



VSTET – Edumis 6665

Self-evaluation: Compliance with The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

October 2024

VSTET Background

VSTET was registered in December 2019.

VSTET, as a tertiary registered institution, is required to be compliant with The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (Code).

The primary purpose of VSTET is to care for the students who enrol and provide education opportunities which will improve present and future life situations. Therefore, the requirements of the Code remain, as always, 'front and centre' of daily practice.

1 Strategic Goals and Plans

VSTET has strategic goals and plans for the health and well-being of learners. These are reviewed annually each year to ensure they remain appropriate. The well-being of current learners, and an analysis of issues which have arisen, are used to confirm strategic goals and plans.

Staff are encouraged to be well-informed about matters which may impact the well-being of learners. This includes such themes as: mental health, domestic and living situations (i.e. accommodation circumstances), anxiety, and healthy lifestyles, among others. Routine staff meetings include a specific focus on learner well-being, needs and progress.

Strategic Goals and Plans

Vision	To have a learning environment where students feel comfortable and safe, where they enjoy being at VSTET, and are happy to engage in the learning process.
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement deliberate actions and activities which support the wellbeing of all learners – i.e. wellness by design.• Have policies and procedures which support the wellbeing of all learners, and routinely review these to maintain currency.• Ensure every staff member is able to identify and support the wellbeing of each learner and work collaboratively with colleagues to achieve this.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable learners to have a voice in the provision and maintenance of learner wellbeing. • Provide resources to support the wellbeing of all learners.
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EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE ACTIONS WHICH SUPPORT LEARNER WELL-BEING

Outcomes	Do
Strategy is appropriate	Review and communicate the Wellbeing Strategy to ensure it remains current and is available to relevant stakeholders.
Wellbeing report is available	Review, analyse and summarise wellbeing activities to align with the code self-review deadline.
Actions enable student voice to be heard	Open door policy whereby offices are easily accessed by learners who routinely enter and chat.
	Respond to all issues, incidents (including those which are 'niggles' but which can cumulatively undermine the learning environment), and complaints, whether informal or formal, and document in the relevant Folder.
Actions are taken to support wellbeing	Make available to learners, a list of organisations which can provide wellbeing help and support– in the Handbook, Noticeboard.
	Annual review of Complaints and Appeals Policy, and Codes of Conduct.
	Annual evaluation of learner incidents and complaints to identify trends - Issues, Incidents, and Complaints folder.
	Make available a list of learner emergency contacts.
	Learners are made aware of policies and procedures 5-01 Learner Support, 5-03 Learner Code of Conduct, 5-04 Learner Complaints, Discipline and Appeals, 5-06 Learner Literacy Support.
	Annually confirm the relevance of the topics in the level one and two programmes, on: discrimination, alcohol and other drugs, assertiveness, support services, health and safety, employment and career options.
	Confirm LNAAT literacy and numeracy tool has been used routinely (quarterly) for/by each learner. Analyse trends.
	Provide transport to bring learners to course and to take them home at the end of the course, each day.
	Evaluate expenditure on transport, food, and personal resources (e.g. toiletries, etc) for learners, and budget accordingly.
	CCTV cameras are used to promote and manage learner health and safety.

An analysis of well-being activities helps to identify any emerging aspects which need specific consideration going forward.

- 1 A small but significant number of students have had issues with their family/living situations. Alternative accommodation for this age group isn't readily available, due mainly to age and lack of income issues, but also a shortage of accommodation in general.

- 2 Vaping is widespread among the students. The craving results in not only frequent use, but also sharing of vapes, including sometimes unwelcome pressure to share.

2 Learner Voice

Learner Voice

VSTET works to build effective relationships with all learners to not only be more alert to health and wellbeing issues, but also for learners to feel confident to talk with staff and express any concerns they may have, at a personal level, or at a group level. Staff work closely with learners. The classroom is an open forum for sharing knowledge, observations, wants, and needs.

Staff routinely assist students to resolve minor personal wellbeing issues, referring significant issues through to the health nurse or case workers.

Complaints by learners

VSTET has the complaints procedure in the Handbook and in the Programme Guidebooks. These booklets are provided to each student. The complaints procedure shows learners what to do in the event of wishing to lodge a complaint, and how to move it forward. The Handbook and Guidebooks also advise the Appeals process.

In 2024 one student lodged a formal complaint. This was not a significant issue and the student confirmed that management speaking to the person being complained about was a sufficient resolution.

3 Safe, inclusive, supportive, and accessible physical and digital learning environments

Safe learning and engaging communal environments

Learners need to safe and secure. The small number of learners ensures VSTET can quickly address potential issues of discrimination, racism, bullying, harassment, and abuse. The tutors work hard to ensure there is a supportive culture in the classroom.

The Handbook, and some of the topics in the programmes, provide information on services which learners may access if they are seeking wellbeing support.

VSTET regularly engages with organisations which provide counselling and wellbeing support and VSTET staff refer learners in need of additional support through to the appropriate organisations.

Support with studies

Prospective learners are provided with the opportunity to look around the learning environment before enrolling, and to discuss programme content and expectations.

The Handbook and the Programme Guidebooks describe rules and guidelines for behaviour and performance, and the Guidebooks in particular, provide information on the requirements for success.

Rolling enrolments mean learners are moving forward through their learning at different speeds to suit their personal capabilities and are often working on different topics. No assessments are undertaken until the tutor feels that the learner is ready to do the assessment and likely to succeed.

There is support for literacy and numeracy, recognising that this can be problematic for many learners, particularly those who have disengaged early from mainstream schooling.

Learners, upon enrolment, are each given a document which has a summary of their programme content, and this is able to be used to monitor progress toward qualification achievement. The programmes are designed to enable an element of learner choice in the 'what and when'.

There are topics within the programmes which provide an opportunity to explore employment and education pathways.

Physical and digital spaces

VSTET is constantly upgrading facilities, and this year has increased the computer stock by twenty five percent. VSTET makes changes to the learning environment in consultation with the learners, and with the objective of making the environment better suited to learner interests and preferences, and to programme delivery.

The physical space is well-heated and ventilated, and every effort is made to ensure the learners are comfortable in their learning environments.

Computers on each learner workspace are available for accessing information on the Internet, but gaming and social media are locked down, as are potentially risky websites.

A further small classroom with seats tables and computers has been added to enable more senior students to work independently.

A food preparation room has been built in 2024 for the Hospitality students – separate to the kitchen/cooking/cleaning area.

One of the smaller classrooms has been set up as the 'low light' classroom, for those who get headaches, epilepsy, and/or who can't work in bright light.

Seating plans are used to seat particular learners in particular places, either with a peer support, handy to the tutor's desks, or handy to the classroom door if a rapid exit is required. The seating plan is flexible but enables the tutors to manage another aspect of learner well-being.

4 Learners are safe and well

Information for learners: basic needs

Information about rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and support services, is provided to learners in the Handbook and Guidebooks. There is opportunity to reinforce this information during various topics in each of the level one and level two programmes.

Physical and mental health

VSTET keeps a close eye on each learner's wellbeing and facilitates the opportunity to meet with the Health Nurse who attends each fortnight and who is readily available at short notice if a need arises.

Most students have case workers who are available to assist each student if required. Students over 16 who don't have a youth services worker are provided with the opportunity to be assigned to a case worker.

VSTET provides a context which respects and encompasses diversity.

Monitoring and responsiveness

VSTET is alert to the need to ensure enrolled learners have continuity of delivery and the opportunity to achieve their qualifications. Learner support and wellbeing are crucial factors in this equation. VSTET provides the individualised support which many learners, parents and caregivers are seeking.

- Enrolment: VSTET obtains contact information during the enrolment process. This is available for use when there are concerns or potential emergencies with learners.
- Risk Schedule: A risk schedule is maintained as a mechanism for reflecting and evaluating potential risks and this is routinely checked and upgraded.
- Attendance: There is close monitoring of attendance patterns and staff speak with students who are developing haphazard attendance patterns.
- Evaluations: Programme evaluations provide an opportunity for students to formally and confidentially comment on their programmes and learning environment.
- CCTV cameras: CCTV cameras support the safety and wellbeing of staff and students.

New Actions to Support Wellbeing

As a result of activities in 2024, there will be further consolidation of wellbeing initiatives during 2025. The small VSTET team makes every effort to go above and beyond to provide wellbeing support for learners.

In 2025 VSTET will add a small games and puzzles area where students who want to 'mix and mingle' in a quiet space, can sit quietly and socialise purposefully.

As in the past few recent years, VSTET holds on to the comment from the EER 2021 Summary of Results: "Pastoral care is a standout feature of the learner's experience at VSTET."