

Section E (NAG 5) SAFE, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Policy: **Supporting Student Wellbeing**

Date of Review: **December 2022**

Reviewers: **Michelle Chrustowski (School Nurse), Olivia Fugmann (Associate Principal), Staff Health & Safety Committee**

GOAL

We are committed to promoting the wellbeing (hauora) of our students and recognise that a student's wellbeing directly affects their ability to learn.

Our concept of wellbeing encompasses some or all of the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of health.

Promoting wellbeing

We aim to provide a safe physical and emotional environment and a positive, inclusive school culture which supports wellbeing. This involves a whole-school approach, through our school values, policies, and procedures; and collaboration with families, the community, and support services.

Staff maintain positive learning environments and relationships with students and encourage students to develop the New Zealand Curriculum's key competencies of managing self and relating to others.

Our policies and procedures help maintain a safe environment and promote student wellbeing. We follow:

- guidelines for acting on concerns about students' physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing, including abuse recognition and reporting and breaches of the alcohol/drugs policy
- guidelines for dealing with bullying and harassment
- behaviour management guidelines
- comprehensive digital technology policies and procedures to guide our use of the internet, mobile phones, and other ICT devices and equipment.

At Waitakere College, students are sorted into horizontal tutor groups, and the tutor teacher is the first point of contact for pastoral care for both students and parents. Each form level has a dean, who is responsible for the overall wellbeing of students in their year level, and the school has a guidance counselor available to students for help to students for help and support.

We ensure that we provide adequate support for the wellbeing of our international learners via our Director of International Students and maintain effective communications with parents/guardians/caregivers about their wellbeing.

Responding to Wellbeing Issues, Concerns, and Crises

Students may experience increased vulnerability at times, requiring additional school support. Challenges to students' wellbeing may include accidents and illness, health conditions, low self-esteem, bullying, bereavement, family changes, trauma, drug use, coping with a natural disaster, anxiety and/or depression, self-harming behaviour, and suicidal ideation.

In line with ERO's guidelines for responding to wellbeing issues and concerns, we follow the steps of noticing, investigating, collaborative sense making, prioritising actions, and monitoring and evaluating impact. Staff monitor student performance, attendance, and demeanour, and report any concerns about student wellbeing to the Pastoral Team.

When concerns arise, we identify student needs and arrange appropriate support, such as counseling, mentoring, learning support, and referral to health and social services. We keep a readily-accessible list of contacts for referral, including community groups. We monitor the student's continuing wellbeing and work collaboratively with the student, family, and support services (as appropriate) to provide ongoing support.

We are sensitive to cultural differences in the understanding and expression of wellbeing issues and concerns and seek cultural advice where needed.

Staff are aware of the limits of privacy and confidentiality. If dealing with student wellbeing concerns adversely affects staff, they seek support from senior management and (if available) their school's Employee Assistance Programme- IGNITE.

Legislation

- Education and Training Act 2020
- Children's Act 2014

Resources for Schools

- Ministry of Education: Wellbeing in schools. Also see Te Pakiaka Tangata: Strengthening Student Wellbeing for Success
- Canterbury District Health Board: Pastoral care and pastoral care teams: a review to inform policy and practice in schools
- NZCER: Wellbeing at School

Resources for Students and Parents

- Ministry of Education's tools and resources for parents: Wellbeing at home and school (primary) and Wellbeing at home and school (secondary)
- Kidshealth: Emotional and mental wellbeing
- Mental Health Foundation: Helplines – a comprehensive list of contacts offering phone or online chat support
- Help for the Tough Times: a resource connecting 12–19 year olds to four helpful websites
- 0800 What's Up: a phone and chatline for 5–19 year olds to talk about the challenges in their everyday lives

Chairperson

Principal

Date