

# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact our Administration Office 9370 8784

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Scot Vale West Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

## CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

The school is situated in Melbourne's north-west, adjacent to the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds, in the city of Moonee Valley. In 2013 we proudly celebrated our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. There are several areas within the school grounds that cater to a wide range of outdoor play experiences.

These include an oval, a synthetic running track, large play equipment areas, basketball/netball court and shady areas.

The school has a diverse population and a community that embraces and benefits from its multicultural mix. Whole school events such as Multicultural Evening, Twilight Picnic, The Arts and Spanish Festivals and the school concert provide an opportunity for the community to work together. The school has well-developed grounds and gardens which are maintained through student and community involvement. A strong emphasis has been placed on establishing a sustainability culture that has been developed over many years.

Ascot Vale West Primary School offers outstanding teaching and learning programs in a secure and stimulating environment. The staff, along with supportive families, work hard to continually improve our school. All students are encouraged to be responsible and independent, while striving to achieve their personal best and participate confidently in their learning whilst also working cooperatively with others. The school also aims to provide a range of learning experiences to enable students to reach their full potential.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Ascot Vale West Primary School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all students, staff and members of our community. Our school recognises the importance of the partnership between our school and parents and carers to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, creating an inclusive and safe school environment for our students.

When engaging with our community we acknowledge and value its diversity. The richness of many cultures is embraced and supported through the curriculum and through community events such as multicultural evenings. In recognising economic and social family backgrounds, the school encourages parent participation in a range of ways and ensures educational experiences are accessible for all students. The school endeavours to support both families and individuals in recognition of their life experiences.

By responding to the diverse learning needs of the students, the school undertakes a continuous improvement approach to ensure that our curriculum and pedagogy engages all students. This includes a strong commitment to professional learning, the embedding of improvement strategies and responding to multiple sources of feedback.

Our school believes student wellbeing requires a whole child focus. The school responds to students' social, emotional, cultural, cognitive, health and welfare needs using a multi-disciplinary approach, including accessing DET psychological, nursing and language services and other local agencies.

The school understands that full attendance maximises every student's ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach effectively. Student attendance is monitored in accordance with the school's [Attendance Policy](#).

Our school is committed to preventing and addressing all forms of bullying. [Refer to Bullying Prevention Policy for more information](#).

The programs and teaching at Ascot Vale West Primary School support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- elected government

- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance.

This policy outlines our school's vision, mission, objective, values and expectations of our school community. This policy is available on our school website, our staff induction handbook, school information booklet & Prep Information Booklet.

To celebrate and embed our Statement of Values and Philosophy in our school community, we

- display posters that promote our school values
- celebrate our values in our school newsletter
- provide awards and recognition for students who actively demonstrate the values
- align our student management with our school values
- discuss our values with students in the classroom, meetings and assemblies.

With the vision, *Strong Foundations, Strong Future* the school strives to ensure that our students will become responsible, motivated life-long learners who can confidently face future challenges.

Ascot Vale West Primary School's mission is to foster academic and personal development of its students through the provision of an authentic and engaging environment facilitated through strong School values, philosophy and vision.

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Ascot Vale West Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

Priority is given to engaging all students in rigorous and enriching curriculum in a safe and orderly environment every school day. Identified Learning Dispositions of *Curiosity, Reflection, Resilience* and *Confidence* are embedded in curriculum instruction.

The school actively promotes student voice and multiple opportunities for student leadership within and beyond the classroom. Opportunities for students to take on meaningful responsibilities arise through the Student Representative Council (SRC) and additional student leadership roles including Student Ambassadors for Library, Spanish & Visual Arts, the Buddy program, as well as Sporting and Performing Arts events. The school provides additional programs including Before & After School Care, Breakfast Club, Camping program and the Moonee Valley Instrumental Music Program (MVIMP) and SoundGarage.

The school works collaboratively with students and parents/carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices, based on the school's values, expected social competencies and positive peer relationships. There are also strategies in place to address inappropriate behaviours which can negatively impact on the learning environment of self and others.

*A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:*

## Universal

- student social and emotional learning will be catered for in curriculum programs
- students will have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the SRC, Student Leadership roles and other more informal mechanisms
- setting high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, Parent Opinion Survey data, student management data, Student Check-In data and school level assessment data
- delivering a broad curriculum to ensure that students can engage in teaching and learning that is tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- using an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- adopting a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and following the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- incorporating our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promoting this to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- delivering carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- acknowledging student positive behaviour and achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- encouraging students to contribute and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including class meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Instructional Leaders, Primary Welfare Officer, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- creating opportunities for cross age connections amongst students through school concerts, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- encouraging all students to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team comprising of the Principal, Assistant Principal and the Primary Welfare Officer if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in health, wellbeing and learning
- engaging in Restorative Justice with our staff and students, which incorporates programs such as:
  - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships
- developing programs, incursions and excursions to address issue specific needs or behaviour

- providing opportunities for student inclusion i.e., sports teams, recess and lunchtime activities, buddy programs
- ensuring measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment. Student social and emotional learning will be catered for in curriculum programs
- supporting opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, recess and lunchtime activities).

### Targeted

The school has a Primary Welfare Officer at 0.6 EFT, together with the Assistant Principal who will:

- undertake health promotion and social skill development in response to needs identified by classroom teachers or other school staff during the school year
- provide parent programs when required
- ensure regular and timely Student Support Group meetings timetabled to support PSD students
- incorporate EAL coaching and MEA to support EAL students and families
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- ensure our Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – refer to our Aboriginal Wellbeing & Safety Policy and the Koorie Education Policy for further information
- undertake health promotions and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff
- apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- facilitate and implement the use of the Student Check-In Tool each term to identify students under three categories of social, emotional and academic behaviour. The data is analysed and actioned by the Wellbeing Team and shared with PLCs.
- Ensure our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through:
  - the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships education program
  - Multicultural activities and events such as Multicultural evening, Harmony Day, Diversity Run, Restorative Justice
  - The employment of our MEA and EAL co-ordinator
- provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on LGBTIQ+ Student Support
- support all students in Out of Home Care (OoHc) in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group Meeting (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- support students with a disability to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Students with Disability](#), by making reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs where required such as consultation with families and where required, student support group meeting and individual education plans

- support wellbeing and health, staff may undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- *students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)*

### Individual

Ascot Vale West Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with students and their families to discuss how best to support the student to engage with school
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Positive Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
  - school-based wellbeing supports
  - Student Support Services in the Network
  - appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First
  - re-engaging programs.

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances, health and wellbeing
- collaborating (where appropriate) with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - who are funded under the Program for Students with Disability (PSD)
  - in Out of Home Care (OoHC)
  - who are indigenous
  - who have complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

## 4. Identifying students in need of support

Ascot Vale West Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to assist identified students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Ascot Vale West Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance and suspension data
- engagement with families
- communication with student families
- student check-in tool (DET)

Specific structures to support students' needs include Individual Education plans, Student Support Groups, Return to School Plans, specific EAL support and Positive Behaviour and or Safety Management Plans for students at risk. Teachers are provided with additional classroom support in the form of Literacy/Numeracy/EAL coaching and additional staff (e.g., MEA, ES, parent helpers, volunteers) to ensure student needs are being addressed.

Support for individual students or groups of students are offered on a needs/funding dependent basis. This may include support from the Primary Welfare Officer or specific programs for students.

## 5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently in line with the Ascot Vale West Primary School's Bullying policy.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Ascot Vale West Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive (Restorative Justice) and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- advising a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to either the Student Welfare Officer, Assistant Principal or Principal
- restorative practices
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Ascot Vale West Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

## 7. Engaging with families



Ascot Vale West Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

## 8. Evaluation

Ascot Vale West Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Ascot Vale West Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2023
Consultation	Student Representative Council March 2023 School Council March 2023 School Community Website March 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2024