



# STUDENT WELLBEING GUIDELINES

Iona Presentation College

## Sources of Authority

### CECWA Policy

Community

### Executive Directive

Student Safety, Wellbeing & Behaviour

## 1. JUNIOR SCHOOL

### 1.1. Head of Junior School

1.1.1. The Head of Junior School has the overall responsibility for the coordination of Student Wellbeing for students at Iona Presentation College Junior School. The Dean of Junior School, Wellbeing Coordinator, classroom teachers and specialist teachers assist the Head of Junior School in regard to student wellbeing at the Junior School. They are responsible for the programs, referrals and overall wellbeing and care of all students.

### 1.2. Classroom Teachers

1.2.1. Each classroom teacher is available to all students in their classroom. They are responsible for the delivery of a Student Wellbeing program catered to the needs of the students in their class. They have daily contact with their students in their care and this enables them to know the students well in their class, look after their general welfare, liaise with staff and parents and be a source of communication and information for the students. The College encourages the students to communicate with their classroom teacher about any of their concerns.

### 1.3. House System

1.3.1. The Junior School has a vibrant House System. The Junior School has four houses, and they are looked after by the Year 6 House Captains and staff House Reps. The House System helps foster a team spirit and competitiveness between each House. It encourages the students to become involved in the various co-curricular activities and assist them in developing their talents. It is also a very important aspect of Pastoral Care at Iona by allowing students to interact with students from Pre-Primary to Year 6 rather than just their own year group. This allows for the development of a peer support and mentoring system.

### 1.4. Junior School Social Worker

1.4.1. The Junior School has a social worker who promotes the mental health and well-being of the students. The Junior School Social Worker provides support to students, after parent consent, to address issues such as:

1.4.1.1. Emotional difficulties including sadness, worry, anger, stress and anxiety

1.4.1.2. Friendship issues

1.4.1.3. Family conflict

1.4.1.4. Study Techniques

1.4.1.5. Relaxation Techniques

1.4.2. The Junior School Social Worker assists the classroom teachers in delivering the Pastoral Care programs for their year groups by presenting on different topics throughout the year or when called upon as the need arises.

### 1.5. Junior School Assemblies

1.5.1. Throughout the year there are several Year Group or Learning Area assemblies. Assemblies are held on a Thursday morning. These Assemblies are organised by the classroom teachers or specialist teachers and recognise achievement and effort in all areas of school life.

### 1.6. First Aid and the College Nurse

1.6.1. The Front Office is available to all students for first aid, minor ailments, injury and illness that occurs throughout the school day. If a student feels ill while at school, the classroom teacher will send the student with a friend to the Front Office. Upon assessment, the Receptionist will then decide on a course of action, which may include simple medications and return to class, a short time in the Sick Bay or contacting a parent to collect the student if they are deemed too unwell to remain at school. The College Nurse may also be called to the Junior School for further assessment if necessary.

1.6.2. Parents are encouraged to notify either the Front Office or the College Nurse with any significant concerns regarding their child's health status, i.e.; changes in medications, symptoms or recent injuries so we can best care for the student's individual needs.

### 1.7. Your Local General Practitioner (GP)

1.7.1. Your local or family general practitioner is an obvious first person to turn to if your family, friends and other support people have not been able to help. Local GPs may be able to give you the help and advice you need. If they cannot, they will certainly be able to put you in touch with people who can help.

- 1.7.2. Your family GP has specific knowledge about young peoples' health. They are easily accessible, affordable and confidential. If you would like to find a youth friendly GP in your area, visit [www.amawa.com.au/community/yfd/index](http://www.amawa.com.au/community/yfd/index)

## **2. SENIOR SCHOOL**

### **2.1. Deputy Principal Senior School**

- 2.1.1. The Deputy Principal Senior School Wellbeing, has the overall responsibility for the coordination of student wellbeing for students at Iona Presentation College.

### **2.2. Head of Year**

- 2.2.1. Each year level has a Head of Year who is available to all students in that Year level. They are responsible for the delivery of a student wellbeing program catered to the needs of the students in their year group.

### **2.3. Homeroom**

- 2.3.1. The foundation of student wellbeing in the College is the Homeroom. The Homeroom teacher engages with their Homeroom students in the many year group activities. They have daily contact with the girls in their care and this enables them to know the girls well in their class, look after their general welfare, liaise with staff and parents and be a source of communication and information for the girls. The College encourages the girls to openly communicate with their Homeroom teacher about any of their concerns.

### **2.4. House System**

- 2.4.1. The College has a vibrant House system. The College has six Houses and they are looked after by the House Coordinators. The House system helps foster a team spirit and a healthy competitiveness between each House. It encourages the girls to become involved in the various co-curricular activities and assist them in developing their talents. It is also a very important aspect of student wellbeing at Iona by allowing students to interact with students from Years 7- 12 rather than just their own year group. This allows for the development of a peer support and mentoring system.

### **2.5. College Psychologists**

- 2.5.1. The College has two psychologists who promote the mental health and wellbeing of the students. The College Psychologists provide counselling to students to address the following issues:
- 2.5.1.1. Emotional difficulties including sadness, worry, anger, stress and anxiety
  - 2.5.1.2. Friendship issues
  - 2.5.1.3. Family conflict
  - 2.5.1.4. Study Techniques
  - 2.5.1.5. Career Development
  - 2.5.1.6. Relaxation Techniques
- 2.5.2. The College Psychologists assist the Heads of Year in delivering the Student Wellbeing programs for their year groups by presenting on different topics.
- 2.5.3. The psychologists can also assist with the learning needs of students. This may involve psychometric assessment and recommendations to improve learning skills. Students may self-refer or be referred by their parents or teachers.

### **2.6. Career Guidance**

- 2.6.1. Our Director of Academics and Pathways is a highly experienced Careers Counsellor. The Director of Academics and Pathways provides career guidance for students and parents on an individual or group basis. This includes assistance with subject selection, information concerning post-school options, applications, and general career guidance for university and TAFE courses.

### **2.7. Learning Enhancement**

- 2.7.1. The College has two Learning Enhancement (Support) Teachers. The Learning Support Teachers will, after the testing of students who present with learning difficulties, either initiate extra help for these students or assist their teachers with providing a modified program to cater for their learning needs.

### **2.8. Gifted And Talented**

- 2.8.1. The Gifted and Talented Coordinator will provide opportunities for students to develop and extend their talents in a wide range of areas beyond the standard curriculum.

### **2.9. College Assemblies (A), Year Level Activities (YLAs) and House Assemblies (HA)**

- 2.9.1. Each Thursday is a seven period day; where a College Assembly, a House Assembly or a Year Level Assembly takes place. College Assemblies recognise achievement and effort in all areas of school life. Year Level Assemblies are organised by the Head of Year who delivers the student wellbeing program suited to the relevant needs of the year group. House Assemblies are organised by the House Coordinators. They involve the organisation of House Events and developing positive peer relationships with students from Years 7-12 within a House.

## 2.10. College Nurse

- 2.10.1. The Wellbeing Centre is located on the ground floor of the Sister Albeus Fahey Building and is available to all students for first aid, minor ailments, injury and illness that occurs throughout the school day. If a student feels ill while at school, the classroom teacher will sign the Student's Planner and direct her to report to Student Reception.
- 2.10.2. Upon assessment, the College duty nurse will then decide on a course of action, which may include simple medications and return to class, a short time in the Wellbeing Centre or contacting a parent to collect the student if she is deemed too unwell to remain at school.
- 2.10.3. Parents are encouraged to notify either the College nurse with any significant concerns regarding their daughter's health status, i.e.; changes in medications, symptoms or recent injuries so we can best care for your daughter's individual needs.

## 3. DRUG AND ALCOHOL GUIDELINES

### 3.1. Rationale

- 3.1.1. The influence of drug use on the individual, family and community is evident in our society and has the potential to become a school problem. To assist in the fullest development of our students, clear guidelines must be provided so that the drug use does not reduce the potential of the individual or interfere with the legitimate academic and co-curricular interests of other students and staff.
- 3.1.2. Drug use by students is an issue that confronts the majority of schools in some way at some stage. To this end, The College's Drug and Alcohol Guidelines, in accordance with State Legislation and CEWA Policies, sets out guidelines, which publicly describe the school culture and ethos in relation to the use of drugs by students.
- 3.1.3. This guideline pertains to a student who, at any time, is:
  - 3.1.3.1. On College premises
  - 3.1.3.2. At a College function
  - 3.1.3.3. In College uniform
  - 3.1.3.4. Travelling to or from the College
  - 3.1.3.5. On any College camp, excursion, tour or Reflection Day
  - 3.1.3.6. Representing the College at any organised educational, social, sporting or public function
  - 3.1.3.7. Residing on campus
  - 3.1.3.8. At an INSTEP or TAFE placement

### 3.2. Aims

- 3.2.1. To clearly define the expectations of the College with regard to possession, use and distribution of drugs;
- 3.2.2. To outline the consequences for students found possession, using and/or distributing drugs;
- 3.2.3. To promote the responsible use of prescribed medications;
- 3.2.4. To maintain the dignity of the individual at all times.

### 3.3. Definition of Drug for the purpose of this guideline:

- 3.3.1. A *drug* is defined as any substance (with the exception of food and water) which, when taken into the body, alters the body's function either physically and/or psychologically. Drugs may be legal (eg caffeine) or illegal (eg cannabis, ecstasy).

### 3.4. Prevention

- 3.4.1. The College is a smoke-free zone
- 3.4.2. The College has a compulsory Health Education program for Years 7-10 and the Student Wellbeing program for students in Years 7-12.
- 3.4.3. Drug education will be supported by a healthy school environment.

### 3.5. Rules

- 3.5.1. The College does not permit students to:
  - 3.5.1.1. Possess or consume vapes
  - 3.5.1.2. Possess or smoke tobacco
  - 3.5.1.3. Possess or consume alcohol
  - 3.5.1.4. Inhale solvents
  - 3.5.1.5. Possess or use illegal drugs (*Misuse of Drugs Act, 1981*)
  - 3.5.1.6. Possess drug-related equipment such as syringes (except in case of lawful medical use), bongs, pipes, etc. (*Misuse of Drugs Act 1981*).
- 3.5.2. Drugs for medical use are to be used in accordance with prescribed use and CEWA guidelines. Students may only carry sufficient personal medication for one school day. Parents and guardians are responsible for providing the College, in writing, the details of regular prescribed medication and its appropriate use.

### 3.6. Consequences available to the College

- 3.6.1. Informing and consulting parents

- 3.6.2. Providing counselling
- 3.6.3. Loss of privileges
- 3.6.4. Referral to an external agency for counselling
- 3.6.5. Police notification
- 3.6.6. Suspension from the College
- 3.6.7. Exclusion from the College
- 3.6.8. Possession or use of illegal drugs will normally lead to exclusion from the College. Supply of illegal drugs to others will lead to exclusion from the College. The College is likely to notify the police.

#### 4. POSITIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS GUIDELINES

##### 4.1. Rationale

- 4.1.1. Iona Presentation College aims to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of each student. The College encourages a learning environment where students respect the dignity and rights of others in keeping with Gospel values and the spirit of Nano Nagle. Every member of the Iona Community has the responsibility to behave in a respectful manner at all times.
- 4.1.2. In establishing this at Iona Presentation College:
  - 4.1.2.1. A high standard of behaviour is expected at all times.
  - 4.1.2.2. A safe and caring environment is provided for everyone, where the right of every person to be free from all forms of bullying is observed.
  - 4.1.2.3. Behaviour that is courteous and considerate is strongly encouraged and positively reinforced. Students are regularly educated about issues relating to bullying behaviour.
- 4.1.3. In order to achieve this aim, the rights and responsibilities of each member of the community are outlined in the College's Student Code of Conduct and as such, this guideline should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct. As this guideline applies to cyber bullying, it should also be read in conjunction with the Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement.

##### 4.2. Defining Bullying/Harassment

- 4.2.1. Behaviour that is considered to be bullying involves an abuse of power that is hurtful, embarrassing, threatening or frightening. Harassment is characterised by persistently threatening or tormenting behaviour towards a person. Such acts may be physical or psychological and not always obvious. It can be intentional or unintentional and may involve individuals or groups. All forms of bullying, whether it is physical, verbal or cyber, are not tolerated at any level.

##### 4.3. Physical/Visual

- 4.3.1. Non-verbal gestures, which are designed to intimidate or hurt, eg negative body language, staring
- 4.3.2. Displaying offensive materials, pictures or objects
- 4.3.3. Writing offensive notes, letters and graffiti
- 4.3.4. Pushing, hitting, pinching, kicking and other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone
- 4.3.5. Unwelcome touching or brushing against another
- 4.3.6. Damaging, stealing, hiding or destroying another's property or possessions
- 4.3.7. Disrespect for or invasion of, personal space and property, eg going through personal belongings, borrowing without permission, etc

##### 4.4. Verbal

- 4.4.1. Putting people down through comments, jokes or mimicking
- 4.4.2. Name calling
- 4.4.3. Teasing a person about their beliefs or appearance
- 4.4.4. Derogatory comments made on the basis of race, culture, sexuality, socio-economic status, different abilities or any other individual difference
- 4.4.5. Intimidating or harassing phone calls
- 4.4.6. Practical jokes that may be hurtful

##### 4.5. Cyber

- 4.5.1. *"Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, mobile phone, instant messaging, defamatory personal web sites and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others"* – Bill Belsey
- 4.5.2. Cyberbullying is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as internet services, email, chat room, social networking or instant messaging. This also includes mobile phones. Examples include:
  - 4.5.2.1. Flaming – heated exchanges
  - 4.5.2.2. Harassing and threatening messages
  - 4.5.2.3. Denigration – sending nasty SMS, pictures or prank phone calls

- 4.5.2.4. Impersonation – using another person’s screen name or password
- 4.5.2.5. Outing or trickery – sharing private personal information, messages or pictures with others
- 4.5.2.6. Ostracism – intentionally excluding others from an online group
- 4.5.2.7. Sexting – sharing explicit material by mobile phone or other devices.

#### 4.6. Relational

- 4.6.1. Hurting others by damaging or manipulating relationships, eg. spreading rumours
- 4.6.2. Social exclusions by deliberately excluding another from a group of friends
- 4.6.3. Writing, sending or delivery harassing notes or messages
- 4.6.4. Telling other not to associate with or like someone

#### 4.7. Victimisation

- 4.7.1. Pressuring or intimidating others to act against their will, eg. giving up possessions, money, buying food or drink for bribery purposes, doing work for others or committing minor offences for them.
- 4.7.2. *Bullying is NOT a conflict between peers of equal power, or a one-off incident between peers. These situations are managed in different ways, eg. through mediation.*

#### 4.8. Promoting Positive Peer Relationships

##### 4.8.1. Prevention

- 4.8.1.1. The College aims to provide an environment that prevents bullying through the following means:
  - 4.8.1.1.1. Promoting positive student behaviour by giving consistent messages about appropriate behaviour, valuing diversity and discouraging violent or negative behaviour.
  - 4.8.1.1.2. Raising awareness of the Positive Relationships Guideline and bystander behaviour via promotional material, curriculum and workshops or seminars for staff, parents and students.
  - 4.8.1.1.3. Students are taught the skills of resilience, conflict resolution and social skills through the Student Wellbeing program.

##### 4.8.2. Response

- 4.8.2.1. Where bullying does occur, the College will respond in the following ways:
  - 4.8.2.1.1. All reports of harassment or bullying are treated seriously, in a timely manner and discreetly.
  - 4.8.2.1.2. All parties involved in the complaint are treated with respect, dignity and fairness. The process should ensure that individuals do not suffer further disadvantage, retaliation or threats.
  - 4.8.2.1.3. The manner in which Iona deals with incidents of bullying is by supporting and developing the skills of individuals or groups.
  - 4.8.2.1.4. Support and/or counselling is offered to the complainant and respondent.

##### 4.8.3. Strategies to Counter Bullying

- 4.8.3.1. Responsibility of the College - in addition to the development, evaluation and review of the Positive Peer Relationships Guideline, the College will take the following actions to counter bullying:
  - 4.8.3.1.1. All members of the Iona community are expected to be role models in words and actions, by acknowledging the appropriate positive behaviour in others, by refusing to be involved in any bullying or harassment and by taking steps to support the victims of bullying.
  - 4.8.3.1.2. The Positive Peer Relationships Guideline will be promoted through the Ionian, Staff and Parent Portal and the College Community network.
  - 4.8.3.1.3. The reporting of bullying incidents will be actively encouraged. Reporters, victims and bullies will be offered appropriate support, eg. counselling.
  - 4.8.3.1.4. Open communication between parents, staff and students will be encouraged.
  - 4.8.3.1.5. Effective peer support programs will be provided to students.

##### 4.8.3.2. Responsibility of Staff

- 4.8.3.2.1. Be obviously present during recess and lunchtimes when they are on duty, as a deterrent to possible incidents of bullying in the College grounds. Staff members will be on time to supervision duties and vigilant in monitoring student behaviour.
- 4.8.3.2.2. Wear a high visibility vest while on duty during recess, lunch or on bus duty.
- 4.8.3.2.3. Support the Positive Peer Relationships Guideline through open communication in Homeroom and subject classes.
- 4.8.3.2.4. Respond in a timely manner to any reported cases of bullying in accordance with this guideline.
- 4.8.3.2.5. Actively counteract bullying behaviour.
- 4.8.3.2.6. Be a positive role model for students by demonstrating respect, care and tolerance at all times. Staff will reinforce social skills and teach how to effectively communicate and resolve conflict with others.
- 4.8.3.2.7. Be aware of negative peer relations in the classroom. For example, exclusion of students during group or partner-based activities.
- 4.8.3.2.8. Respond to incidents of bullying at the time.
- 4.8.3.2.9. Refer major incidents of bullying to a member of the Wellbeing Council, eg Head of Year, Deputy Principal Junior School/Senior School or College Psychologist.

#### 4.8.3.3. Suggested Strategies for College Staff

- 4.8.3.3.1. Each situation is different and therefore staff members should use their professional judgement in responding to bullying.
  - 4.8.3.3.1.1. An accurate account of all steps taken must be kept.
  - 4.8.3.3.1.2. Find out the facts: speak with the victim and the alleged bully separately.
  - 4.8.3.3.1.3. Use the method of shared concern approach – employ the help of the alleged bully in solving the problem for the alleged victim.
  - 4.8.3.3.1.4. Depending on the success of (3), attempt to diffuse the situation. Ensure all parties come to some form of an amicable agreement.
  - 4.8.3.3.1.5. Monitor the situation by observing and actively asking the parties involved whether the situation has improved.
  - 4.8.3.3.1.6. If the situation continues, refer it to the Head of Year.
  - 4.8.3.3.1.7. All information is confidential to the people directly involved in the situation and all persons involved in the situation need to be informed about the confidentiality.
  - 4.8.3.3.1.8. If staff members are unsure or require any other suggestions on dealing with bullying, they should consult the relevant Head of Year, Deputy Principal or College Psychologist.

#### 4.8.3.4. Responsibility of Students

- 4.8.3.4.1. Treat other members of the school community with respect, fairness and dignity at all times.
- 4.8.3.4.2. Be proactive in stopping bullying by standing up for the victim and assisting them to seek help from an adult.
- 4.8.3.4.3. Report incidents of bullying or harassment to a member of staff, College Leader or parent.
- 4.8.3.4.4. Not to breach the privacy of students, staff and members of the school community through any unauthorised recording or filming or inappropriate use of ICT.
- 4.8.3.4.5. Respect the property of others.
- 4.8.3.4.6. Accept responsibility for their actions.

#### 4.8.3.5. Responsibility of Parents

- 4.8.3.5.1. As this guideline aims to be a guide for all members of the College community, parents are encouraged to support the work of the school in the home environment. Parents are encouraged to:
  - 4.8.3.5.1.1. Show interest in their child's thoughts, actions and feelings.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.2. Take an active interest in their child's academic, social, cultural. Sporting and service life at the College.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.3. Reinforce that it is right to report bullying. Parents are asked to clarify with their child that it is not dobbing but rather "reporting when someone has been hurt" and that there is a difference.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.4. Report all incidents of bullying that they are aware of, not just incidents that happen to their own child.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.5. Leave College staff to investigate situations further. Parents are asked not to contact the other student involved, nor their parents.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.6. Speak to their child regularly about how much they disapprove of bullying and why. Parents are encouraged to tell their child that it is wrong to take part in mistreating another person at any level, however small.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.7. Encourage their child to see the positive side of others. Parents are asked to model and encourage respect for others, compassion, co-operation, friendliness and tolerance.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.8. Stress to their child that bullying is everyone's problem and encourage them to act courageously and support any other student who is being bullied.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.9. Develop resilient social skills in their child such as speaking assertively and using a confident voice/body language and eye contact.
  - 4.8.3.5.1.10. Discuss with their child any networking sites that are used and reinforce positive use of these sites.
- 4.8.3.5.2. Parents are asked to report the following to a Staff Member (eg Homeroom Teacher, Head of Year, College Psychologist):
  - 4.8.3.5.2.1. Any changes in their child's behaviour
  - 4.8.3.5.2.2. Reluctance to attend school
  - 4.8.3.5.2.3. Unexplained aches and pains
  - 4.8.3.5.2.4. Moodiness, appearing distressed and anxious
  - 4.8.3.5.2.5. Damaged belongings

#### 4.8.4. College Response to Bullying

##### 4.8.4.1. The Method of Shared Concern Approach to Behaviour Change

- 4.8.4.1.1. The method of shared concern is a non-punitive approach that has been shown to be among the most effective in dealing with bullying and promoting positive relationships and behaviour. Parents

sometimes perceive that the school is “doing nothing” if they do not punish bullies, however there are several reasons for using non-punitive approaches including the following:

4.8.4.1.1.1. Schools recognise the reality that some students may not be aware of the degree of harmfulness and seriousness of their bullying actions. Therefore, it makes more sense to take a problem solving and awareness approach.

4.8.4.1.1.2. Non-punitive approaches are less likely to place the victim at further risk from retaliation and more subtle bullying. Fear of retaliation and social exclusion as a result of other being punished for their bullying behaviour has been shown to be a major factor in preventing students from letting teachers know that they are being bullied.

#### 4.8.4.2. Mediation

4.8.4.2.1. In a controlled meeting, the mediator (usually Head of Year/Homeroom Teacher) guides discussion and sets ground rules (eg confidentiality and respect). The mediator explains why the meeting is taking place, emphasising that this is an attempt to resolve the issue, not to blame someone else.

4.8.4.2.2. The complainant is invited to speak about their experiences, concerns, feelings and hope for change. The respondent and/or bystanders who may have been involved have the opportunity to respond. The mediator attempts to bring the parties to an amicable solution to their situation where both parties are happy.

#### 4.8.4.3. Formal Apology

4.8.4.3.1. This method looks at mending relationships and also assisting with personal wellbeing of the parties involved. The apology may be verbal or written. This method focuses on the acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour and the willingness to make up for this behaviour. It allows the respondent to articulate why their behaviour was not acceptable and allows them to apologise and articulate how they will change that behaviour.

#### 4.8.5. Recurring Incidents of Bullying

4.8.5.1. In some cases, more serious consequences may need to be applied in response to severe bullying situations or for bullying situations that have persisted over time. Consequences may include:

4.8.5.1.1. Involvement of the Deputy Principal Junior School/Senior School and/or College Principal.

4.8.5.1.2. Involvement of parents.

4.8.5.1.3. After School Detention.

4.8.5.1.4. Suspension from the College.

4.8.5.1.5. In extreme cases, exclusion from the College.

4.8.5.2. Heads of Year, Homeroom Teachers and the Deputy Principal are able to work with complainants and respondents to improve the situation.

#### 4.8.6. Counselling

4.8.6.1. Referral for counselling (either in-school or externally) may be arranged at any stage for complainants and/or respondents.

## 5. SELF-HARM AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR

### 5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. Some young people will experience psychological distress during their school years. Additionally, some are exposed to trauma and cumulative harm. These factors, as well as others, may lead to an increase in the risk of mental health problems and, in some cases, self-harm or suicidal behaviour. Action must be taken to ensure the young person's safety, and to arrange for assessment and intervention to take place. Schools are well placed to educate the students in their care in how to cope with difficult emotions and life events.

5.1.2. Iona Presentation College aims to prevent all harm to the young people in its care, and where this is not possible, tries to intervene effectively with students who have engaged in self-harm or suicidal behaviours. All College staff have a Duty of Care, which is a legal requirement, to protect students from harm. Staff play an important role in identifying, as well as supporting, individual students who are distressed and may be at risk of self-harm or suicidal behaviour. This policy aims to support College staff to identify and respond to suicidal behaviour and/or self-harm in students. These guidelines complement but do not replace skills and knowledge gained through attending training such as Youth Mental Health First Aid and Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention.

### 5.2. Definitions and Indications

5.2.1. Self-Harm Definition - Self-harm (SH) is a deliberate act to harm oneself without the intent to die and is aimed at reducing uncomfortable or distressing emotions. It is often repetitive in nature. SH can occur in many forms including cutting, scratching and/or picking skin, burning, pulling hair and hitting objects or oneself. Injuries can vary from very mild to severe.

5.2.2. Suicide Definition - Suicide is a deliberate act to end one's life resulting in death. This is usually termed 'death by suicide' or 'suicided'. In the event of a suicide, the College Crisis Management Team will implement the Crisis Management Plan.

5.2.3. This policy also refers to the following terms throughout:

- 5.2.3.1. Suicidal behaviour: suicidal ideation, communications, suicide attempts and suicide.
- 5.2.3.2. Suicidal ideation: thoughts about ending one's life.
- 5.2.3.3. Suicidal communications: direct or indirect expressions of suicidal ideation, through verbalisation, behaviour or planning actions.
- 5.2.3.4. Imminent risk: a crisis or urgency which requires constant supervision and immediate action.
- 5.2.3.5. Suicide attempt: an individual deliberately harming themselves with the intent to die but not resulting in death.
- 5.2.3.6. Contagion: when one suicide can lead to further suicides or suicidal behaviour in the community. A cluster refers to a number of suicides occurring within geographic or psychosocial proximity.
- 5.2.3.7. Postvention: steps taken after a death by suicide and forms part of an overall response to suicide, comprising of prevention, intervention and postvention measures.

### **5.3. Indicators of Concern**

- 5.3.1. Most people considering suicide give signs that they are not coping. Ignoring or interpreting these signs as attention seeking can be harmful to the person as they may have difficulty expressing their needs openly to those who can help them. However, some young people may show no observable signs.
- 5.3.2. College staff may observe behaviours or sudden changes in a student that might indicate that they are stressed or distressed. It is important for staff to consult with the relevant Homeroom Teacher/Classroom Teacher, Head of Year, Psychologist or the Deputy Principal to ascertain if further action needs to be taken to support the student.
- 5.3.3. Some indicators of concern include, but are not limited to:
  - 5.3.3.1. changes in activity or mood
  - 5.3.3.2. poor emotional regulation
  - 5.3.3.3. history of trauma
  - 5.3.3.4. drop in academic performance
  - 5.3.3.5. distractibility and difficulty making decisions
  - 5.3.3.6. disclosure of persistent thoughts about death and/or suicide
  - 5.3.3.7. negative view of self and/or the world
  - 5.3.3.8. significant tiredness and/or loss of energy
  - 5.3.3.9. alcohol and other drug use
  - 5.3.3.10. peer conflict or withdrawal
  - 5.3.3.11. risk-taking behaviours
  - 5.3.3.12. persistent or sudden absence from school
  - 5.3.3.13. sudden weight loss or gain
  - 5.3.3.14. change in appearance (no care for clothes, hair, hygiene)
  - 5.3.3.15. unexplained injuries such as cuts, burns, bruises
  - 5.3.3.16. wearing long sleeves or covering up skin, particularly on their limbs
  - 5.3.3.17. changes in eating and/or sleeping
  - 5.3.3.18. posting photos of their own or others' self-harm or suicidal behaviours on social media sites
  - 5.3.3.19. references to suicidal thoughts or self-harm in schoolwork

### **5.4. Prevention**

- 5.4.1. The College aims to prevent self-harm in the following ways:
  - 5.4.1.1. a sense of 'belonging' is fostered in all students.
  - 5.4.1.2. encouraging understanding and awareness of mental health issues amongst students and staff, including via training such as Youth Mental Health First Aid and the Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention workshops.
  - 5.4.1.3. students are taught effective coping strategies through the Wellbeing Program, the Health program, and the Religious Education program.
  - 5.4.1.4. promoting help seeking options with caring adults.
  - 5.4.1.5. the College community is provided with information to develop an awareness, understanding and promotion of mental health and well-being.
  - 5.4.1.6. students who may be at risk of SH or suicide are referred for counselling.
  - 5.4.1.7. peers who are distressed by another student's self-harm are offered support/counselling.
  - 5.4.1.8. resources relating to SH and suicide prevention are updated as appropriate.
  - 5.4.1.9. contagion is prevented by ensuring that self-harm wounds are covered, and that self-harm is not discussed amongst students. Students are not to speak to peers about self-harm or to show peers self-harm injuries either in person or on social media. Instead, self-harming students are to seek support from a member of the Wellbeing Council.

### **5.5. Ongoing Care**

- 5.5.1. A member of the Wellbeing Council (usually the student's Head of Year) will co-ordinate the following:
  - 5.5.1.1. monitoring of the student

- 5.5.1.2. contact with the family
- 5.5.1.3. contact with Mental Health Professionals, as required
- 5.5.1.4. monitoring and supporting peers
- 5.5.1.5. the implementation of a Risk Management Plan for students at significant risk of self-harm
- 5.5.1.6. contact with all staff involved in the student's care eg. informing teachers of the student's distress, requesting reduced expectations regarding schoolwork and assessments, informing Reception staff, etc.

## 5.6. Indirect and Direct Disclosures

- 5.6.1. All indicators of SH and suicidal behaviour needs to be taken seriously. Staff will inform the student's Head of Year about a student's direct or indirect disclosure. The Head of Year will then inform other members of the Wellbeing Council as required, including the College Psychologist and the Deputy Principal. A risk assessment will be conducted by the College Psychologist, in conjunction with external support where required. **Confidentiality cannot be maintained with a student who discloses suicidal behaviour. Parents/guardians and required staff at the College will be informed to ensure the safety of the young person.**

## 5.7. Direct Disclosure

- 5.7.1. A direct disclosure is when a student informs a staff member of any feelings, thoughts or actions related to suicidal behaviour or self-harm. This may include verbal disclosure or communication through a task such as an essay or a piece of artwork.

## 5.8. Indirect Disclosure

- 5.8.1. An indirect disclosure may include instances where a staff member is informed of a concern regarding student suicidal behaviour or self-harm by a third party eg. another student, school or community member.

## 5.9. Responding to Disclosures

- 5.9.1. When a student discloses suicidal behaviour or self-harm, staff must prioritise the safety of the student in a calm, caring and non-judgemental manner. The student will be informed that the information cannot be kept confidential to ensure their safety.
- 5.9.2. Where the disclosure suggests the student is at *imminent risk*, staff must immediately escort the student to the relevant Head of Year, College Psychologist or member of the College Leadership Team. **A student at imminent risk of self-harm or suicidal behaviour must be located immediately and not left unsupervised under any circumstance.** The Head of Year/College Psychologist/College Leadership will contact the parent/guardian of the student and follow the emergency management procedure as required.
- 5.9.3. In all other situations where the student is *not at imminent risk*, staff will support the student to receive first aid from the College Health Centre as required and inform the relevant Head of Year and/or College Psychologist immediately. The Head of Year will enact any existing Risk Management Plan if relevant, and will also ensure the student's peers are supported as necessary.
- 5.9.4. In the event of a serious or life-threatening self-harm situation at the College:
  - 5.9.4.1. The College Health Centre will be notified to provide immediate first aid as required, and staff will call 000.
  - 5.9.4.2. The College Principal will be notified and implement Crisis Management Procedures.
  - 5.9.4.3. The safety of all students and staff is paramount; precautions should be taken to limit exposure of the situation to other members of the community.

## 5.10. Risk Management Plans

- 5.10.1. Following a student disclosure of suicidal behaviour or non-suicidal self-harm, a Risk Management Plan may be developed, which identifies foreseeable circumstances where a student may be at risk of harm and outlines strategies to reduce this risk.
- 5.10.2. In developing a Risk Management Plan, consider the following guidelines:
  - 5.10.2.1. Student safety and wellbeing is the priority, with a plan developed as soon as is practical. An interim plan can be implemented while a more comprehensive plan is developed.
  - 5.10.2.2. The plan will be individualised to the student's specific circumstances.
  - 5.10.2.3. The plan is developed in collaboration with all relevant parties where possible (eg. parent/guardian, relevant school staff, interagency staff and the student if appropriate).
  - 5.10.2.4. All strategies to access appropriate support during the school day will be discussed with the student.
  - 5.10.2.5. The plan is distributed to relevant school staff, parent/guardian and any interagency staff working with the student.
  - 5.10.2.6. The plan is kept in a secure and confidential place.
  - 5.10.2.7. The plan is reviewed regularly, including when there is a significant incident that may impact on the management of risk at the school level.
  - 5.10.2.8. The plan ceases when all relevant parties agree that it is no longer required.