



Every child. every opportunity

Student Engagement Policy 2014 Tallangatta Secondary College 8370



Endorsement by School Council	Insertion of a tick (✓) in the next column indicates that the School Principal, as Executive Officer of the School Council, verifies that this Student Engagement Policy was endorsed at a meeting of School Council.	✓
		Mr Alby Freijah 30 th March 2014

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References	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DEECD Engagement policy• DEECD Bullying & harassment
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1 School Profile Statement

Purpose:

Tallangatta Secondary College is a pivotal partner in delivering high quality state education which stimulates supports and challenges all members to engage in meaningful pathways which positively influence the nature and function of society in all its contexts.

Values:

Centred on learning – the values of Tallangatta Secondary College are Trust, Respect, Honesty and Confidence. These values were established after extensive consultation with students, parents and teachers and were formulated by a working party of representative students and teachers.

Social – community and demographics

Enrolments in 2014- 435. Enrolments are trending upwards.

This reflects relatively consistent year 7 enrolments and higher retention 7 – 12 and 11 – 12.

Enrolments in our traditional feeder primary schools are declining in most cases. There are increasing enrolments from the Kiewa Valley and wider Wodonga district.

The reorganisation of educational provision in Wodonga redefines and offers opportunities for the college, its members and the community.

Approximately one third of enrolments are Education Maintenance Allowance/Youth Allowance recipients and virtually no students have a language background other than English. –

80% of the school population is bussed in each day from our large catchment area.

There are a small number of Koorie students within the school community.

Environmental – grounds and facilities

Within the constraints of the architecture, age and location of the buildings, the learning environment is very well-maintained and the grounds are excellent. Considerable funding is committed to the construction of a new Performing Arts Centre and Science Centre.

Educational

Tallangatta Secondary College has operated a vertically integrated Unit system of curriculum organisation since 1978.

We offer semester and term length units of study within the VELS Learning Areas, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Vocational Education and

Training (VET) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) as well as special programs which target student needs such as Learning Support (years 7-10), Personal Best (year 9), Integrated Transition program (Year 7), Advance (CFA Youth Crew), sport, personal development, school production, instrumental music, peer support, supportive friends, camps and many student initiated events and special days.

Through our involvement in the P-12 Curriculum Cluster we are building a P – 12 curriculum which supports a collegiate network with our primary feeder schools.

The use of ICT is an integral part of curriculum.

2 Whole-school prevention statement

Student engagement has been identified as an important precursor to student learning.

At Tallangatta Secondary College we are committed to increasing student engagement as evident in the school's strategic plan. Research shows that student learning and student retention are correlated strongly with student engagement. The more actively engaged students are with the college the more likely they are to persist in their school studies and to achieve at higher levels. Student engagement is directly linked with a sense of connectedness and empowerment. Students who are engaged feel a strong sense of belonging; they participate in school activities, accept school values and feel accepted by their peers. They value school success and believe that education will benefit them personally and economically. They enjoy school, attend classes, are prepared for class, complete homework and are involved in extra curricular activities.

Engagement of students in the life of the school and in their own learning is important in creating the possibility for continued learning and retention. Engagement is the student's psychological investment in learning, comprehending and mastering knowledge of skills (Newman, 1989, 34).

Engaged learners are doers and decision-makers who develop skills in learning, participation and communication that will serve them throughout adulthood.

Tallangatta Secondary College has been using a model of a staged response to student engagement for many years. We have developed a powerful student management model that encompasses student welfare, learning support, and the professional development of staff. This has included the delivery of Calmer Classrooms and Student Engagement Professional Development based on work by Doctor Loretta Giorcelli.

Links to Strategic Plan

Student Engagement is a major focus of the College's Strategic Plan. The College focuses intensively at the primary preventative level to ensure that engagement occurs early. Our structure works at early intervention and has a model that delivers direct intervention where required. Student Engagement directly relates to the school goal of student wellbeing and engagement within the college's school strategic plan:

- To enhance students sense of connectedness and engagement in school life
- To improve linkages between students, parents and the school
- To enhance the college's learning and physical environment

Implementation

Student engagement is a staged response; to empower students with success in their secondary years. The following groups meet regularly to identify issues, discuss options and review programs and responses that have been implemented to ensure engagement in learning by our students.

- Student Management team (Year Level Coordinators, Later Years and Middle Years Teams & Assistant Principal)
- Curriculum Committee (including LA Coordinators)
- Administration/SSOs
- ICT Team
- Counselling team
- School Nurse
- School and wider Community (NELLEN, Rotary etc)
- Other Educational Institutions
- Teaching Staff
- Education Support Staff and Administration

Objective/Goals

- Develop new and flexible engagement programs in response to students and community needs.
- Establish community links through curriculum and wellbeing programs.
- Enhance the opportunity for student leadership.
- Improve attendance / retention.
- Improve social and emotional health of students.
- Create a safe and positive environment; inside and outside the classroom
- Support staff and enhance their professional development
- Develop extra curricular activities
- Enhancement of student motivation
- Publicity of student engagement programs
- Celebration of student achievements

Programs

- Student leadership programs including
 - School Captains

- Sport leadership
- Bus captains
- Music captains
- Home Group Leaders
- House Captains
- Personal Best at year 9
- Lunchtime activities
- Transition Program
- Peer Support
- Social, health and wellbeing programs
- Peer mentoring programs
- Community linkage programs
- Road safety programs including “Keys Please” and “Looking after your mates”.
- Outdoor Education
- Camps Program
- Fundraising and charity links
- Sport
- Improvement in the college environment
- School Production
- Vertical Modular Grouping
- Work Experience
- Gender Specific Units

Key Improvement Strategies

The Curriculum Committee and Student Management team has committed to enhance student engagement in terms of programs and processes in support of learning experiences that foster a culture of participation and connectedness across the school community.

The improvement strategies, programs and implementation processes will be monitored effectively through the support of data from attitudinal surveys and attendance/ retention.

Strategic Plan 4 year Targets.

1. Student report card will be fully implemented with 80% staff and parent satisfaction.
2. All students (7-10) will use a digital portfolio as a tool to reflect on their learning and report to their parents.
3. Parent satisfaction with reporting will be at the 75th percentile.
4. Appropriate partnerships with community and health providers will be established and resourced.
5. Celebratory events will be held annually and achievements recognised within the college and broader community
6. Average absence for all students will be below the State mean.

7. Student decision making and student and class room misbehaviour as measured by the staff and student satisfaction surveys will be above 75th percentile compared with Like school groups.
8. Programs and resources will be in place to support students at risk.
9. Parent satisfaction with communication will be at or above the 75th percentile
Staff satisfaction and morale will be above 75th percentile on staff satisfaction survey

TSC Welfare Structure to Support Student Engagement

At Tallangatta Secondary College Welfare involves the social, emotional, physical and psychological well-being of our students, teachers and parents of Tallangatta Secondary College. We should be aware of and work towards program, policies and strategies which provide the best possible College in which individual rights, responsibilities and abilities are respected and valued in a caring and safe environment.

Appendix 1 lists all the policies developed which support welfare for all at Tallangatta Secondary College.

3 Rights and responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles

Every member of the 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:

1. Freedom
2. Respect
3. Equality
4. 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 human rights.

All DEECD 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.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate

a student with 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, an education provider should take into account information about:

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

An education provider should 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. The provider should also 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.

The provider may 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.

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.

Examples of cyber bullying behaviour are:

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

Cyber bullying may happen to anyone and the bully has the ability to act anonymously. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

Tallangatta Secondary College aims to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and encourages 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
- reduced career prospects

Students will be advised as to how to deal with a bullying situation if one occurs.

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)

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.

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
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyber bullying

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

- the language used and things said
- how others are treated
- respecting people's property (eg copyright)
- visiting appropriate sites.

Behaving safely online means:

1. protecting privacy and personal information of others (we used to call it 'stranger danger')
2. selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute

3. protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
4. being proactive in letting someone know if something is 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If students are being harassed or bullied you should:

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- 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

At Tallangatta Secondary College and in line with the health promoting Schools Model that we have adopted the school believes that it has an obligation to foster positive relationships with all members of the school community. Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambitions • Participate fully in the school's educational program 	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. • Display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community. • Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn. Students will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. <p>Take greater 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</p>

	learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.
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Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged. 	<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. • Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Teachers have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment. • Be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student 	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy. • Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively. • Know the content they teach. • Know their students. • Plan and assess for effective

	<p>learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.• Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.
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4. Shared expectations

Tallangatta Secondary College shares high expectations with the whole-school community. Shared expectations are:

- jointly negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, including students
- clear and specific
- focused on positive and pro-social behaviours
- focused on prevention and early intervention
- supported by relevant procedures
- consistent, fair and reasonable
- linked to appropriate actions and consequences.

Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Tallangatta Secondary college has 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.

Tallangatta Secondary College has developed a Code of Cooperation that is based around four core values. These are:

Trust

Care for self and others

Respect

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

Honesty

Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

Confidence

Be confident to do your best at all times

Tallangatta Secondary Colleges 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.

Diversity in the school community

At Tallangatta Secondary College we include information on how we will address and celebrate diversity within our school community.

Tallangatta Secondary College 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 appropriate behaviours are encouraged through the implementation of a staged response supported by targeted and individualised support when required (see Element 1). Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment will NOT be used at the School under any circumstances.

When developing actions and consequences, Tallangatta Secondary College will ensure that they are developed in consultation with and agreed on by

representatives from the whole-school community, including students. This will foster a cohesive and consistent response to poor attendance and inappropriate behaviour. These actions and consequences should be incremental (a staged response) and should be applied fairly and consistently.

Applying fair and consistent discipline and attendance policies that are collectively agreed on and fairly enforced will increase the likelihood that student connection to school is maintained.

Equal emphasis will be placed on issuing positive consequences for meeting high expectations as there is on negative consequences.

Actions and consequences have an educational role and aim to foster positive relationships and retain the dignity of the student. Actions and consequences that isolate a student from learning will be avoided where possible.

Tallangatta Secondary College students are encouraged accept responsibility for their actions, and to participate fully and positively in their educational experience. It is important that exclusions will only be use when all other options have been exhausted or where the wellbeing or safety of another student is at risk.

At Tallangatta Secondary College 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
- 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
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

Broader support strategies will include:

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators
- tutoring/peer tutoring
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group 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
- involving community support agencies.

The Tallangatta Secondary College Attendance Policy is part of an appendix to this document

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in section 4.3 of the DEECD guidelines published in **Effective Schools which contains the Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines**. Appendices 12 to 18 of the guidelines provide flowcharts and pro formas for 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.

Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.

- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish school work 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 may be used for this work.

- Where students are required to undertake school work after school, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes.

The principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the 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 (See Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for process required).
- Suspension after a support group meeting.
- Suspension where the health, safety and well being of themselves, staff or other students are at significant risk. (Support group can be convened after the suspension)
- Expulsion. as a last resort..

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/tchrcharter.htm http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eeo/eeoact.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

**TALLANGATTA SECONDARY COLLEGE
ATTENDANCE POLICY**

May 2014

Rationale:

- Students of school age (six to sixteen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, have a shared enrolment with a specialist setting, have received exemption from the Deputy Secretary (Schools) or are enrolled in correspondence education.

Aims:

- To maximise learning opportunities by ensuring absenteeism of students is kept to a minimum.
- To put into place agreed processes for managing truancy within the school.

Implementation:

- All enrolled students are expected to attend all of each school day.
- An electronic roll marking system is employed by the school.
- Attendance rolls on SIMS are marked each morning at home group and staff maintain and mark rolls for each class.
- Attendance records will be entered into SIMS daily.
- Attendance and absence records will form part of each child's half year and end of year progress reports to parents.
- Parents of absent students are required to provide a written note, detailing the reason/s for absence. These notes are to be retained by the school.
- Office staff will ring or message parents where notes or phone call explanations are not provided.
- Staff members are to bring to the attention of the level co-ordinators any student/s whose attendance is irregular.
- The level co-ordinator will, after checking the attendance records, decide upon a strategy to be employed. As truancy is often indicative of other problems including engagement and family issues, the support strategies employed by the level co-ordinator, in consultation with the Student Management Team, will be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, they may include:
 - initial telephone contact with parents
 - Counselling sessions for parents and/or students
 - Home visits
 - Formation of a support group
 - School attendance as a prerequisite to extra-curricular activities
- Ongoing truancy issues will be reported by the principal to the appropriate welfare and government agencies.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four year review cycle.