



Student Welfare Policy and Procedure

Policy Objective

- The welfare of students at Southern Highlands Christian School is a paramount responsibility and privilege of the school as it partners with parents in the education of their children.
- Welfare encompasses the whole of a student's well-being and healthy development. It therefore includes nurturing, building and encouraging; protection from harm, (Child Protection Policy); and also training, direction and correction, (Discipline Policy)
- The school partners with parents, the school and wider community, in strategies which are preventive and proactive in caring for students; and responsive in identifying welfare needs and determining best actions.
- This policy outlines the procedures and policies of the school in pursuit of the welfare of students; and its obligations to government authorities for the protection of children.

Biblical Basis

The school recognises that the responsibility for a child's welfare is given to his or her parents by God; but that this task is shared by the community of faith, and the wider community. Southern Highlands Christian School considers the welfare of the children in its care as a sacred trust from God, through the parents who enrol their children. In partnership with parents, every person who belongs to the community of Southern Highlands Christian School is encouraged to take responsibility for, and seek the well-being of, others: *'...admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.'* 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

Policy Statement

1. At Southern Highlands Christian School, student welfare and academic achievement involves the balance of physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual well-being of the child. Thus student welfare is incorporated into every area of school life.
2. SHCS aims to provide:
 - A safe and nurturing environment in which students can learn. (WHS Policy suite)
 - Effective teaching and learning experiences which engage students in the activities of the school, including extra-curricular activities. (Teaching & Learning Programs)
 - Oversight of day to day monitoring of student well-being as determined by observable signs at school.
 - A fair and effective discipline system which encourages behaviour consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and School Rules; and seeks to improve the behaviour of students who do not meet those expectations. (Discipline Policy)



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- An environment in which students can come to understand how God has given them abilities and gifts and how they can use them.
- An environment that encourages attitudes of self-respect, self-discipline, and respect for others, as people made in God's image; and an understanding of individual differences. (Staff Code of Conduct; Student Code of Conduct; School Rules; Volunteers Code of Conduct)
- An environment in which it is clear that bullying, violence and aggression are unacceptable. (Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Monitoring of student attendance at school to ensure safety and well-being of students, and the continuation of a sound educational program. (Attendance Policy)
- Staff who are committed Christians, qualified teachers, have current clearance under WWCC; and who seek to care for and nurture the students in their care. (Employment Policy, Child Protection Policy)
- Open Classroom culture – classrooms are open to visits from other staff, team teaching arrangements, the assistance of a teacher's aide; and a teacher may invite observation by their Section Coordinator, or have a class observation agreed to as part of Staff Appraisal.
- A clear understanding across the school community of duty of care; the provisions of the Child Protection Act; and commitment to reporting incidents relating to child protection. (Child Protection Policy)



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Southern Highlands Christian School seeks the welfare of all students through nurture, protection, training and building them up in every element of school life; so they may develop personal resilience and a sense of self, through the understanding that they are loved and valued by God.

1. Physical Security

Measures to ensure the safety of students include:

- Playground and bus supervision by teachers
- Visitor sign-in and ID passes; Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors
- Late and early notes for students arriving or departing during class hours
- Administration office overlooks front grounds to be aware of child leaving without authorisation
- Maintenance of buildings, grounds, facilities (WHS Policy suite)

2. School Programming

- (a) Daily commitment of time for Biblical Studies and Pastoral Care which complement family and church priorities for development of Christ-like character and attitudes.
- (b) The Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) program addresses issues of physical and emotional health, reinforced by events such as: sports carnivals and teams.
- (c) The Student Code of Conduct sets out positive expectations for students to confidently know how to behave in the school setting. It is reviewed annually at the start of the year, and regularly in classroom discussions.
- (d) Anti-bullying content is incorporated in classroom management practices and teaching programs. (Anti-Bullying Policy)
- (e) Discipline procedures provide a clear behaviour modification plan that provides direction and both positive and negative consequences for behaviour choices at school. (Discipline Policy)
- (f) Staff meetings will update staff generally on student issues for information and prayer, maintaining confidentiality and privacy according to the sensitivity of the circumstances.
- (g) Work experience and work readiness programs give students practice scenarios and orientation to the workforce.
- (h) Staff training in child protection, discipline and welfare occurs annually in PD Week; and is included throughout the year at staff meetings as incidents arise, or policies and procedures change.

3. Development of Student's Gifts and Strengths

- (a) The school offers individualised learning support; and creative extension, to enhance students' learning opportunities.
- (b) Retreats and outdoor education experiences develop closer relationships and offer challenges that build resilience.
- (c) The work, gifts and achievements of students is celebrated; and regularly showcased through assemblies, newsletters, performances and displays.



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- (d) A range of extra-curricular activities is offered for students to try new things, mix with students in other year groups, and to learn from invited guests who can build positively into the lives of students.
- (e) Opportunities are provided for student leadership that allows development of skills and positive relationships within different year groups in the school context e.g. captains, SRC. The Student Representative Council involves representatives from year groups. The SRC coordinates fund-raising, social events and is a student liaison group.
- (f) The school encourages the development of an outward focus and service to others through involvement in charities and local events designed to help others in our local or wider community.
- (g) Promote an understanding of other cultures, and an experience of Christian ministry to others is encouraged through experiences, such as: Year 9 Service Program; Year 10 Bourke Mission; Stage 6 overseas short-term mission.

4. Building the School Community

- (a) Enrolment
The Enrolment process includes orientation to the school. (Enrolment Policy) Orientation activities occur: for Prep readiness; for students entering Kindergarten the following year; for students and families at the start of the year, or when a student commences mid-year.
- (b) Communication
Regular information to parents, and other members of the school community, on all aspects of school life and events, through: newsletters, website, annual report, school reports, newspaper coverage of school events, advertising etc. Information nights for parents at the beginning of the school year include a discussion of welfare pathways for the support of students (Communication Policy).
- (c) Community Engagement
There are a range of opportunities for effective transition into the school for families and students. Activities include: information nights, Country fair, Commencement and Thanksgiving services, student performances and displays
- (d) Appointment of Parent Coordinator
The Parent coordinator facilitates communication between parents and the school on matters of community interest.
- (e) Chaplain(s)
Engages an on-site Chaplain for student and staff support, who may be called on for advice or direct involvement with the welfare of a student. The Chaplain regularly speaks at assemblies and contributes to newsletters, on topics consistent with the parents in partnership program.

5. Pastoral Care Team

- (a) Class/ Homeroom teacher: the first point of contact for students, parents and other staff concerning student welfare.
Parents are encouraged to arrange a meeting during scheduled parent-teacher meeting times; and at any other time through appointment via the Front Office, if they would like to talk to their child's teacher.
- (b) Subject teachers (secondary school): the first point of contact for students, parents and other staff concerning student welfare that relates to a specific subject area.



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Subject teachers should be contacted during scheduled parent-teacher meetings for regular updates on a child's progress in those subjects; or at any other time by appointment through the Front Office, if there are concerns about that subject.

- (c) Teachers will consult with Year Advisors in all significant matters of student welfare; or when requiring further support in dealing with a welfare issue.
- (d) Chaplain: available to students, parents and staff.
The school may refer students to the Chaplain; or include the Chaplain in discussion/ mediation/ investigation as required. The Chaplain may also initiate contact with students, parents or staff, to invite discussion or prayer.
- (e) Heads of Department: oversight of the welfare and pastoral care for the students in the years for which they are responsible. They deal with pastoral care issues, arrange pastoral activities and assist with discipline. They are key people in the welfare system and will often liaise with parents, the chaplain and with the Heads of School. Parents and students may raise issues of concern directly with the Head of School by making an appointment.
- (f) Head of School: Meets regularly with the KLA HOD's and Chaplain to discuss issues involving students and to plan activities. The Head of School deals directly with issues such as child protection matters, and provides appropriate information to KLA HOD's. In emergency or critical incident situations any Executive member can be called on for assistance.
- (g) Principal: reports all incidents where a student appears to be at risk of significant harm, to the relevant authorities. (Child Protection Policy). The Principal will also intervene in any issues of a serious nature where there is difficulty reaching resolution.

6. Welfare Strategies

- (a) Early communication to parents of any educational, welfare or behavioural concerns the school holds regarding their child
- (b) Individualised Enrolment Plan – partial enrolment; return to school plan; provisional enrolment; (Enrolment Policy & Attendance Policy)
- (c) Learning Support – testing; Individual Educational Plans (IEP's)
- (d) Classroom Support – teacher's aides in class, observing lunch/playground, taking kids out of class; parent involvement; Continued Professional Learning for teachers
- (e) Parent Connection/ Involvement – such as: information nights; parent-teacher meetings; regular communication to parents if there is a welfare/ discipline issue; parent involvement in classes and on excursions/ camps; displays/ performances of student work; PIP (parents-in-partnership) working bees; social community events.
- (f) Feedback on effectiveness of the school in numerous areas - Annual Community Survey; Year 12 Exit Survey (student); Exit interviews (Heads of School with departing families)
- (g) Attendance procedures - to ensure regular attendance and follow up of unexplained/ persistent absences or late arrivals (Attendance Policy)
- (h) Discipline procedures – individual plans for focus on improvement to behaviour in 3 goals.
- (i) Centralised record keeping on SchoolPro - an accurate profile of student records as updated by staff. Confidential notes are securely maintained on a school server, with access limited to authorised staff only