



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & WELL-BEING POLICY

Produced in consultation
with the school community

To be read in conjunction with

This policy should be read with reference to: the Department of Education (DET) guidelines; in particular the Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines, the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and the Disability Standards for Education 2005. The following legislation is also relevant: the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*; the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*; the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

16th August 2016

Principal: Mr Stephen Brain
School Council President: Mr Andrew Rigg

1 School Profile Statement

Purpose:

At Cohuna Secondary College we aim to create a respectful, caring and engaging environment that provides diverse opportunities for students to extend and expand their capabilities and strive for excellence.

Our school is located in a small rural environment, an irrigation-farming region that has suffered from a decade of drought and a one in a hundred year flood. The costs for food, fuel, travel and further education expenses are a high proportion of family income. The global financial crisis has had a significant impact on the viability of farming and the cost of financing businesses and farms higher than can be readily managed. Like many other schools in this region of Victoria we are in a community with an ageing population. There has been a gradual decline in population in the Shire since 2011. The average age in the Gannawarra Shire is 47, compared with the average age across the whole of Victoria of 36. This means there are concerns for the ongoing sustainability of our community.

The school has had continued and sustained links with two other small rural schools – Boort Secondary College and Pyramid Hill College - to form the “Gateways 4 Sustainable Communities” Program which aims to improve the profile and accessibility of agricultural pathways through VET/TAFE courses whilst also meeting the skills needs of the local community.

The school aims to provide a positive, stimulating, secure, safe, happy and caring environment conducive to optimal learning, where mutual cooperation and respect is evident.

Our Student Wellbeing focus aims to empower individuals and teams to enable a sense of connectedness, purpose and zest for life. We seek to help build self confidence, self esteem and resilience in order for our students to approach future life experiences, opportunities and challenges with self-assurance and energy.

Levels of engagement

There are three levels by which Cohuna Secondary College enhances wellbeing and engagement and build resilience – organisational, pedagogical, and relational

At an organisational level, schools:

- Establish a culture of high expectation for learning
- Develop a sense of optimism, purpose and school pride
- Foster a friendly, respectful & inclusive environment
- Generate a sense of optimism and purpose in students, staff and families
- Implement a positive approach to behaviour management
- Establish proactive policies addressing wellbeing and inclusion
- Make effective use of teacher professional learning
- Provide opportunities for student participation and leadership
- Foster strong partnerships with students, parents, carers, community and service providers

At a pedagogical level, schools:

- Explicitly teach social and emotional learning skills
- Provide a relevant, rigorous and well-taught curriculum tailored to age and ability levels
- Provide a comprehensive wellbeing education program
- Use a variety of instructional methods and technologies to foster participation in learning
- Embrace the use of collaborative teaching strategies throughout the curriculum
- Provide experiential, hands-on learning opportunities
- Explicitly develop personal and social capabilities
- Use feedback and coaching effectively
- Use data to inform teaching
- Provide an engaging curriculum

At a relational level, schools:

- Establish a friendly, respectful and inclusive environment
- Have high but achievable expectations for student learning and behaviour
- Promote positive and supportive teacher-student relationships
- Promote positive and supportive peer relationships
- Use positive approaches to manage student behaviour
- Foster a range of strategies to prevent and respond to bullying
- Provide a range of extra-curricula learning activities to foster social interaction, team spirit and school pride
- Notice and intervene when students experience problems related to learning or wellbeing

Strategic Plan 2013-2016.

Our School Review was conducted in 2012 and led to our new Strategic Plan for 2013-2016. Our Strategic Plan 2013-2016 centres around the achievement of the following four goals:

Student Learning:

1. To improve student learning achievements in Years 7 – 12 with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy

Student Engagement and Wellbeing:

2. To have a high level of student wellbeing where students are motivated and engaged with a strong sense of connectedness to their peers, the school and their teachers.

Student Pathways and Transitions:

3. To apply successful transition programs and initiatives for all students, coming into, moving through and leaving the school.
4. To maximise the continuing education, training and employment options for all students.

Our Vision:

Excellamus – Let us excel.

At Cohuna Secondary College we:

- Treat all people with respect;
 - Actively engage in diverse learning experiences;
 - Create and utilise opportunities to enhance our capabilities;
 - Care for and support each other within the school and the wider community;
- and
- Strive for excellence in all that we do.

2 Whole-school prevention statement

The following "Golden Rules" are displayed in every classroom and are in our students' Ibis Organiser:

At Cohuna Secondary College we treat all people with respect and we focus on our learning.

This means:

- *we listen attentively;*
- *we do our work promptly;*
- *we speak thoughtfully; and*
- *we appreciate people's differences.*

and we do NOT:

- *use 'put-downs' or insults; or*
- *disrupt others' learning.*

It also means we treat our own, others' and the school's property with care.

We strive for excellence in all that we do.

Let us excel!

The Key Improvement Strategies for Student Engagement and Well-Being from our Strategic Plan are:

- * The focus of professional learning of teachers in relation to Student Engagement and Wellbeing is on sustainable change of practice initiatives for the whole school.
- * Behaviour management and associated discipline practice is reviewed as a priority in the context of restorative practices and that the outcomes are whole school policy.
- * The evidence of, and the relationship between staff, parent and student surveys is prominent in providing a focus for relevant student engagement and well being improvement initiatives, and in establishing priorities.

Student Wellbeing: Early Intervention

Cohuna Secondary College believes that a successful behaviour management approach is far more than a single program or product. It is an ongoing process involving every member of the school community. Cohuna Secondary College's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy highlights the values of the school community and the behaviours it expects will be demonstrated. It links very closely to our preventative approach through empowering students to recognize and accept responsibility for how they choose to behave. Our focus is on expectations rather than rules, consequences rather than punishments and problem solving rather than conflict. Our conversations with students are characterized by expression such as getting along, tolerance, personal choice, cooperation and respect.

While our focus is on promoting appropriate behavior, consequences may be provided when students choose to behave in inappropriate ways. In most circumstances, this will usually involve the inappropriate behavior being identified and the student given an opportunity to modify their behavior. If a student chooses not to respond to this warning, further consequences will be imposed.

Our approach to student management in the yard is similar to that in the classroom, with the same expectations and values being promoted. Teachers supervising in the yard acknowledge appropriate behavior and deal with inappropriate behavior.

Student Management is most effective when parents, students and teachers work together to establish the values and expectations of the school community and appropriate behavior in the classroom and the yard. In some circumstances, parents will be invited to join with their child's teacher to develop an individual learning plan to assist their child develop appropriate behavior patterns in the classroom or the yard. An individual learning plan will identify the skills to be developed and will outline strategies to be used at school and, if appropriate, at home. We place great importance on this partnership and value the support of parents and students.

The school promotes the philosophy of: "It's Not Okay To Be Away". Going to school every day is important for a student's education. Absence from school means that learning opportunities are reduced and this can ultimately lead to poor student achievement. Where this happens, the impact may be felt long after the student has left school.

We encourage parents to notify the school if their child is going to be absent. Year Level Co ordinators or the AP contact the parents if a student is absent for more than 2 days. The importance of regular attendance is promoted in the newsletter.

(1)

Whole School Opportunity

Parent/teacher interviews, Reports, School Values,
Student Leadership: Student Representative Council, Special events: ANZAC Day, hosting visiting Japanese students, Information Nights, Assemblies
Teaching and Learning: Maths/Science Competitions, Science Week activities, Instrumental Music, Public Speaking, Assemblies, Eisteddfods,
Wellbeing: Arts Performances, Cybersafety, House Sports, Interschool Sports, Band, Theatre Restaurant, Individual Learning Plans, Individual Behaviour Plans, Interim Reports,

(2)

Targeted Group Opportunity

Student Leadership: School Captains, House Captains, Youth Council, Lions Club Youth of the Year, Future Leaders, Student membership of school and community committees.
Volunteering and Community Service: Cohuna Show, Combined Primary School Cluster Sports, Footy Clinics, the Village, Men's Health Program, Waiting on tables at community events, Cambodia Alternative Schoolies, Remembrance Day Wreath laying,
Wellbeing: Keys Please and Look After Your Mates, Wellbeing performances/activities, Arts Connect, CSC Art Show, Bogong Ski Camp, Tasmania Camp, Year 8 3 day camp, Year 11 Melbourne Orientation, Transition activities, Information Nights, Chaplain, Social Worker, Psychologist, Year 12 Police talk, end of year activities,
Excursions/Incursions: FLO (Flexible Learning Options), VCE Top Arts/VCE Art Gallery excursions, VCE Physics/Chemistry/Biology field trips, CSIRO activities,
Teaching and Learning: Maths splitting at year 10, On Demand Testing, Naplan, PAT-R, Morphographics, Year 10 Exams, Debating,
Transitions and Pathways: Year 7 Warrnambool Camp, VET, VCAL, Careers Counselling, Careers Expos, School Based Apprenticeships, School Based Study sessions, Careers based elective subject.

(3)

Individual Intervention and Opportunity

Wellbeing: Chaplain, Social Worker, Psychologist, CAMHS, Doctor, Youth Connections, Private Counsellor, Alternative Educational Programs, Behaviour Plans, Individual Learning Plans, Student Support Group Meetings,

3 Rights and Responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles

Every member of our 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.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

Under the act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of the following attributes:

- age
- breastfeeding
- gender identity
- impairment
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status or status as carer
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association (with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes).

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

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

- Freedom□
- Respect□
- Equality
- 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 privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural Rights

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

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

- Encourage compliance with the Charter□
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and□
- Respect and promote human rights

Part of the monitoring of Human Rights will be to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist on the School Compliance web site.

3.4 Students with disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 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.

We are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with a 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, we take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability;
- his or her preferred adjustment;
- any adjustments that have been provided previously; and
- 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.

We seek to 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. We also seek to 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.

We 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.

3.5 Bullying and Harassment

Definitions

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that is carried out through use of an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings).

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of;
- spreading of rumours online;
- sending unwanted messages; and
- defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include:

- poor health – anxiety, depression;
- lower self esteem;
- reduced study performance;
- missed classes, social withdrawal; and
- reduced career prospects.

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle: (the most common form)

They include:

- offensive staring and leering;
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference;
- racist or smutty comments or jokes;
- questions about another's sexual activity;
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family;
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body; and/or
- offensive name calling.

Explicit: (obvious)

They include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc.;
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing;
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal;
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail;
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks;
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography; and/pr
- requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

Bullying can involve such things as

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving;
- publicly excluding a person from your group;
- taking or breaking a person's property;
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk; and/or
- teasing a person because of their looks.

Cyberbullying

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (eg copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information
(formerly called 'stranger danger')
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something is 'not quite right'.
At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop; and/or
- discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn; • work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition; • experience success; • participate fully in the school's educational program; and • have issues about their learning listened to and addressed. 	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend regularly; • participate fully in the school's educational program; • display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school and community; • demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, and contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students; • take increasing 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.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged; • have opportunities for a variety of learning experiences; • continue to develop over time; • have their learning reported regularly and accurately throughout the year; and • Parents can expect to be welcomed at their child's school. 	<p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours; • ensure their child's regular attendance; • engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning; and • support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
Teachers have a right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment; and • be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student. 	Teachers have a responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treat all students fairly and plan for the needs of the individual student; • know how students learn and how to teach them effectively; • know the content they teach; • know their students; • plan and assess for effective learning; • create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments; • use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning; and • fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy.

4. Shared Expectations

Our Vision:

Excellamus – Let us excel.

At Cohuna Secondary College we:

- Treat all people with respect;
 - Actively engage in diverse learning experiences;
 - Create and utilise opportunities to enhance our capabilities;
 - Care for and support each other within the school and the wider community;
- and
- Strive for excellence in all that we do.

At Cohuna Secondary College we:

- **treat all people with respect;** and
- **we focus on our learning.**

This means that we:

- listen attentively;
- do our work promptly and cooperatively;
- speak thoughtfully;
- use our manners; and
- appreciate people's differences.

It also means we treat our own, others' and the school's property with care.

We strive for excellence in all that we do.

Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Like all schools, we 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.

The school's values are based on the Australian Government's nine *Values for Australian Schools*, which are:

• Care and Compassion

Care for self and others

• Integrity

Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds

• Doing Your Best

Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence

• Respect

Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view

• Fair Go

Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society

• Responsibility

Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment

• Freedom

Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others

• Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion

Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

• Honesty and Trustworthiness

Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

School expectations include:

- inclusive teaching practices
- accessible educational provision for all students
- parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success
- provision of appropriate student services
- development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.

Restorative Practices

The school focus in on restorative practice processes. This means that 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)
- separate the deed from the doer (Marshall et al. 2002)
- 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).

Diversity in the school community

The school aims to address diversity by:

- maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community;□
- attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer□
- increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce□
- enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs
- creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems.

5. School Actions and Consequences

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments;
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations;
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students;
- consistently acknowledging all students;
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making, such as in the SRC; and
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- understanding the student's background and needs;
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers;
- providing consistent school and classroom environments; and
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

Protocols

When a student is disrespectful or not focussed on their learning then they will receive a warning and then face the consequences of their actions.

The consequence may be being:

- moved within the classroom;
- asked to leave the classroom for a short period of time;
- involved in a mediation meeting with other students and the teacher;
- sent to see their Year Level Coordinator (in this situation, the teacher will write an *Incident Report* for the Coordinator);
- asked to do community service (e.g. rubbish collection, gardening);
- held after school for detention;
- called to a meeting with their parent(s) and their Coordinator to work out a plan;
- put on a *Behaviour Card* to be signed in each class and by a parent each night;

- removed from class for an *Internal Suspension*; and/or
- removed from school on one or more days for an *External Suspension*.

Restorative Practice Questions: which may be used by teachers and coordinators with students

1. What happened (What did you do to be sent here?)
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you thought about since?
4. Who has been affected by your actions? In what way?
5. What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Broader support strategies include:

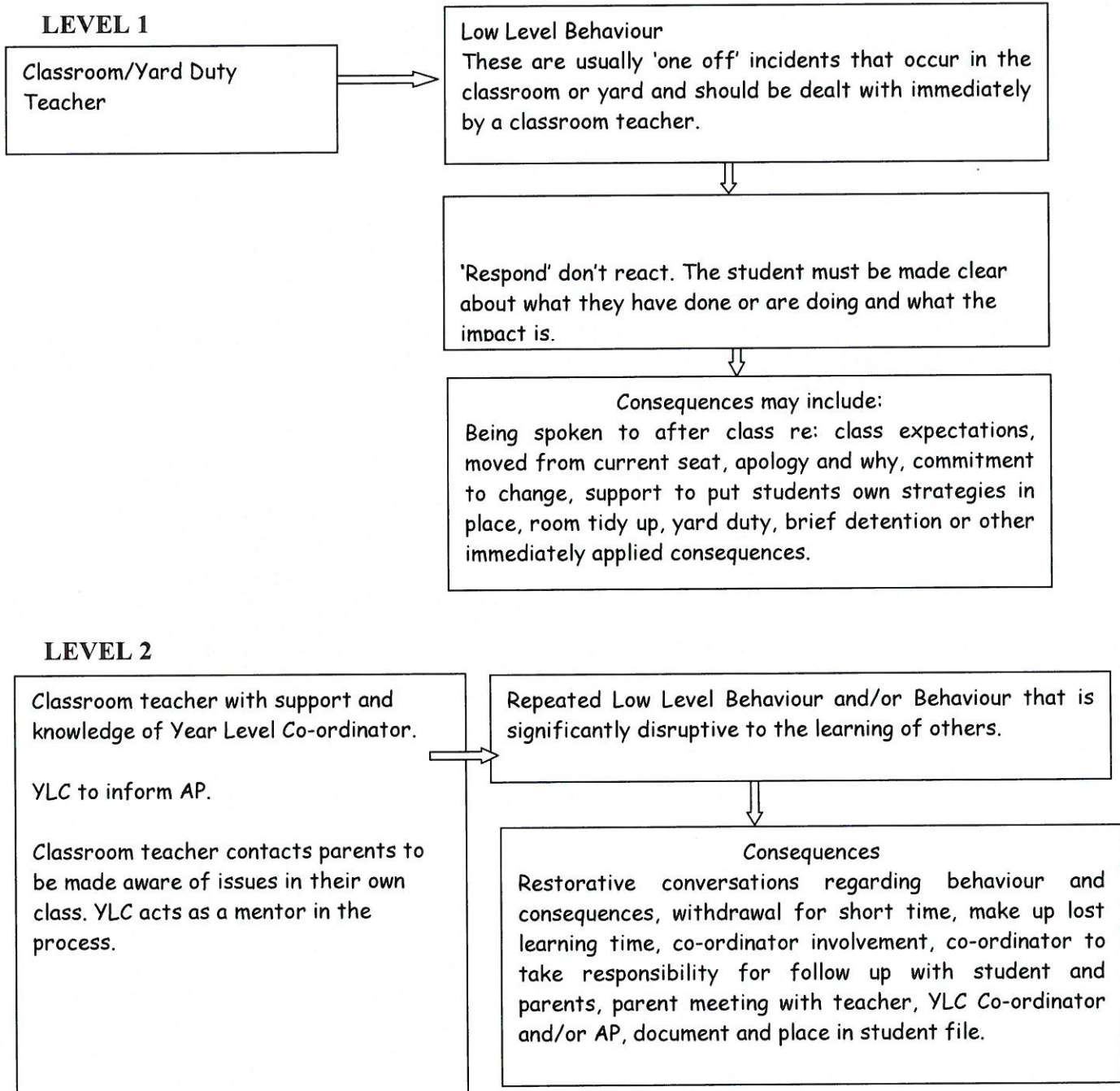
- involving and supporting the parents/carers;
- involving the Wellbeing Manager, Year Level Coordinator, Pathways and Transitions Manager, Assistant Principal and/or Principal;
- tutoring/peer tutoring;
- mentoring and/or counselling;
- convening Student Support Group (SSG) meetings – the SSG is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour;
- developing individualised, flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans;
- providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts; and
- involving community support agencies such as Northern District Community Health and Youth Connections.

Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment will NOT be used at Cohuna Secondary College under any circumstances.

Protocol for dealing with Student Management

Intervention should be based on a 'Restorative Practice Model' that allows students the opportunity to consider the impact of their actions, have consequences applied that are appropriate, re-engage them in their work and restore their place in the classroom and college community. Consequences must be consistent and use positive language to support behaviour change.

The following are general descriptions of types of behaviour that students may exhibit. They are not exhaustive or comprehensive. Consequences are also not exhaustive and are examples only. NOTE: Where intervention or consequence is required these should be recorded in the log books in the AP's Office.



LEVEL 3

Significant lack of respect for self and others right to learn.

Behaviour that is repeated, escalates, or an unwillingness to comply with requests or change around negative behaviour (including bullying in all its forms), may be abusive toward teacher or other students.

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour.

Inappropriate access of material via the school ICT network.

Ongoing behaviour that has not responded to other intervention strategies.

Teacher to provide information to the year level coordinator and the YLC engages with the AP. The AP engages with the Principal on issues affecting the student. The Principal may become involved in the discussions.

Parents contacted and engaged in the solution/consequences for these actions.

AP may enlist additional support which may include: Pathways/YouthConnections/Social/Worker/Chaplain/Psychologist and/or other services.




Consequences

Parents informed and formal meetings conducted (address strategies and consequences). The AP in conjunction with the YLC will decide on student attendance: suspension, support for both student and parents, formal plan which is to be regularly reviewed, modification to a student's timetable, internal/external support, restricted attendance at school, significant school privileges revoked (including excursions participation in sport, formal or other events), referral to outside agencies such as Youth Connections.

Acts of violence=student may be sent home after parents contacted.

LEVEL 4

Repeated behaviour that has not responded to any of the strategies in 1,2 or 3. 

Significant disruption to the learning of others.

High level threatening, violent or aggressive behaviour.

Behaviour that encourages or supports other students to undertake activities that show significant negative actions toward the College (including unlawful conduct).

Chronic or high level disengagement or absenteeism that has not responded to other interventions.

AP & YLC work together through this process. The AP engages with the Principal on the issues and strategies that have been used. The Principal will become involved in the process at this point.



Consequences

Formal suspension, restricted school attendance, communication with DEECD regional office staff to consider further support and/or schooling options, ILP or BLP developed and implemented on return to school,

NOTE: In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for the College to involve Police or other services dependent on the nature of the incident or the behaviour involved. The Principal and/or AP will undertake this task.

Discipline Procedures – Suspension and Expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, we follow the procedures listed in section 4.3 of the DEECD guidelines published in *Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*. Appendices 12 to 18 of the guidelines provide flowcharts and proformas that we use in suspension and expulsion procedures.

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.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges.
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time. These may be part-day or whole day "Internal Suspensions".
Where appropriate, parents/carers are informed of such withdrawals.
- Community Service – i.e. cleaning desktops, rubbish collection, gardening, etc.
- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish schoolwork that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess or lunchtime may be used for this work.
Where a student is required to undertake Detention after school, the time will not exceed forty-five minutes. The principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before of any after-school detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship (for example, where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.
- Convening of a Support Group that may include a team of people including parents and teachers (See *Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines* for our process).
- We have a zero tolerance of violence. Any act of violence will result in an automatic external suspension.

References

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/codeofconduct.htm
School Accountability and Improvement Framework	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm
Effective Schools are Engaging Schools	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm
Safe Schools	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/default.htm
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchhrcharter.htm http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eo/eoact.htm
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf



• Cohuna Secondary College

• *Excellamus: Let us excel*

BULLYING (including cyber-bullying) AND HARASSMENT POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that **bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.**

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

What are bullying, cyber bullying and harassment?

Definitions

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person. **Harassment** is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle: (the most common form)

They include:

- offensive staring and leering;
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference;
- racist or smutty comments or jokes;
- questions about another's sexual activity;
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family;
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body; and/or
- offensive name calling.

Explicit: (obvious)

They include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc.;
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing;
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal;
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail;
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks;
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography; and
- requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group. This may be done in different ways; by hurtful teasing, threatening actions or gestures, name-calling, hitting or kicking, sending offensive messages, or deliberately leaving someone out. It is not considered to be bullying if people of equal strength or power have an odd quarrel or fight.

Bullying can involve such things (but are not limited to) as:

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving;
- publicly excluding a person from your group;
- taking or breaking a person's property;
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk; and/or
- teasing a person because of their looks.

Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as mobile phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It may involve text or images (photos, drawings). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of;
- spreading of rumours online;
- sending unwanted messages; and
- defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (eg copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information (formerly called 'stranger danger')
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something is 'not quite right'.

At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop; and/or
- discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. 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.

GUIDELINES

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

All new students and staff will be informed of the anti-harassment 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 will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti- Harassment Policy, guidelines and procedures (see Appendix A).

PROGRAM

Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school's induction process.

The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.

If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.

Student programs will be organized to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials eg eSmart& Bully Stoppers.

Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.

The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.

Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Welfare and Discipline Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines.

LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's [Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DET's [Safe Schools are Effective School's](#)
- DET's [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- The school's Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- DET's [Respectful Schools](#)

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures
- Appendix B: Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Appendix A

Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures

What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying** – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student'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
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual Conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is 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. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

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, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

Cyber-bullying

Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Harassment

Is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Why do we have a Policy on these?

To provide a safe and friendly college environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act*.

What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?

- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

Am I bullying or harassing someone?

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

What are some of the feelings victims of bullying or harassment may experience?

- **"I will ignore it and it will go away."**
If anything it will make things worse - you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.
- **"I don't want to cause trouble."**
Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.
- **"Am I to blame?"**
Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.
- **"Am I imagining things?"**
Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
- intimidated or frightened
- uncomfortable

What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

Tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

Bullying can involve

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyber-bullying can involve

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities – it can be subtle or explicit

Subtle (the most common) they include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours
- extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution

What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- discuss the matter with a Coordinator, Assistant Principal or a teacher that you feel comfortable with
- the school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially

How will your complaint be dealt with?

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

Level 1

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the student welfare coordinator or assistant principal/ principal.

Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the Assistant Principal.

Here, the Assistant Principal (Wellbeing) may:

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"

Level 3

For 'at risk' students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual 'strength building' plan should be developed by the student welfare coordinator in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

Level 4

Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Student Welfare Coordinators will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student's family.

Note: The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with '*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*' (DET) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment.

• Cohuna Secondary College

• *Excellamus: Let us excel*



Medication Authority Policy

This form should be completed ideally by the student's medical/health practitioner, for all medication to be administered at school. For those students with asthma, an Asthma Foundation's *School Asthma Action Plan* should be completed instead. For those students with anaphylaxis, an ASCIA *Action Plan for Anaphylaxis* should be completed instead. These forms are available from the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA): <http://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/ascia-plans-action-and-treatment>.

Please only complete those sections in this form which are relevant to the student's health support needs.

Name of School: _____

Student's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

MedicAlert Number (if relevant): _____ Review date for this form: _____

Please Note: wherever possible, medication should be scheduled outside the school hours, e.g. medication required three times a day is generally not required during a school day: it can be taken before and after school and before bed.

Medication required:				
Name of Medication/s	Dosage (amount)	Time/s to be taken	How is it to be taken? (eg orally/topical/injection)	Dates
				Start date: / / End Date: / / <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing medication
				Start date: / / End Date: / / <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing medication
				Start date: / / End Date: / / <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing medication
				Start date: / / End Date: / / <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing medication

Medication Storage
Please indicate if there are specific storage instructions for the medication:

Medication delivered to the school
Please ensure that medication delivered to the school:

- Is in its original package
- The pharmacy label matches the information included in this form.

Self-management of medication

Students in the early years will generally need supervision of their medication and other aspects of health care management. In line with their age and stage of development and capabilities, older students can take responsibility for their own health care. Self-management should follow agreement by the student and his/her parents/carers, the school and the student's medical/health practitioner.

Please advise if this person's condition creates any difficulties with self-management, for example, difficulty remembering to take medication at a specified time or difficulties coordinating equipment:

Monitoring effects of Medication

Please note: School staff *do not* monitor the effects of medication and will seek emergency medical assistance if concerned about a student's behaviour following medication.

Privacy Statement

The school collects personal information so as the school can plan and support the health care needs of the student. Without the provision of this information the quality of the health support provided may be affected. The information may be disclosed to relevant school staff and appropriate medical personnel, including those engaged in providing health support as well as emergency personnel, where appropriate, or where authorised or required by another law. You are able to request access to the personal information that we hold about you/your child and to request that it be corrected. Please contact the school directly or FOI Unit on 96372670.

Authorisation:

Name of Medical/health practitioner:

Professional Role:

Signature:

Date:

Contact details:

Name of Parent/Carer or adult/Mature minor:**

Signature:

Date:

If additional advice is required, please attach it to this form

**Please note: Mature minor is a student who is capable of making their own decisions on a range of issues, before they reach eighteen years of age. (See: [Decision Making Responsibility for Students - School Policy and Advisory Guide](#)).



Cohuna Secondary College

Excellamus: Let us excel

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Statement

A broad range of professional groups are identified in the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) as mandatory reporters. Mandated staff members must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

The following professionals are prescribed as mandatory reporters under section 182 of the CYFA:

- primary and secondary school teachers and principals (including students in training to become teachers)
- registered medical practitioners (including psychiatrists)
- nurses (including school nurses)
- police.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to make a report. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

Non-mandated staff members

Section 183 of the CYFA states that **any person**, who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused
- a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused.
- the staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child or young person's safety, stability or development
- the staff member observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
- a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

Reporting a belief

Staff members, whether or not mandated, need to report their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

Protecting the identity of the reporter

Confidentiality is provided for reporters under the CYFA. The CYFA prevents disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with legislation, except in specific circumstances.

The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family of the report
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- a court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

Information provided during a protective investigation may be used in a court report if the risks to the child or young person require the case to proceed to court. In these circumstances, the source of the information may be required to provide evidence to the court.

If Child Protection decides that the report is about a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child, they may refer the report to a community-based child and family service and disclose the identity of the reporter to that service. However, the CYFA provides that neither Child Protection nor the community-based child and family service may disclose the reporter's identity to any other person without the reporter's consent.

Professional protection for reporters

If a report is made in good faith:

- it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter
- the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

This means that a person who makes a report in accordance with the legislation will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation of the report.

Failure to report

A failure by mandated professionals and staff members to report a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse may result in the person being prosecuted and a court imposing a fine under the CYFA.

Making a report to Child Protection

The CYFA allows for two types of reports to be made in relation to significant concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child – a report to Child Protection or a referral to Child FIRST.

A report to Child Protection should be considered if, after taking into account all of the available information, the staff member forms a view that the child or young person is in need of protection because:

- the harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development
- the harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development
- the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child or young person from harm.

Where during the course of carrying out their normal duties, a school staff member forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, the staff member must make a report to Child Protection regarding this belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as practicable.

Staff members may form a professional judgement or belief, in the course of undertaking their professional duties based on:

- warning signs or indicators of harm that have been observed or inferred from information about the child
- legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting
- knowledge of child and adolescent development

- consultation with colleagues and other professionals
- professional obligations and duty-of-care responsibilities
- established protocols
- internal policies and procedures in an individual licensed children's service or school.

Upon receipt of a report, Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required.

In most circumstances, Child Protection will inform the reporter of the outcome of the report. When the report is classified by Child Protection as a Wellbeing Report, Child Protection will, in turn, make a referral to Child FIRST.

Any person who is registered as a teacher under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, or any person who has been granted permission to teach under that Act, including principals, is mandated to make a report to Child Protection. In the course of undertaking their professional duties, mandated staff members are required to report their belief, when the belief is formed on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury.

School policy and procedures stipulate how teaching staff fulfil their duty of care towards children and young people in their school.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the principal/assistant principal or a member of the school leadership team. If a principal/assistant principal or member of the leadership team does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the teacher's obligation to do so if they have formed a reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred. If the teacher's concerns continue, even after consultation with the principal or member of the leadership team, that teacher is still legally obliged to make a mandatory report of their concerns.

Information about the identity of a person making a report to Child Protection must be kept confidential unless the reporter consents to the disclosure of their identity. If the staff member wishes to remain anonymous, this information should be conveyed at the time that the reporter makes the mandatory report.

The role of school staff

School staff have a duty of care to protect and preserve the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care and staff must always act in the best interests of those children and young people. If a staff member has any concerns regarding the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person it is important to take immediate action.

Note: The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.

The roles and responsibilities of staff in supporting children and young people who are involved with Child Protection may include acting as a support person for students, attending Child Protection case plan meetings, observing and monitoring students' behaviour, and liaising with professionals.

Confidentiality

Staff must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of suspected child abuse and neglect, and may discuss case details and the identity of the child or the young person and their family only with those involved in managing the situation.

When a child or young person has moved to another school, professional judgement should be exercised as to what information needs to be passed on. This will be guided by usual procedures for passing on information about a child's general wellbeing or special needs, and the role of the school in any ongoing care plans.

Interviews at Victorian schools

Child Protection may conduct interviews of children and young people at school without parental knowledge or consent. However, a child will be interviewed at a Victorian school only in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the child's best interests to proceed in this manner. Child Protection will notify the school of any intention to interview a child or young person. This may occur regardless of whether the school is the source of the report to Child Protection. When Child Protection practitioners arrive at the school, the principal or their nominee should ask to see their identification before allowing Child Protection to have access to the child or young person.

Support persons

Children and young people should be advised of their right to have a supportive adult present during interviews. If a child is too young to understand the significance of the interview, a staff member should make arrangements for a supportive adult to attend with the child.

A staff member may be identified as a support person for the child or young person during the interview. Prior to the commencement of the interview, the Child Protection practitioner should always authorise the staff member to receive information regarding Child Protection's investigation.

This may occur verbally or in writing using the relevant Child Protection proforma.

Independent persons must refrain from providing their opinions or accounts of events during interviews. A principal or their delegate may act as an independent person when the child or young person is to be interviewed, unless they believe that doing so will create a conflict of interest.

Advising parents, carers or guardians

Staff **do not require** the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.

It is the responsibility of Child Protection to advise the parents, carers or guardians of the interview at the earliest possible opportunity. This should occur either before, or by the time the child arrives home

Ensuring that a Child Protection interview takes place

The school does not have the power to prevent parents, carers or guardians from removing their children from the school and should not attempt to prevent the parents, carers or guardians from collecting the child. If a parent/carer or guardian removes a child before a planned interview has taken place, the principal and/or their nominee should contact Child Protection or Victoria Police immediately.

Staff Training

Staff will be informed of Mandatory Reporting requirements as part of their initial induction to the school and will be provided with supporting documentation in their staff handbook.

Updates will take place annually as part of the Performance and Development/Staff meeting rotation.

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/protecting-children-together>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children%2c-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource>

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/586465/information-guide-registered-teachers-principals.pdf

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse>

Date Implemented	August 2015
Author	
Approved By	School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
Date Reviewed	
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Review Date	November 2016

Cohuna Secondary College

Excellamus: Let us excel



DUTY OF CARE POLICY and PROCEDURES

All government school staff will be made aware of their legal responsibilities. As part of the government school principal contract, government school principals are required to plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of students.

Definition

Whenever a student–teacher relationship exists, the teacher has a special duty of care. This is defined as: “A teacher is to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect a student under the teacher’s charge from risks of injury that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen.” (*Richards v State of Victoria* (1969) VR 136 at p. 141) As part of that duty, teachers are required to supervise students adequately. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from those that could arise (that is, those that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen) and against which preventive measures could be taken.

School authorities in breach of the duty of care may be liable for injuries inflicted by one student on another, as well as for injuries sustained by a student.

Schools normally satisfy the duty of care by allocating responsibilities to different staff. For example, the principal is responsible for making and administering such arrangements for supervision as are necessary according to the circumstances in each school, and teachers are responsible for carrying out their assigned supervisory duties in such a way that students are, as far as can be reasonably expected, protected from injury. This duty extends to intervention in single-sex areas if need be by a teacher of the other gender.

Rationale:

In addition to their professional obligations, principals and teachers have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to protect students in their charge from risks of injury that are reasonably foreseeable.

Aims:

To ensure that staff have an understanding of their duty of care to students, and behave in a manner that does not compromise these legal obligations.

Implementation:

- Although the general duty is to take reasonable steps to protect students from reasonably foreseeable risks of injury, specific (but not exhaustive) requirements of the duty involve providing adequate supervision in the school or on school activities as well as providing safe and suitable buildings, grounds and equipment.
- A teacher’s duty of care is not confined to the geographic area of the school, or to school activities, or to activities occurring outside the school where a student is acting on a teacher’s instructions. The duty also applies to situations both before and after school where a teacher can be deemed to have ‘assumed’ the teacher pupil relationship.
- Quite apart from mandatory reporting requirements, a teacher has a concurrent duty of care to protect a student from harm that is reasonably foreseeable. A breach of this duty of care may lead to legal action being taken against the individual teacher or teachers concerned. A breach of this duty of care will be established if a teacher or principal failed to take immediate and positive steps after having acquired actual knowledge or formed a belief that there is a risk that a child is being abused or neglected, including sexual abuse.
- The teacher’s duty of care is greater than that of the ordinary citizen in that a teacher is obliged to protect a student from reasonably foreseeable harm or to assist an injured student, while the ordinary citizen does not have a legal obligation to respond.

- Whilst each case regarding a teacher's legal duty of care will be judged on the circumstances that occurred at the time, the following common examples may be times when a teacher has failed to meet their legal duty of care responsibilities to their students:-
 - arriving late to scheduled timetabled yard duty responsibilities
 - failing to act appropriately to protect a student who claims to be bullied
 - believing that a child is being abused but failing to report the matter appropriately
 - being late to supervise the line up of students after the bell has sounded
 - leaving students unattended in the classroom
 - failing to instruct a student who is not wearing a hat to play in the shade
 - ignoring dangerous play
 - leaving the school during time release without approval
 - inadequate supervision on a school excursion
- Staff members are also cautioned against giving advice on matters that they are not professionally competent to give (negligent advice). Advice is to be limited to areas within a teacher's own professional competence and given in situations arising from a role (such as careers teacher, year level coordinator or subject teacher) specified for them by the principal.
- Teachers must ensure that the advice they give is correct and, where appropriate, in line with the most recent available statements from institutions or employers. Teachers should not give advice in areas outside those related to their role where they may lack expertise.

Risks to students outside the school environment

Legal cases establish that a teacher's duty of care does not start nor end at precise times during the day. The approach generally taken is that a teacher's duty applies irrespective whether the risk occurs in or outside the school environment. However, the important issue in all cases will be whether the school took **reasonable steps** to protect the student from the risk.

Risks outside the school environment may sometimes call for immediate and positive steps by a school depending on the age of students, urgency and threat of injury. Consider for example, if a live power line came down outside the school, no emergency workers had arrived, and students are about to be dismissed to walk home. No school would allow the students to walk out to that danger unsupervised.

There will be a number of other situations where the school will be under a duty to take reasonable steps. In some instances, the school's control over the activity may require it to take more active measures to satisfy the requirement that it take reasonable steps. For example, a known bully on a school bus may require the school to suspend or refuse to transport the bully. In other instances, the school may not control the activity, and the reasonable measures available to it will be limited.

While students are generally free to move around the buildings and work independently in break out spaces and designated study areas they must be under (indirect) adult supervision at all times.

Staff are responsible for their students at all times.

The following instructions and notices **apply to all staff.**

Classroom Supervision

- It is **not** appropriate to leave students in the care of ancillary staff, parents or trainee teachers (At law, the Duty of care cannot be delegated)
- It is **not** appropriate to leave students in the care of external education providers for example incursions (At law, the Duty of care cannot be delegated)
- In **an emergency situation** use the phone for the Principal or Assistant Principal or contact the teacher in the next room. (if appropriate – send another student for assistance)
- **No student** should be left unsupervised **outside the classroom** as a withdrawal consequence for misbehaviour. Withdrawal is to be conducted by sending a student to a colleague's classroom, or to the Assistant Principal or Principal. This should be accompanied by documentation and appropriate follow up. The teacher, Principal or Assistant Principal **is to be contacted first** to alert them that the student is on their way.

Movement of Students

- Care needs to be taken in allowing students to leave the room to work in other areas of the school.
- Use of students as monitors outside the room during class time must only occur with the approval of the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Discretion is to be used when allowing students to visit the toilet or the Library during class time.

Yard supervision

- Yard supervision is an essential element in teachers' duty of care. It is now clearly established that in supervising students, teacher's duty of care is one of positive action.

- Be aware that students are usually less constrained and more prone to accident and injury than in a more closely supervised classroom.
- Be aware that yard duty supervision within the school requires the teacher to fully comply with DET guidelines and brings with it an increased duty of care. It is a teacher's responsibility to be aware of these guidelines and duty of care responsibilities. Teachers are also expected to follow College policy whilst on yard duty.
- Teachers rostered for duty are to attend the designated area at the time indicated on the roster.
- Teachers on duty are to remain in the designated area until the end of the break period or until replaced by the relieving teacher, whichever is applicable.
- The handing over of duty from one teacher to another must be quite definite and **must occur in the area of designated duty**. Where a relieving teacher does not arrive for duty, the teacher currently on duty should send a message to the Daily Organiser, Assistant Principal or Principal, **but not leave the area until replaced**.
- No changes to the yard duty roster are to be made without the approval of the Daily organiser, or Assistant Principal.
- Be alert and vigilant -intervene **immediately** if potentially dangerous behaviour is observed in the yard.
- You should always be on the move and highly visible.

Excursions, Incursions and Camps

- Be aware that students are usually less constrained and more prone to accident and injury than in a more closely supervised classroom.
- Be aware that an incursion with an external provider does not absolve supervision duties of the teacher, including first aid duties. A teacher must be present at all times and remain the person designated with duty of care responsibilities.
- Be aware that camps and excursions outside the school require the teacher to fully comply with DET guidelines and bring with it an increased duty of care. It is a teacher's responsibility to be aware of these guidelines and remain the person designated with duty of care.
- Be aware that excursion and camp activities require the teacher to ensure that the venue and transport adhere to DET guidelines.
- Be aware that school policy is for students to be counted on and off transport and at other times on a regular basis whilst on excursion or camp activities.
- The teacher in charge will have copies of all confidential medical forms and permission notes with contact details. A copy of this material will also be kept at school.
- Arrangements will be made for students not attending to continue their normal program at school under supervision of another classroom teacher.
- The teacher in charge or designated teacher of an excursion or camp will carry a mobile phone and a first aid kit.
- If the return time from an excursion or camp is delayed, the teacher in charge will contact the school to inform the General Office and/or Assistant Principal of the new arrival time so that parents can be contacted.
- If crossing roads students are to use designated crossing points. Staff are to walk to the middle of the crossing to ensure visibility and orderly crossing. Other staff control the flow of students across the road.
 All staff must follow the DET guidelines when organising an excursion, incursion or camp. All procedural steps contained in the School camping, excursions and incursions Policy and Procedure outlines must also be followed.

Informing Staff of the legislative liability of Duty of Care

All staff will be informed of their legal requirement via:-

- A copy of this document will be provided to each member of staff at the first staff meeting at the commencement of the school year, and will be placed on the intranet.
- New staff will be informed of their Duty of Care as part of the school's Induction Program
- Duty of Care will be an agenda item at staff meetings and staff will be directed to familiarise themselves with section Student Safety of the Victorian Government Schools Policy Advisory Guide.
- Staff will complete a risk assessment including duty of care when completing planning for camps, excursions and incursions.
- Staff will be directed to the student wellbeing policy annually.

Date Implemented	Term 3 2015
Author	N/A
Approved By	School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
Date Reviewed	July 2015
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Review Date	February 2017
References	Victorian Government Schools Policy Advisory Guide

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Adequate supervision of students in the school is a requirement of the school's duty of care. The school will normally satisfy the duty of care for the on-site management of students outside normal timetabled class time by allocating responsibilities for supervision to different staff. The principal is responsible for making and administering such arrangements for supervision as are necessary according to the circumstances in the school, and teachers are responsible for carrying out their assigned supervisory duties in such a way that students are, as far as can be reasonably expected, protected from injury.

This duty extends to intervention in single-sex areas if need be by a teacher of the other gender. **This applies to emergency situations ONLY.**

GUIDELINES

2.1 As part of its duty of care the school is required to adequately supervise students for a defined period before school; at recess time and lunch time; and after school. This on-site supervision requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from those that could arise (that is, those the teacher should reasonably have foreseen) and against which preventive measures could be taken.

2.2 It is essential parents/carers are kept informed as to when supervision of students is available before and after school, and that outside these times supervision and/or the collection of students is the responsibility of parents/carers. This information should be clearly provided to parents/guardians on a regular basis.

2.3 Parents/carers may require their child to leave the school grounds to:

- go home for lunch
- be dismissed early from school to attend an appointment

It is important the school has a process to authorize these requests and accurate student records are maintained.

PROGRAM

3.1.1 A roster system will be used to timetable staff members for yard supervision.

Yard supervision will include before school, recess and lunch breaks, and after school.

3.1.2 In determining whether supervision of students entering or exiting the school is adequate, the principal or their nominee will consider a number of factors including:

- which entry/exit points should be or are used by students
- whether any entry or exit points should be locked, designated as out of bounds, or supervised
- road traffic conditions
- designated pick up and drop off areas

3.1.3 The supervision of the arrival and departure of any school contract buses is a matter for the discretion of the principal who will consider the following:

- the number of students alighting from and boarding the bus at the school
- the age of students alighting from or boarding the bus
- the times of the arrival and departure of the bus(es)
- the location of the pick-up and drop-off points in relation to the other areas of the school
- whether supervision is required to protect students on the bus, or from unruly student behaviour when boarding or alighting from the bus

3.1.4 The supervision of the arrival and departure of any students on public transport is a matter for the discretion of the principal who will consider whether supervision is required to protect students on the bus, or from unruly student behaviour when boarding or alighting from the bus.

3.2 Parents/carers are discouraged from sending their children to school before the designated supervision time in the morning. Parents/carers are encouraged to pick up their child by the end of the designated end of day supervision period. Parents will also be informed via the school's newsletter the times when staff members will be rostered to undertake yard supervision before and after school each day.

3.3 The school must receive written permission from a parent/carer before the school will authorise a student to be dismissed to:

- go home for lunch
- to attend an appointment during school hour

Students must be signed out of the school if departing prior to dismissal time. A record of early departures is to be kept in the Administration Office and completed for all students departing the school early.

Note: When a student departs from the school (following initial attendance) without authorisation, the parent/guardian will be informed immediately.

LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/dutyofcare.aspx>

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: On-Site Supervision of Students Procedures

5. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Appendix A

On-Site Supervision of Students Procedures

1. Introduction

The processes outlined below provide adequate and appropriate supervision of students in the school yard so the school fulfills its duty care to its students in terms of on-site supervision.

2. Supervision before and after school

- The school will provide staff supervision for students arriving before school between 8.40am and 9.00am.
- The school will provide staff supervision for students after school between 3.20pm and 3.30pm. However, at Homework Night and Future Leaders classes students will be fully supervised by staff.
- This information is provided to parents/guardians on a regular basis via the school newsletter. Outside of these times the supervision and/or the collection of students is the responsibility of parents/guardians.
- Sufficient teachers will be allocated by the school principal or their nominee to supervise students during these periods
- Should a teacher be called away to other duties alternate supervision arrangements will be put in place in consultation with the Daily Organiser, Assistant Principal or Principal.

1. Supervision at recesses and lunch time

Students are required to be adequately supervised during recesses and lunch times. In order to ensure that students are adequately supervised, a 'Yard Duty Roster' will be created each term allocating teachers to supervise students in defined areas of the school grounds during these times. Details of the roster are communicated to teachers at morning briefings, staff meetings, daily news and via the staff noticeboard.

2. Unauthorised student departure from school

When a student departs from the school (following initial attendance) without authorisation, the parent/guardian will be informed immediately.

Where there is reasonable concern for the student's safety or the safety of others, immediate contact will also be made with the police and the Department's Emergency and Security Management Branch, telephone 9589 6266 (24 hour service).

3. Early departure of students prior to dismissal time

Students must be signed out of the school if departing prior to dismissal time. Students must see the Assistant Principal with a note who will then issue a pass, record their absence/destination/ and give instruction that they must see their Coordinator before departure. Students are also told to sign out and then back in (if returning) in the general office.

A record of early departures is kept in the General Office and completed for all students departing the school early. Details will include the student's name, year level, the time of departure and the name of the person collecting the student.

- No parents/carers are permitted to take students directly from the classroom.
- Students can only be collected by a responsible person 16 years and over.
- No students will be sent home on their own out side of normal dismissal time.

4. Arrangements for students not collected after school

- Parents/guardians will be informed when supervision of students is available before and after school hours and that supervision outside of these times and/or the collection of students is the responsibility of parents/guardians. Students remaining in the school yard awaiting collection after 3.30pm will be directed to the office waiting area.
- If it becomes known that a student who is normally collected from the school, remains at the school well beyond the normal time of collection, attempts will be made to contact the parents/guardians, or the emergency contact person identified by the parent/guardian in the school records.
- Where all reasonable attempts have been made to locate the parents/guardian and the emergency contact persons, and the time is well beyond a reasonable time for collection, consideration will be given to contacting the police or the Department of Human Services and for them to arrange for the care and protection of the student.

Arrangements for student supervision on school camps and excursions

The school will provide supervision ratios in line with the Department's policy as outlined in the Victorian Government Schools School's Policy Advisory Guide section 'Excursions and Activities' depending on the nature and location of the school activity.

•
• **Cohuna Secondary College**

• *Excellamus: Let us excel*



MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Statement

A broad range of professional groups are identified in the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) as mandatory reporters. Mandated staff members must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

The following professionals are prescribed as mandatory reporters under section 182 of the CYFA:

- primary and secondary school teachers and principals (including students in training to become teachers)
- registered medical practitioners (including psychiatrists)
- nurses (including school nurses)
- police.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to make a report. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

Non-mandated staff members

Section 183 of the CYFA states that **any person**, who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused
- a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused.
- the staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child or young person's safety, stability or development
- the staff member observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
- a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

Reporting a belief

Staff members, whether or not mandated, need to report their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

Protecting the identity of the reporter

Confidentiality is provided for reporters under the CYFA. The CYFA prevents disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with legislation, except in specific circumstances.

The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family of the report
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- a court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

Information provided during a protective investigation may be used in a court report if the risks to the child or young person require the case to proceed to court. In these circumstances, the source of the information may be required to provide evidence to the court.

If Child Protection decides that the report is about a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child, they may refer the report to a community-based child and family service and disclose the identity of the reporter to that service. However, the CYFA provides that neither Child Protection nor the community-based child and family service may disclose the reporter's identity to any other person without the reporter's consent.

Professional protection for reporters

If a report is made in good faith:

- it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter
- the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

This means that a person who makes a report in accordance with the legislation will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation of the report.

Failure to report

A failure by mandated professionals and staff members to report a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse may result in the person being prosecuted and a court imposing a fine under the CYFA.

Making a report to Child Protection

The CYFA allows for two types of reports to be made in relation to significant concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child – a report to Child Protection or a referral to Child FIRST.

A report to Child Protection should be considered if, after taking into account all of the available information, the staff member forms a view that the child or young person is in need of protection because:

- the harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development
- the harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development
- the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child or young person from harm.

Where during the course of carrying out their normal duties, a school staff member forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, the staff member must make a report to Child Protection regarding this belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as practicable.

Staff members may form a professional judgement or belief, in the course of undertaking their professional duties based on:

- warning signs or indicators of harm that have been observed or inferred from information about the child
- legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting
- knowledge of child and adolescent development

- consultation with colleagues and other professionals
- professional obligations and duty-of-care responsibilities
- established protocols
- internal policies and procedures in an individual licensed children's service or school.

Upon receipt of a report, Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required.

In most circumstances, Child Protection will inform the reporter of the outcome of the report. When the report is classified by Child Protection as a Wellbeing Report, Child Protection will, in turn, make a referral to Child FIRST.

Any person who is registered as a teacher under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, or any person who has been granted permission to teach under that Act, including principals, is mandated to make a report to Child Protection. In the course of undertaking their professional duties, mandated staff members are required to report their belief, when the belief is formed on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury.

School policy and procedures stipulate how teaching staff fulfil their duty of care towards children and young people in their school.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the principal/assistant principal or a member of the school leadership team. If a principal/assistant principal or member of the leadership team does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the teacher's obligation to do so if they have formed a reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred. If the teacher's concerns continue, even after consultation with the principal or member of the leadership team, that teacher is still legally obliged to make a mandatory report of their concerns.

Information about the identity of a person making a report to Child Protection must be kept confidential unless the reporter consents to the disclosure of their identity. If the staff member wishes to remain anonymous, this information should be conveyed at the time that the reporter makes the mandatory report.

The role of school staff

School staff have a duty of care to protect and preserve the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care and staff must always act in the best interests of those children and young people. If a staff member has any concerns regarding the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person it is important to take immediate action.

Note: The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.

The roles and responsibilities of staff in supporting children and young people who are involved with Child Protection may include acting as a support person for students, attending Child Protection case plan meetings, observing and monitoring students' behaviour, and liaising with professionals.

Confidentiality

Staff must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of suspected child abuse and neglect, and may discuss case details and the identity of the child or the young person and their family only with those involved in managing the situation.

When a child or young person has moved to another school, professional judgement should be exercised as to what information needs to be passed on. This will be guided by usual procedures for passing on information about a child's general wellbeing or special needs, and the role of the school in any ongoing care plans.

Interviews at Victorian schools

Child Protection may conduct interviews of children and young people at school without parental knowledge or consent. However, a child will be interviewed at a Victorian school only in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the child's best interests to proceed in this manner. Child Protection will notify the school of any intention to interview a child or young person. This may occur regardless of whether the school is the source of the report to Child Protection.

When Child Protection practitioners arrive at the school, the principal or their nominee should ask to see their identification before allowing Child Protection to have access to the child or young person.

Support persons

Children and young people should be advised of their right to have a supportive adult present during interviews. If a child is too young to understand the significance of the interview, a staff member should make arrangements for a supportive adult to attend with the child.

A staff member may be identified as a support person for the child or young person during the interview. Prior to the commencement of the interview, the Child Protection practitioner should always authorise the staff member to receive information regarding Child Protection's investigation.

This may occur verbally or in writing using the relevant Child Protection proforma.

Independent persons must refrain from providing their opinions or accounts of events during interviews. A principal or their delegate may act as an independent person when the child or young person is to be interviewed, unless they believe that doing so will create a conflict of interest.

Advising parents, carers or guardians

Staff **do not require** the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.

It is the responsibility of Child Protection to advise the parents, carers or guardians of the interview at the earliest possible opportunity. This should occur either before, or by the time the child arrives home

Ensuring that a Child Protection interview takes place

The school does not have the power to prevent parents, carers or guardians from removing their children from the school and should not attempt to prevent the parents, carers or guardians from collecting the child. If a parent/carer or guardian removes a child before a planned interview has taken place, the principal and/or their nominee should contact Child Protection or Victoria Police immediately.

Staff Training

Staff will be informed of Mandatory Reporting requirements as part of their initial induction to the school and will be provided with supporting documentation in their staff handbook.

Updates will take place annually as part of the Performance and Development/Staff meeting rotation.

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

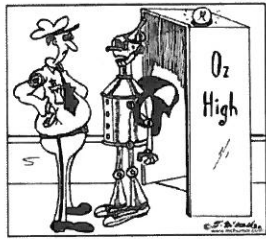
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/protecting-children-together>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children%2c-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource>

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/586465/information-guide-registered-teachers-principals.pdf

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse>

Date Implemented	August 2015
Author	
Approved By	School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
Date Reviewed	
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Review Date	November 2016



"I set off the metal detector again? This is going to make me late for class the for the fifth time this week."

Effectively Managing and Supporting VERY Difficult Students Cohuna Secondary 2015



"What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas" is all well and good, but this happens to be Windmill Point Elementary School."

Appendix A

"I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration, I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or de-humanized. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming."

Haim G, Ginott

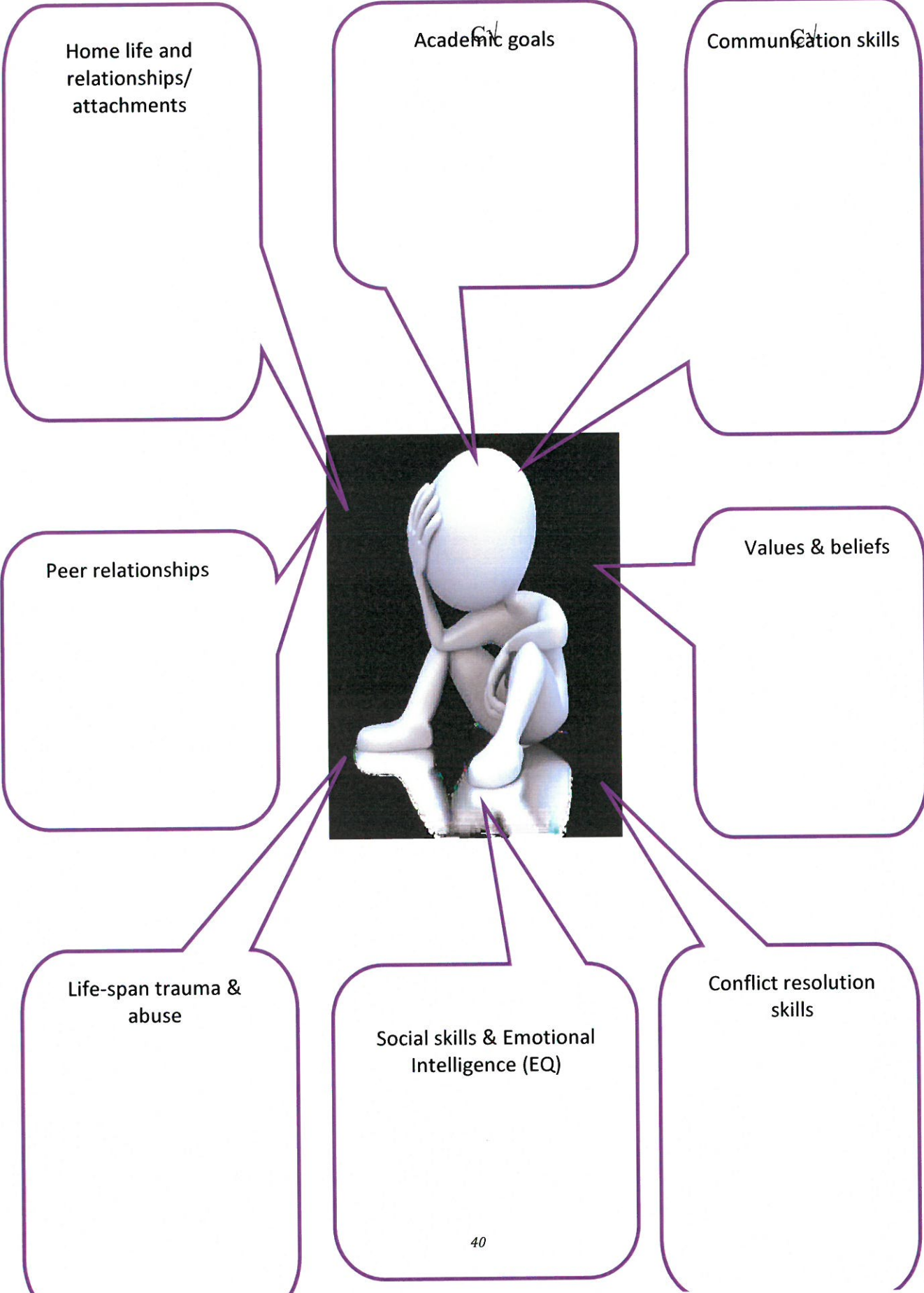
Contents

Page

Case Study	3
Neuroscience - the thinking and feeling brain	4
Appreciative Inquiry Explicit Relational Practice Audit	5-6
About the 4R's Model	7-9
Continuum of Positive Behaviour Development	10
Establishing, Strengthening and Sustaining Classroom relationships	11-14

Glasser's Teaching Habits & Using Descriptive Language	14
Ten Essential Teacher Skills	15-19
33 Behaviour corrections	20-22
19 Tips for managing relationships with VERY difficult students	23-36
Restorative conversations with VERY difficult students	37-39
Keystones for effective relational practice	40-41
75 Super Quick strategies	42-43
Ten Commandments for reducing and defusing conflict	44-45
10 Step Framework for Behavioural Interventions	46
A.B.C Behavioural Analysis	47
Social Skills Profile of Social Difficulty	48-50
Student Behaviour Profile	51
Individual Education Plan	52-54
Individual Behaviour Plan	55
S.M.A.R.T Support Plan (Australian Childhood Foundation)	56
Trauma Informed Practice (Australian Childhood Foundation)	57-59
Working with S.M.A.R.T. students (Australian Childhood Foundation)	60
Student Support Group Meeting Record	61
Working with parents	62
32 tips for working with Autism (Eltham High School)	63-66
Rules of thumb for Autistic students	67
Resources and references	67

Case Study



Case Study

Peter is in year 9 living with his single mum who is difficult to contact and engage with. Home life offers little sense of security, discipline or routines. Peter physically harasses and hits other students, interferes with their materials and rarely engages with classroom work. Peter has a wide range of avoidance behaviours and will sometimes walk away from adults when his behaviour is challenged. He lies about things that he has done and rarely takes responsibility for his behaviour. He leaves the classroom when he likes and has huge meltdowns when the teacher attempts to correct his behaviour.

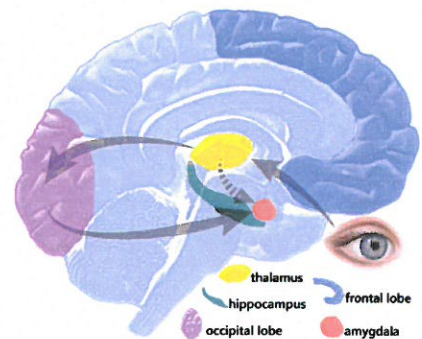
Peter has some funding and works one-on-one with support staff member who helps him read. Peter's reading age is very low so can't engage with regular classroom content.

His teachers are stressed and felt a great sense of relief over the 2 days that Peter was suspended from attending school.

The Principal believes that Peter has a right to be in the classroom despite his inappropriate behaviour and wants teachers to accommodate his needs. On bad days the Assistant Principal will remove Peter from the classroom to his office. Peter readily accompanies him. Other parents have expressed concern about what is happening in the classroom with their children.

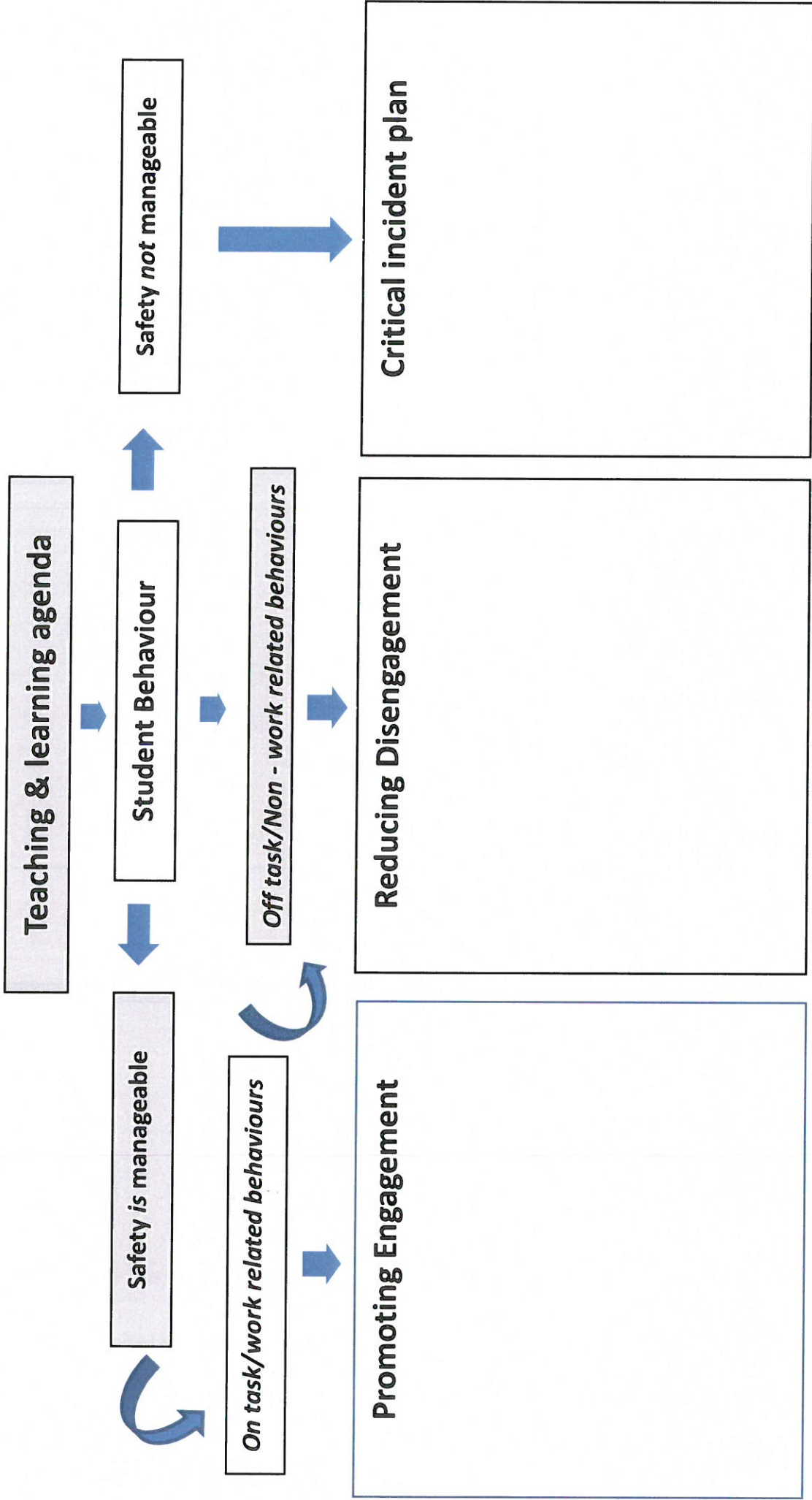
Neuroscience - the thinking and feeling brain

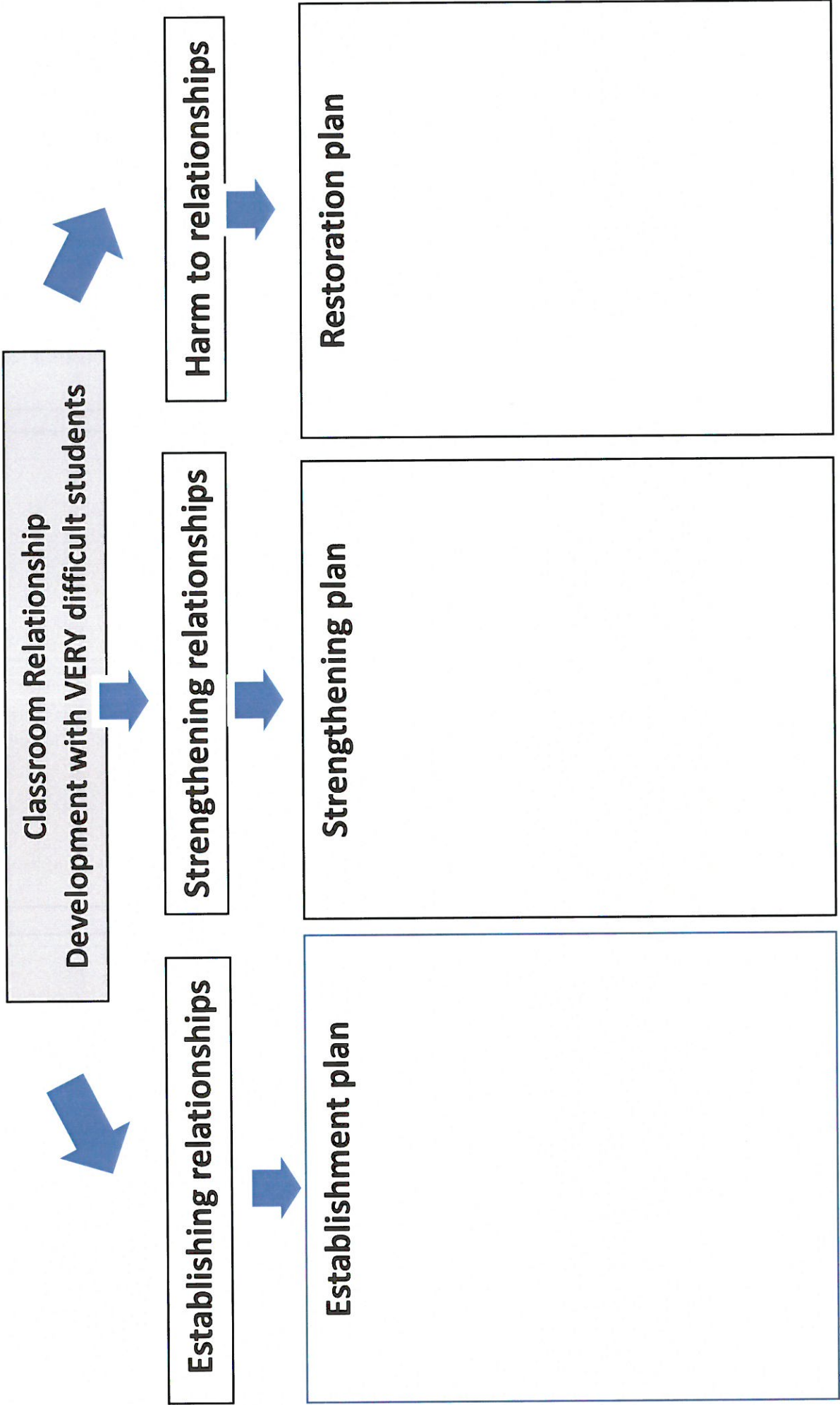
From the thalamus, a part of the stimulus goes directly to the amygdala while another part is sent to the neocortex or "thinking brain". If the amygdala perceives a match to the stimulus, i.e., if the record of experiences in the hippocampus tells the amygdala that it is a fight, flight or freeze situation, then the amygdala triggers the HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal) axis and hijacks the rational brain. This emotional brain activity processes information milliseconds earlier than the rational brain, so in case of a match, the amygdala acts before any possible direction from the neocortex can be received. If, however, the amygdala does not find any match to the stimulus received with its recorded threatening situations, then it acts according to the directions received from the neo-cortex. When the amygdala perceives a threat, it can lead that person to react irrationally and destructively. Goleman states that "emotions make us pay attention right now — this is urgent - and gives us an immediate action plan without having to think twice. The emotional component evolved very early: Do I eat it, or does it eat me?" The emotional response "can take over the rest of the brain in a millisecond if threatened." An amygdala hijack exhibits three signs: strong emotional reaction, sudden onset, and post-episode realization if the reaction was inappropriate.



When the amygdala perceives a threat, it can lead that person to react irrationally and destructively. Goleman states that "emotions make us pay attention right now — this is urgent - and gives us an immediate action plan without having to think twice. The emotional component evolved very early: Do I eat it, or does it eat me?" The emotional response "can take over the rest of the brain in a millisecond if threatened." An amygdala hijack exhibits three signs: strong emotional reaction, sudden onset, and post-episode realization if the reaction was inappropriate.

Goleman later emphasised that "self-control is crucial ...when facing someone who is in the throes of an amygdala hijack" so as to avoid a complementary hijacking - whether in work situations, or in private life. Thus for example 'one key marital competence is for partners to learn to soothe their own distressed feelings...nothing gets resolved positively when husband or wife is in the midst of an emotional hijacking. The danger is that "when our partner becomes, in effect, our enemy, we are in the grip of an 'amygdala hijack' in which our emotional memory, lodged in the limbic center of our brain, rules our reactions without the benefit of logic or reason...which causes our bodies to go into a 'fight or flight' response." (From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amygdala_hijack.)





Our 4R's Core Plan

Remind Redirect Relocate Reflection



Reminder: teacher reminds the student about classroom expectations

'Remember our agreement about coming to class on time and prepared for work, open your book and begin the work thanks'

Redirection: teacher redirects the student from what they are doing to what they need to be doing

'I can see that you are having some difficulty beginning the work. I will sit with you for a while and help you get started. You need to stop _____ and begin the work thanks'

Relocation: teacher relocates the student to sit by themselves to complete the work

'It looks like you need some time by yourself to get this work done. I need you to move to that desk/next to my desk/over there and complete the work thanks, then you can move back'

Reflection: teacher directs the student to sit in 'Time away' and complete a Think sheet'

'I need you to move to 'Time away' and work on a Think sheet. I will come and help you when I am free'

ABOUT THE 4 R's MODEL: remind, redirect, relocate, reflect.

This model is based on a set of values and beliefs that include:

- Recognition of student and teacher rights and responsibilities
- Need for the teacher to teach and students to learn
- Values driven practice including: respect, engagement, hope, interconnectedness, accountability, honesty, support, participation, humility, empowerment, etc.
- A code of cooperation that drives and makes expectations clear and achievable
- A relational approach to developing healthy connections to minimise mistakes and wrongdoing
- A restorative approach to inappropriate behaviour

The model is designed to establish and support:

- A set of generic classroom rules/expectations that are displayed in all classrooms and are negotiated and taught to students by their teachers
- Processes to manage appropriate and inappropriate behaviour that encourages students and staff to own their behaviour and to reflect on the consequences of their actions and is consistent across the school
- A relocation and reflection process that removes the student from the social setting/classroom so the teacher can continue teaching and students can continue learning with a focus on social responsibility
- A 'Think' sheet that asks the student/s to reflect on their behaviour and to make better choices in the future
- A process that collects objective data about student behaviour so we can act quickly and effectively in the interests of everybody
- Practices and processes that are restorative rather than punitive
