Student Support and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure

Purpose

- The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:
- ensure we understand each students' individual needs and how we can best provide services to enable students to successfully participate in the selected course.
- provide students with reasonable access to identified training support services, including trainers, assessors and other staff.
- create a positive and inclusive learning environment that promotes mental and physical health and emotional wellbeing, fosters respectful relationships, and ensures that all individuals have access to support services and resources for students facing challenges, regardless of background, culture, or health conditions.

Definitions

Student Wellbeing means the holistic state of a student's mental, physical, emotional, and social health. They can range from acute mental or physical health concerns to stress and anxiety.

1.0   Policy Statement

1.1   This policy supports the Outcome Standards for RTOs, Standard 2.3 and 2.6., Standards 6 of the National Code of Practice 2018 to provide student support services to enrolled students.

1.2   This policy ensures that all students are given support while studying with AA Academy . This support includes both academic support and personal support and the following procedures ensure that students are made aware of the support available.

1.3   AA Academy provides students with access to academic and wellbeing support services available to assist them in meeting course requirements.

1.4   There is no cost to access student support services provided within AA Academy .

1.5 There are also no costs for a referral to an external support service, however accessing services outside AA Academy may incur costs and should be clarified prior to engaging external support services.

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1.6   AA Academy conducts an age and culturally sensitive Student Orientation Program to enrolled students to provide them with the following, but not limited to, information:

a) About AA Academy

b) Legislative frameworks

c) Client Feedback

d) Offered qualifications or training programs

e) Credit Transfer

f) Recognition of Prior Learning

g) support services available to assist them in the transition into life and study in Australia

h) legal services

i) emergency and health services

j) facilities and resources

k) complaints and appeals processes; and

l) information on visa conditions relating to course progress and attendance.

m) AA Academy 's relevant policy and procedures including but not limited to:

- Monitoring International Student Academic Progress Policy and Procedures

- Critical Incident Policy and Procedures

- Transfer between Course Providers Policy and Procedures

- Extending Course Duration Enrolment Policy and Procedures

- Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures (and Intervention programs)

- Deferring, Suspending or Cancelling Student's Enrolment Policy and Procedures

n) Applicable student visa conditions

o) Student's rights and obligations

p) AA Academy 's rights and obligations

q) All information contained in the Student Information Handbook (copy to be provided to them during the orientation program or to refer them to AA Academy 's website).

r) English language or study assistance

s) The support services available to assist overseas students with general or personal circumstances that are affecting their education in Australia.

t) Information on their employment rights and conditions and how to resolve workplace

issues such as through fair work ombudsman.

1.7 AA Academy implements a critical incident policy and procedures that cover the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, the required follow-up to the incident, the recording of the incident and the action taken. Critical incidents include but not limited to:

- Missing students
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Death, serious injury or any threat of these
- Natural disaster; and
- Issues such as domestic violence, sexual/physical assault, drug or alcohol abuse
- Non-life threatening events

1.8 AA Academy will help students in accessing study support and welfare-related services during the duration of their course.

1.9 Students will be provided with the Change of Personal Details form, which is also available at the Reception,

Designated student support staff

A designated Student Support Officer is to be the official point of contact for our students. The Student Support Officer must have access to up-to-date details of AA Academy 's support services. The Student Support Officer may be a secondary appointment where the capacity of that position allows for support services to be provided when required. The Student Support Officer will play an important role in overseeing the assessment of student language, literacy, numeracy and digital proficiency and establishing student support plans. The Student Support

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Officer is recommended to hold the competency TAELLN421 Integrate core skills support into training and assessment, or a unit that is directly related to this unit and may be superseded.

Additional Student Support Officer positions can be appointed as demand for support service coordination grows. The capacity of current arrangements and the need for additional capacity will be monitored through the regular management meeting.

Types of support

It is important to acknowledge that the support that students will seek from AA Academy will be varied according to their individual circumstances. A common misconception is that student support centres around the student's language literacy and numeracy or learning support needs. Whilst these support requirements are important, student support needs can often present from many other aspects of the student circumstances that are much more varied including circumstances relating to administrative, personal, cultural, economic, etc.

In recognition of this diverse requirement, the following support service guide has been developed to assist the Student Support Officer or those responding to student support requirements to provide a response that is informed by our lessons learned and our established knowledge of support service approaches which will best enable students to progress with their training and assessment in a supported and culturally safe environment.

Individual need	Support Service
a. Pre-enrolment support to understand rights and obligations, fees and payment arrangements, and the services to be provided	Students requiring additional support to understand the pre-enrolment information requirements are to be engaged on additional one-on-one sessions to talk the student through the information contained within the student handbook, the applicable course brochure and the schedule of fees and charges. It is preferable if these sessions are conducted face-to-face. The Pre Training Review Form is to be used to record this support and filed on the student record.
b. Requires assistance with understanding their employment rights and conditions, and how to resolve workplace issues	The Student Support Officer is to meet with the student to understand the particular issue the student is concerned about in their workplace. The meeting is to be recorded using the Student Support Meeting Record and saved to the student record on the student management system. The Student Support Officer is recommended to utilise the resource is available from the Fair Work Ombudsman website which provides a range of resources. The following resources will help a student to answer question they may have, prevent and resolve issues about workplace entitlements and avoid

	disputes and penalties. These resources focus on helping the student to understand their rights and obligations. • Employees • Pay and Wage • Award • Payslips • Leave For more detail of employment right and condition, visit Fairwork
c. Responding to a student with minor LLND support requirements	Where it is determined that a student does have identified LLND support requirements, the Student Support Officer is to develop a support plan. Prior to developing a support plan, the Student Support Officer should review the LLND assessment results and sit down with the student for interview to gather more information about the student's background and possible support requirements. This interview is to be conducted using the form – LLND Interview Guide. Once the student support officer has all the information they need, they are to develop and record a LLND support plan using the form - LLND Support Plan. This support plan is to identify the strategies that are to be implemented to support the student during their training. The plan is to be shared with the student and a copy is to be provided to the relevant trainer. Follow up progress meetings are to be scheduled with the student to monitor their progress. The student support plan should be securely saved on the student's record within the Student Management System.
d. Responding to a student with significant LLND Support requirements	Where the difference between the student's assessed level and the course level is so significant and there is a risk of the student's disadvantage, a support plan should not be considered. An important component of the LLND assessment process is to proactively identify students that do not hold sufficient LLND skills to undertake the planned training. It is the obligation of AA Academy minimise the risk of students unknowingly participating in training that is unsuitable for them. To do so could potentially put at risk the student's wellbeing. Where the difference between the student's assessed level and the course level is so significant and there is a risk of the student's disadvantage a support plan should not be considered. When determining "significant" as a general guide, if the student success level is more than two levels below the required course level, it may be a disadvantage to the student to progress into the course. Under these circumstances, AA Academy should provide the student information

	and refer the student to relevant external support services where the student may be able to undertake a professional program to improve their overall core skills prior to considering further training and assessment.
	The Student Support Officer is to meet with the student to advise them of the outcomes of LLND assessment and the recommended pathway they take in order to improve their core skills to better enable them to engage in ongoing education and training. The details and outcomes of this meeting are to be recorded within a Student Support Meeting Record and saved to the student's profile within the student management system.
	The following external support services should be considered:
	Dyslexia SPELD Foundation Literacy and Clinical Services:
	DSF Literacy and Clinical Services provides family support and a range of services throughout Australia to enable children and adults with specific learning disabilities and difficulties to realise their greatest potential. Further information is available at the https://dsf.net.au/
	Reading Writing Hotline
	The Reading Writing Hotline provides a national phone service for adults seeking English language, literacy and numeracy referral information, advice and support. Further information is available at the Reading Writing Hotline website or phone 1300 655 506 or visit the DEWR website at: https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-support-individuals/reading-writing-hotline
e. Training and Learning support	Students who have been identified as not achieving the course outcomes or not progressing in line with the course program are to be identified by Trainers and referred to the Student Support Office for support planning.
	The Student Support Office is to meet with the student to identify the areas where support can assist them to improve their engagement and progress in training.
	Please refer to the Monitoring International Students' (VET) Academic Progress Policy and Procedure for further details.

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| f. Student requiring welfare support | Addressing the welfare needs of Students is crucial to ensure their overall well-being and academic success. When a student presents with a need for welfare support, we recommend the following strategies:

Conduct a Needs Assessment: Schedule a one-on-one meeting with the student to understand their specific welfare needs. This could include issues related to housing, mental health, or any other personal or financial challenges they may be facing.

Consider Local Resources: Based on the Student's needs, provide them with information and referrals to relevant local resources, such as:

    • Counselling and Psychological Services for mental health support
    • Student Health Centre for medical care and assistance
    • Emergency Housing or Temporary Accommodation Options
    • Financial Aid Office for assistance with tuition, fees, or living expenses

Connect with Community Organisations: Establish partnerships or maintain a directory of local community or family support organisations that offer welfare services, legal aid clinics, or social service agencies. These resources can provide additional support to students in need. Develop a Support Plan: Work with the student to create a personalised support plan that addresses their specific needs. This plan may include regular check-ins, referrals to campus or community resources, and strategies to help them manage their situation while focusing on their academic goals. The support plan should be recorded using the Student Support Plan template. Promote wellness and life skills programs: Identify programs or workshops focused on mental health, financial literacy, stress management, and other life skills to equip students with the tools they need to navigate challenges and maintain their overall well-being.

By implementing a comprehensive approach that includes identifying student needs, providing referrals to campus and community resources, offering academic accommodations, and leveraging institutional support services, we can create a supportive environment that promotes student welfare and success. |
| g. Student suffers from a nervous/anxiety disorder. | Where is student is suffering from nervous or anxiety disorder and this is preventing them from fully engaging in training, these students are to be referred to the student support officer, who will schedule a meeting with the student to sit down and discuss their needs and support strategies. Supporting students with anxiety disorders is crucial to ensure they have |

a positive learning experience. Here are some ways we can assist these students:

- Counselling and Mental Health Services: Recommend access to counselling and mental health services where students can seek professional help. Ensure that these services are easily accessible, and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Flexible Learning Options: Offer flexible learning options such as extended deadlines, or alternative assessment methods to accommodate students who might struggle with anxiety in traditional classroom settings or under time pressure.
- Safe and Inclusive Environment: Foster a safe and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and supported. This can be achieved through promoting a safe environment, practicing diversity and inclusion, and giving clear communication that mental health and safety is a priority.
- Peer Support Groups: Establish peer support groups where students with anxiety can connect with other students share their experiences and offer mutual support. Where the establishment of a group is not possible, consider a buddy arrangement.
- Use teaching strategies: Use teaching strategies to recognise signs of anxiety and how to respond appropriately. This can help in early identification of students who might be struggling and ensure they receive the necessary support. Responding appropriately may include:
  - Show empathy and understanding by acknowledge the student's feelings without judgment. Be patient and provide reassurance that you are there to support them.
  - Maintain a calm and supportive demeanour by staying calm and composed, as your demeanour can influence the student's emotional state. You can also use a gentle tone of voice and positive body language.
  - Encourage open communication by creating a safe space for the student to express their feelings and concerns. Encourage them to talk about their anxiety, but do not force them if they are not ready.
  - Provide clear and consistent Instructions by ensuring that instructions for assignments and tasks are clear and concise.

Break the tasks into smaller, manageable parts and provide

guidance on how to approach them.

- Offer flexibility by being flexible with deadlines and provide additional time for assignments if needed. Consider alternative assessment methods if traditional exams exacerbate anxiety.

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	• Regularly check in with the student to monitor their progress and well-being. Provide positive feedback and recognition of their efforts and achievements. Maintain confidentiality and ensure that any discussions about the student's anxiety are kept confidential. Share information only with relevant staff members who are directly involved in supporting the student, and only with the student's consent. The Student Support Officer is to develop and implement a student support plan. The support plan should be recorded using the Student Support Plan template.
h. Student required counselling support and advice about their personal situation	Students identified as needing specialised counselling support that is beyond the capability of AA Academy , are to be referred to the Student Support Officer who can meet with the student and identify the student's needs and refer the student to a service that is closely aligned with the support they require. The Student Support Officer is to maintain a record of these recommendations using the Student Support Meeting Record which is to be filed on the students record within the student management system. The following are some publicly available support services that are able to provide either counselling support directly or may be able to refer the student to face to face counselling options: Student may be referred to: − Lifeline 13 11 14 − Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 − Salvation Army Family Welfare Centres − https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/locations/type/cw/ − Mental Health Triage – phone 13 14 65 − Anglicare 1300 651 728 − Kids helpline 1800 55 1800
i. Students with a disability or medical condition	Supporting students with disabilities or medical conditions requires a thoughtful and inclusive approach to ensure they have equal access to education and can fully participate in learning activities. Students identified as needing support in regard to their disability or medical condition, are to be referred to the Student Support Officer who can meet with the student and identify the student's needs and determine the support that can be provided.

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	The Student Support Officer is to maintain a record of these recommendations using the Student Support Plan which is to be filed on the students record within the student management system.

Wellbeing Support

AA Academy is dedicated to ensuring that all students experience an environment that is safe, supportive, and conducive to their overall wellbeing. This policy establishes guidelines to proactively support student wellbeing and provide resources to manage challenges that may impact students' mental, physical, and emotional health. It is underpinned by compassion and a commitment to act in a timely, professional and an inclusive manner when a student's needs are identified.

Principles of Student Wellbeing

1. **Safe and Inclusive Environment**: We will provide a learning environment that is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, and prejudice.
2. **Holistic Support**: We recognise that student wellbeing encompasses mental, physical, social, and emotional aspects and integrates support in all these areas.
3. **Empowerment and Resilience**: We aims to equip students with the skills and resources needed to build resilience, self-esteem, and coping mechanisms.
4. **Access to Support Services**: We will ensure that students have access to appropriate internal and external support services when needed.
5. **Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality**: We will ensure that all information related to student wellbeing concerns will be managed with respect for the individual's privacy and confidentiality.

We do this by creating a positive and supportive classroom environment, ensuring staff are aware of the supports available in this policy and procedure, identifying early signs of wellbeing issues, and providing students with information or referring them to appropriate support services as needed.

Identifying wellbeing risks and needs

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All staff are required to undertake professional development training in diversity, inclusion and wellbeing each year.

Trainers and student support staff encourage open communication with students about their wellbeing. They are responsible for fostering a supportive and respectful learning environment and promoting positive student-teacher relationships that enhance students' mental and emotional well-being. They encourage open communication, ensuring that students feel safe and supported in sharing concerns about their well-being, including challenges related to their disability, cultural background, or other personal factors.

Students are provided with information on available support resources and how to seek help if needed in the Student Handbook.

Trainers and support staff are to observe students and be attentive to signs of wellbeing challenges as they progress through their course (e.g. changes in behaviour, attendance issues, or signs of stress or distress).

Where they have concerns, they should follow the below process outlined in the Procedure Section of this document.

Considerations

Strategies to support students' wellbeing

Supporting a student's wellbeing is best conducted through human interaction and this is best achieved by promoting our team to consistently apply strategies when interacting with students. Trainers will primarily have the most interaction with students but, it is everyone's responsibility to apply these strategies when interacting with students.

The following strategies are to be applied when interacting with students to support student wellbeing:

a. **Safe and Inclusive environment**
   − Goal: Ensure a discrimination-free, supportive learning environment.

   − Strategies:

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- Set clear expectations: At the start of each course, communicate clear guidelines on respect, inclusivity, and acceptable behaviour.
- Model respectful behaviour: Demonstrate active listening, inclusive language, and non-judgmental interactions.
- Address issues promptly: If a student reports or exhibits signs of discrimination, bullying, or harassment, address it immediately and escalate if necessary.
- Encourage open dialogue: Foster a culture where students feel comfortable expressing concerns without fear of judgment.
- Use inclusive teaching materials: Ensure course content represents diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and cultures.

b. Holistic Support

- Goal: Recognise and integrate support for mental, physical, social, and emotional wellbeing.

- **Strategies:**

- Check-in regularly: Ask students how they are doing, either informally or through quick wellbeing check-ins.
- Recognise signs of struggle: Be aware of behaviours such as withdrawal, lack of engagement, or signs of stress and fatigue.
- Offer flexible learning options: Where possible, provide alternative ways for students to engage with learning materials (e.g., online access, recorded sessions, extended deadlines).
- Encourage peer support: Promote study groups and peer-to-peer learning activities to enhance social connections.
- Normalise wellbeing discussions: Integrate discussions in the classroom about stress management, time management, and self-care into training sessions.

c. Empowerment and Resilience

- Goal: Help students build self-confidence, resilience, and coping mechanisms.

- **Strategies**:

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- Use strength-based feedback: Focus on students' strengths and progress rather than just areas of weakness.
- Encourage problem-solving: Instead of giving answers immediately, guide students to think critically and develop solutions.
- Promote growth mindset: Reinforce that mistakes are part of learning and encourage perseverance.
- Teach simple coping techniques: Share basic stress-relief strategies like deep breathing, mindfulness, or time management.
- Acknowledge achievements: Celebrate student successes, both big and small, to boost self-esteem.

c. **Access to Support Services**

- Goal: Ensure students can access appropriate internal and external support.
- **Strategies:**

- Know the available resources: Be familiar with internal support services (e.g., Student Support Officer) and external services (e.g., mental health hotlines, community support programs).
- Provide referral information: If a student raises a concern, discreetly offer information on where they can seek help. If in doubt, respond with sensitivity and refer the student to the Student Support Officer.
- Encourage self-advocacy: Help students feel comfortable about reaching out for support by discussing the benefits of available service
- Facilitate connections: If necessary, assist students in making initial contact with support services.

e. **Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality**

- Goal: Ensure student wellbeing concerns are managed with discretion and respect.

- **Strategies**:

  - Avoid public discussions of personal matters: If a student shares a wellbeing concern, arrange a private conversation rather than discussing it in class.

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- Listen without judgment: If a student confides in you, acknowledge their feelings without offering unsolicited advice or personal opinions.
- Follow policies: Make sure you are familiar with referral and reporting procedures for wellbeing concerns and adhere to them.
- Clarify confidentiality limits: Let students know that while their concerns will be kept private, there are limits if safety is at risk (e.g., self-harm or harm to others).

Procedure

4.1 Identification of Support Needs

- Support needs may be identified through:
  - Pre-training review or enrolment interviews,
  - LLN assessments,
  - Self-referral,
  - Trainer or staff observations,
  - Student disclosures at any point during the course.

4.2 Types of Support Offered

- Academic Support: Study skills, assessment assistance, and catch-up opportunities.
- Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (LLN) Support: Additional LLN assistance and referral pathways.
- Digital Literacy Support: Help using online platforms, e-learning tools, or digital assessments.
- Personal and Wellbeing Support: Guidance, counselling referrals, and crisis support for issues impacting student wellbeing.
- Cultural Support: Culturally appropriate assistance for students from CALD backgrounds.
- Disability Support: Reasonable adjustments to assessments and training delivery.

4.3 Development of Student Support Plan

- Where needed, an individualised Student Support Plan will be created in collaboration with the student.
- The plan will document:
  - Identified needs,
  - Agreed support strategies,
  - Responsible staff,

        o   Review dates.
- Plans will be reviewed regularly or upon change of circumstances.

4.4 Implementation and Monitoring

- Trainers and support staff will implement agreed strategies.
- Progress is monitored to ensure support remains effective.
- Adjustments are made where necessary, in consultation with the student.

4.5 Records Management

- All support actions and plans will be recorded in the Student Management System (SMS) and retained securely.
- Access is limited to authorised staff to protect student privacy.

4.6 Communication

- Support services information is included in:
    - Student Handbook,
    - Website,
    - Enrolment materials,
    - Orientation sessions.

4.7 Escalation

- If student support issues involve safety, risk, or serious wellbeing concerns, AA Academy will escalate using the Incident Report Form and Critical Incident Policy.

Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes to legislation, standards, or identified gaps through student or staff feedback.