

**Safe & Inclusive Virtual Learning  
Environment Policy**

29 April 2019



# Background

Virtual School Victoria (VSV) has a responsibility to prepare students for successful participation in society. All individuals and groups within the VSV community are expected to model behaviours that support the agreed global values of **Respect**, **Empathy**, **Collaboration** and **Growth**. VSV will uphold the rights of all students to learn and all teachers to teach. VSV will encourage and support students to interact with each other and teachers appropriately whilst take responsibility for their actions.

## Policy Statement

VSV will provide a safe, inclusive working environment conducive to learning, free from bullying and harassment, giving all students the opportunity to experience success. VSV recognises the vulnerability of the student cohort and is committed to the appropriate student support services being provided and programs being developed that meet the individual needs of students. It is also recognised that inappropriate student actions may be symptomatic of challenges created by health circumstances (e.g. anxiety, OCD, ADD), trauma experiences or difficulty with engagement arising from significant gaps in learning. Students have opportunities to participate in student voice and leadership.

This is achieved through:

- Students being challenged, supported and encouraged to participate in order to reach their full potential.
- The development of positive and trusting relationships with subject teachers and Learning Advisors.
- Encouraging students to accept personal responsibility and take pride in themselves and their school.
- Acknowledging and celebrating the achievement and success of others.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive, engaging and compliant.
- Striving to understand what drives student actions and how it impacts on student learning at VSV.
- Reinforcing appropriate and responsible actions as well as managing inappropriate actions.
- Promoting collaboration between students and with teachers which encourages a positive school climate.
- Supporting students to develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, as outlined in the VSV Enrolment Handbook.
- Consequences for both responsible and irresponsible interactions being developed and applied consistently.
- Teaching staff being given opportunities to develop skills in managing a safe and inclusive virtual learning environment, including online lessons.

## Responsibilities

The primary responsibility for managing challenging student actions rests with the teacher.

## Principal

- Develop, implement and regularly review the *Safe and Inclusive Virtual Learning Environment Policy*, in consultation with the school community and VSV Advisory Board.

- Ensure that challenging student actions are managed through procedures supported by a strong evidence based understanding of how student learning and behaviour are best supported.
- Ensure that new staff, students and their families are aware of appropriate and responsible actions in a virtual/online learning environment.
- Ensure that parents/cares are aware of their rights to advocacy and processes should they have grievances relating to the school's management of challenging student actions.
- Teach and model consultative decision making and ensure structures are in place for student voice and leadership.
- Use system level consequences and interagency support programs with students who do not respond to teacher and/or school consequences.

## Assistant Principal: Student Engagement and Wellbeing

- Ensure that Bullying Prevention Policy and complaints procedures are clearly defined and understood by all members of the VSV school community.
- Ensure the *Safe and Inclusive Virtual Learning Environment Policy* is consistently and appropriately applied.
- Promote and reinforce responsible actions.
- Be available for consultation and support about management of challenging student actions in the virtual/online learning environment.
- Ensure appropriate professional learning programs (including sharing best practice) is provided so staff have an understanding and knowledge of management strategies.
- Access services and agencies which can support students in developing skill and responsibility for their actions.

## Subject Teachers and Learning Advisors

- Develop and foster positive relationships with and between students.
- Apply the *Safe and Inclusive Virtual Learning Environment Policy*, Student Engagement Policy and the Bullying Prevention Policy consistently.
- Structure the teaching program to facilitate learning that is inclusive.
- Develop strategies to manage supportive learning environments.
- Contribute to the development of Individual Learning Plans for relevant students where mandated.
- Develop with their students agreed online lesson expectations.
- Inform parents/carers of any concerns at an early stage.
- Encourage students to seek support.
- Focus on the action and not the student.
- Model appropriate procedures for responding to complaints.

## Parents/Carers

- Ensure students attend online lessons regularly.
- Support positive student participation and interaction in online lessons.
- Encourage and support students in their learning and wellbeing.
- Inform the school of any issue which might impact on the student's engagement, learning or wellbeing.
- Work in partnership with school personnel in the implementation of the *Safe and Inclusive Virtual Learning Environment Policy* to ensure a supportive learning environment.
- Engage with the school values, policies and procedures in a respectful manner.

# Students

- Act in accordance with the Student Engagement Policy, Bullying Prevention Policy and Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Respect the right of all students to grow and learn in a positive environment.
- Engage with school policies and procedures in a respectful manner.

## Procedures/Guidelines

***The primary responsibility for managing challenging student actions in the online learning environment rests with each teacher.***

***Teachers build lesson atmosphere and a safe supportive learning environment***

- Establish explicit online lesson expectations.
- Develop genuine respectful relationships in accordance with the VSV Pedagogical Model for Online Learning.
- Use HIT strategies to promote student engagement and learning.
- Acknowledge and celebrate successes.

***In dealing with departures from expectations***

- Respond in a non-confrontational, non-escalating manner.
- Remind class openly, or individual student privately (e.g. private messaging) of expectations.

***For persistent departures from expectations***

- One on one counselling with the student by the teacher (during or after the online lesson as appropriate).
- Brief reflective time-out (e.g. break out rooms).
- Document (on the student database).
- Contact with parent/carer (mobile/phone/email/visit) by the subject teacher or Learning Advisor.
- Seek advice from/inform the Learning Advisor, Student Coordinator, Leading Teacher or Assistant Principal: Student Engagement and Wellbeing.
- Consult the Team Leader: Student Wellbeing or another member of the Student Wellbeing Team to support the student and family if appropriate.

***Where a student does not respond to the above***

- Warn the student that temporary exclusion from online lessons will occur until an interview with relevant parties is organised. Continue encouraging student learning through the use of online lesson recordings, direct student-teacher contact and asynchronous learning materials.
- Head of School organises an interview with student, parent/carer, teacher/s and Assistant Principal: Student Engagement & Wellbeing as appropriate.
- Record actions on the database.
- Review the student's Individual Learning Plan, if applicable.

***Repeatedly interfering with teaching and learning; non-responsive to the above***

- Exclusion from online lessons at VSV will be considered as a last resort and only where there is risk of direct harm to self or others.

## Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle.  
Review date: July 2022

# Policy – Identification and Recording

## Policy Information

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Safe and Inclusive Virtual Learning Environment Policy
<b>Current Version:</b>	1.0 March 2019
<b>Purpose:</b>	School values, student and staff rights and responsibilities
<b>Scope:</b>	Whole school
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Advisory Board
<b>Policy Author:</b>	Malcolm McIver
<b>Related policies and legislation:</b>	Student Engagement Policy, Bullying Prevention Policy, Student Rights and Responsibilities
<b>Internal procedures guided by this policy:</b>	School operations, student enrolment, engagement and wellbeing

### Revision History

<b>Revision Date:</b>	<b>Status: (Draft/Final)</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>	<b>Prepared/Approved By:</b>	<b>Revision #</b>
July 2018	Final	New	Malcolm McIver, Nick Irvine, Sarah Seymour, Rob Mason	July 2022



# VIRTUAL SCHOOL VICTORIA