a safe manner that ensures both individual safety and the safety of others.
- Support members of the College community in achieving their educational goals.



**All Students:**

<b>Have the right to:</b>	<b>Have the responsibility to:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn and to develop interests, abilities and ambitions in a secure and supportive environment.</li> <li>• Participate fully in all aspects of the school's program.</li> <li>• Expect the highest quality education the school can provide.</li> <li>• Participate in the life of the school including relevant decision making processes.</li> <li>• Experience success and to receive praise for achievement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend regularly.</li> <li>• Participate fully in the school's educational program and strive to achieve their personal best.</li> <li>• Explore and express relevant and thoughtful ideas and opinions.</li> <li>• Display positive behaviours that demonstrate the school's values and key expectations towards themselves, the community and the environment.</li> <li>• Demonstrate respect for other's right to be taught and to learn.</li> </ul>

**Parents / Guardians and Carers:**

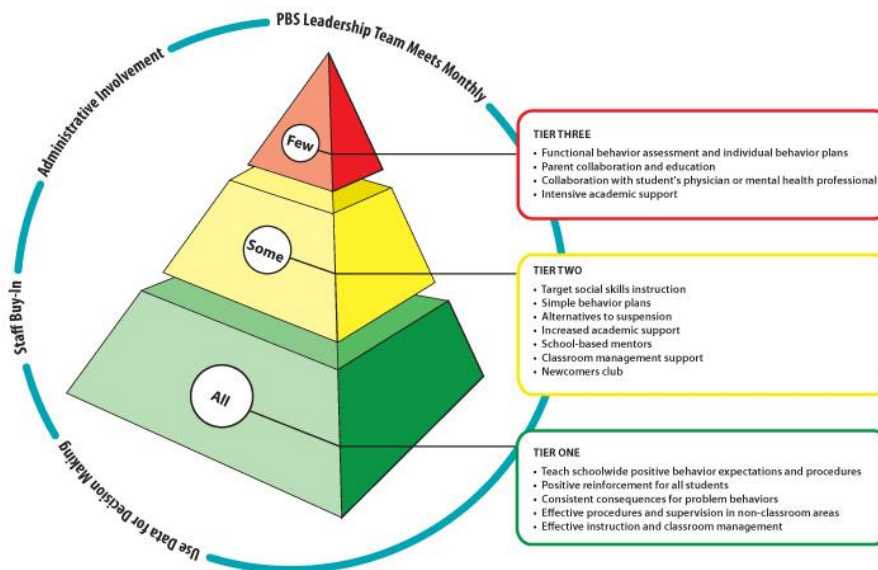
<b>Have the right to:</b>	<b>Have the responsibility to:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which the school's values are promoted.</li> <li>• To work in partnership with the school to advance their child's education through having opportunities to be informed and actively involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure their child attends the school regularly.</li> <li>• Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours.</li> <li>• Engage in regular and constructive communication with the staff regarding their child's learning.</li> <li>• Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.</li> <li>• Acknowledge and praise their children's efforts and successes.</li> </ul>

**Staff:**

<b>Have the right to:</b>	<b>Have the responsibility to:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly, safe and cooperative environment.</li> <li>• Be informed, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement school policies.</li> <li>• Implement and embed the SWPBS key expectations in all school environments.</li> <li>• Develop their capacity as teachers.</li> <li>• Develop positive relationships with students and understand their learning needs.</li> <li>• Know the curriculum they teach.</li> <li>• Understand the process of learning and the impact of good practice on enhanced student learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Plan and assess for effective learning.</li> <li>• Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.</li> <li>• Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.</li> <li>• Engage in professional learning in relation to goals and targets in school strategic plan.</li> <li>• Participate in the school's decision-making processes and foster student, parent and community participation.</li> <li>• Provide educational programs and services which cater for individual needs.</li> <li>• Create an environment where achievement are valued, recognised and celebrated.</li> </ul>

#### 4. SHARED EXPECTATIONS:

Williamstown High School shares high expectations for the whole school community. We have developed a set of key expectations that create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment that maximise individual academic, emotional and social growth. The key behaviour expectations of: Be a Learner, Be Respectful and Be Safe encompass the school's core values, were developed in collaboration with the school community, are explicitly taught across years 7 to 12 and reinforced by all school community members. To ensure that students at Williamstown High School receive what they need to achieve successful outcomes, we employ the SWPBS continuum of support.



#### School (Principals, Teachers and Educational Support Staff) Expectations

Schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

##### **School staff will:**

- Develop positive and meaningful relationships with families that promote engagement, wellbeing and successful outcomes.
- Uphold and explicitly teach the school values and key behaviours expectation (identified in the behaviour matrix).
- Develop inclusive teaching practices that include provisions of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.
- Recognise and celebrate student success and achievement within the school and in the wider community.
- Build community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support and provide family access to appropriate student services.
- Provide the provision of broad educational opportunities that allow and encourages students to explore pathways to success as responsible members of the global community.
- Address and celebrate diversity on a local, national and global level.

#### Parents/ Guardians and Carers Expectations

Parents/ Guardians and carers can be expected to promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress.

##### **Parents / Guardians and Carers will:**

- Model and support the explicit teaching of the school's values and key behaviour expectations.
- Actively support their child's engagement in the school environment.
- Engage and work effectively with the school, communicate clearly regarding their child's learning and wellbeing needs and work with the school to promote positive educational outcomes for them.
- Support their children and ensure they attend school regularly and promote the value of education to their student.
- Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.
- Work with students in the use of the SWPBS reflective conversation (when relevant).
- Work with the school to educate young people to live in a diverse world by promoting an understanding and appreciation of diversity in the school, community and at home.

### **Student Expectations**

As students' progress through school they need to be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.

#### ***Students will:***

- With support from their parents/guardians and carers participate fully in the educational program and attend regularly.
- Take responsibility for their own learning and participate as a member of the whole school community.
- Actively contribute to creating a positive learning environment by upholding the school's key behaviour expectations, demonstrating and encouraging safe and inclusive behaviours.
- Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including their right to learn.

### **SWPBS Reflective Conversations (Restorative Practices)**

Williamstown High School is committed to the application of SWPBS reflective conversations (Restorative Practices). Our reflective conversations inform a positive and formative approach to student engagement and wellbeing (including behaviour management). Its aim is to promote resilience in the one harmed and the one causing harm. The reflective conversation guides staff to support students to understand what they have done, give them ownership of their actions, recognise the impact of their actions on others, consider the most desirable way to reconcile and resolve conflict with others and be engaged and empowered through the process.

#### **Restorative Practices:**

- Are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness (Bond et al. 2001, Fuller 1999).
- Promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy (Hopkins 2002).
- Involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution (Braithwaite 2001b).
- Promote relationship management rather than behaviour management (Cameron & Thorsborne 2001).
- Are systematic, not situational (Armstrong 2004).
- Are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied (Morrison 2002).

## **5. SCHOOL'S ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES:**

**Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours** will be supported through a relationship based on School Wide Positive Behaviour Support practices throughout the whole school, including:

- Establishing predictable, safe and respectful school environments.
- Ensuring student participation in the development of whole school expectations as clearly identified in the behaviour matrix.
- Providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students.
- Acknowledging and recognising the positive behaviours of all students.
- Empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision making.
- Providing safe physical environments that foster positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.

**Inappropriate behaviours**, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, that has a preventative, early intervention and data based focus, including:

- Understanding the student's background and needs.
- Ensuring a clear understanding of key expectations by students, parents/ guardians, carers and teachers exists.
- Providing explicit reteaching opportunities to students who exhibit second and first tier behaviours.
- Engaging, involving and supporting parents / guardians and carers to promote positive educational outcomes for their child.
- Convening student support group meetings (SSG) to develop individualised and flexible support plans which may include scaffolding the student's learning program and/or learning, behaviour or attendance plans.
- Actively involve the student well-being coordinator, careers counsellor and managed individual pathways coordinator.
- Linking students and families with community support, health agencies, mentoring opportunities and/or counselling.

### **Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion**

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

The Staged Interventions used prior to suspension include:

- A range of positive behaviour interventions.
- Learning plans, behaviour support plans and return to school plans.
- Parent/ guardians and carers contact through email, telephone conversations and meetings.
- Referral to student wellbeing coordinator, leading teachers, assistant principals and DET personnel.
- Referral to school based positive behaviours, preventative and intervention wellbeing programs.
- Use of Compass to monitor and track students at risk in order to provide appropriate early intervention.
- Convening of a Student Support Group (SSG) and SSG meetings (see the 'DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance Information' for the process).

When considering suspension or expulsion, the student engagement and wellbeing team at Williamstown High School follow the procedures and process outlined and published by DET in the Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014.

The *Education Training and Reform Act (2006)* prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any Victorian Government school. Corporal punishment must not be used at Williamstown High School under any circumstance.

## **6. LINKS RELATED TO WHS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies;

- Williamstown High School Bullying Prevention Policy
- Williamstown High School Attendance Policy
- Williamstown High School Progression Policy
- Williamstown High School Learning Support Policy
- Williamstown High School Positive Mental Health Policy
- Williamstown High School Acceptable Use Agreement
- Williamstown High School Child Safe Policy

### **Links to Williamstown High School SWPBS Support Material**

- WHS Positive Behaviour Matrices.
- WHS Reflective Conversations
- WHS Success Pass, Post Cards and Positive Acknowledgement posts.
- WHS SWPBS curriculum syllabus

### **Ratification and Review:**

This policy was ratified by School Council on 10 September 2019 and will be reviewed in line with the requirements of the Student Engagement and Inclusion Guideline.