



Student Wellbeing Policy

College Mission

Cabra Dominican College is a Catholic School in the Dominican tradition. It strives to provide an environment that nurtures and develops young people's unique gifts: liberating them in the search for truth and empowering them to create a better world. Cabra Dominican College is committed to providing an environment in which all students feel welcomed, safe and valued.

Context

In recent years, mental health has been richly researched, highlighting a concerning rise in young people's state of being. Specifically, in Australia, mental illness has been recognised as the greatest disease burden for young people (World Health Organisation, 2017).

Importantly, schools have been recognised as playing a key role in the prevention and promotion of youth mental health (Waters, Sun, Rusk, Cotton & Arch, 2017) and wellbeing, which directly correlate to positive student outcomes and achievements. Research evidence shows that students with high levels of wellbeing are more likely to have higher academic growth and achievement and complete Year 12; better mental health; and a more pro-social, responsible and lawful lifestyle (Australian Catholic University and Erebus International, 2008).

Furthermore, the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report showed that:

- students who perceive that their teacher provides individual help when they are struggling were less likely to report feeling tense or anxious;
- bullying was less frequent in schools where students reported more positive relationships with their teachers;
- adolescents who feel that they are part of a school community are more likely to perform better academically and be more motivated in school; they are also less likely to engage in risky and antisocial behaviour;
- students with a strong sense of belonging at school are also more satisfied with their life;
- focusing on a whole of school approach that encourages parent engagement and supports school staff, will help to increase student wellbeing, which in turn will have a positive flow-on in other areas of school life.

In realising its mission and vision, Cabra seeks to nurture the whole person, placing great value on the support of student wellbeing. Wellbeing refers to the social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual development of each individual and is key to effective learning. Wellbeing is promoted and taught in an inspiring social, emotional and physical learning environment.

Policy Statement

Pursuant to our Mission, all policies, structures, services, programs and curricula of the school reflect the College's commitment to the wellbeing and academic care of students. Cabra promotes the integration of pastoral and academic domains of the school, providing a whole school approach to student wellbeing and growth.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, parents/caregivers and is supported by staff working within or for Cabra Dominican College.

Principles

At Cabra, nurturing student wellbeing is multidimensional in approach and is based on the following principles:

- every person at Cabra, has the right to feel safe, connected, valued, listened to and cared for;
- a sense of belonging is paramount to an individual's wellbeing and effective learning;
- student wellbeing is enhanced through a strong partnership with school and home;

- a comprehensive approach to building resilience and addressing mental health issues is critical to the development of positive young minds;
- well-developed social and emotional skills are important elements of wellbeing;
- there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between engagement, wellbeing and outcomes;
- schools can provide a number of protective factors to enhance wellbeing;
- skills and mindsets that promote positive emotions, positive relationships, resilience and character strengths can be explicitly taught and assessed by schools (Green, Odes and Robinson, 2011).

Responsibilities

Students will:

- treat all members of the Cabra community with dignity and respect, act with propriety and adhere to the school Code of Conduct;
- ensure that they contribute to the College as a welcoming and inclusive place to all staff, students, families and visitors;
- support whole school, year level and house pastoral care activities and programs;
- participate in educational opportunities to develop a richer understanding of the manner in which we all provide pastoral care to members of our community;
- develop learning goals to strive towards personal excellence;
- be involved in the community life of the College;
- seek advice and assistance from significant others;
- respect and value themselves and others and live by the College mission.

Parents/caregivers will:

- recognise that education is a partnership between the family and Cabra;
- recognise that the whole school implementation of pastoral care is based on the principles outlined in the policy statement above;
- respect and support the teachers and other members of the College community together in partnership;
- support the College through engaging with the available communication systems and opportunities to be involved in a range of College activities.

Staff will:

- treat children with dignity and respect, act with propriety, protect children in their care and cognisant of their duty of care;
- promote models of behaviour and relationship based on mutual respect, consideration, compassion and reconciliation;
- ensure that they contribute to the College as a welcoming and inclusive place for all staff, students, families and visitors;
- nurture and contribute to a positive welcoming environment which provides opportunities for each individual's needs, gifts and talents;
- know, value and respond to the breadth of individual needs of students;
- participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in the area of pastoral care and wellbeing;
- understand and discharge their duty of care and professional responsibilities;
- implement the pastoral care policy, processes and procedures with care and consideration;
- support whole school and House pastoral care activities and programs;
- be proactive in the early detection of students at risk;
- deliver a creative, dynamic teaching style which challenges and stimulates all students as individual learners;
- implement learning programs and practices, which build positive and respectful relationships;
- encourage and guide students to be involved in the co-curricular life of the College as well as opportunities for faith formation.

Executive Leadership will:

- ensure that the dignity of the human person made in the image of God is contextualised through all educational programs;

- ensure that the College is a welcoming and inclusive place to all staff, students, families and visitors;
- provide a contemporary teaching and learning environment;
- develop and facilitate support structures and processes within the school to facilitate ongoing student wellbeing and learning. Ensure these structures are effectively organised and co-ordinated, well-resourced and flexible according to the needs as they arise;
- collaborate to develop and implement academic/learning and pastoral programs which meet the needs of adolescents in their contemporary world;
- identify areas of need and develop the pastoral skills of staff;
- facilitate networks and avenues for shared dialogue, decision making and effective communication to all members of the College community;
- develop and facilitate the induction of new students and parents into Cabra;
- develop and nurture processes and opportunities for students and staff to develop meaningful positive relationships and a sense of community;
- commit to the development of pastoral care through a range of programs and whole school or House activities;
- ensure that specialist services are provided to support students and staff in the area of pastoral care and wellbeing.

The Board of Directors will:

- develop, monitor and review the Policy in accordance with legal requirements and the Catholic Church's teachings;
- ensure the implementation of the College Strategy supports the integration of the academic, social and spiritual life of the college, especially in the event of celebrations with a specific pastoral dimension;
- allocate resources to facilitate ongoing training and support for pastoral care education and programs.

Related Documents and References

- Cabra Principles for Working Together
- Cabra Dominican College Student Handbook
- Cabra Dominican College Staff Handbook
- PISA (2015)
- Australian Catholic University and Erebus International (2008)
- Positive education: visible wellbeing and positive functioning in students (Waters L, Sun J, Rusk R, Cotton A, Arch A (2017)
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2017)
- Green, Odes and Robinson (2011)

Policy Title: Student Wellbeing Policy
Ratified by Executive Leadership: 2018
Policy due for review: 2021