Ascot Vale West Primary School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Ascot Vale West Primary School on 03 9370 8784 or ascot.Vale.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

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.

Ascot 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.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Ascot Vale West Primary School is situated in Melbourne's inner north-west in the city of Moonee Valley. The school is bordered by residential housing on two sides with the Ascot Vale Leisure Centre and Victory Park on the third.

The Royal Melbourne Showgrounds are located directly opposite the front entrance to the school. The school was established in 1923. The school population reflects the characteristics of the Ascot Vale community with its diversity of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. A key strength of the school is the value placed by the school community on its multicultural mix. The school continually strives to build connections with its diverse communities by providing a range of opportunities for families to participate in school life through parent programs and social activities. Students at Ascot Vale West Primary School have vastly different living circumstances. Approximately a third of students reside in social housing, being of families who are more recent arrivals where English is not the main language spoken at home. This is largely due to families being offered permanent housing outside the local area as the planned redevelopment of the Ascot Vale Housing Estate proceeds.

The values embraced by the school community are: Be a Learner, Be Respectful and Be Safe. These values together with a set of guiding principles provide a framework for the way we work towards achieving our vision. The school has a clearly defined learning framework based on the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model. Through this learning framework teachers scaffold students to support learners as they develop their understandings.

Whilst developing Literacy, Numeracy, Social and Emotional Wellbeing are our key focuses, we believe that the development of the whole child is critical to successful outcomes for our students. The Wellbeing Team and Curriculum Team support staff and monitor students, and their families to ensure they remain connected and engaged in learning. The school is also committed to its Specialist Program where the Specialist Team implement Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Physical Education and Spanish programs. Staff work collaboratively in Professional Learning Communities led by Instructional Leaders. Professional Learning Communities use inquiry cycles to challenge current practices to drive and deepen their knowledge by responding to student data. This enhances the tracking and monitoring of individual students and sub-groups to more effectively personalise and scaffold learning; ensuring challenge and progress for every student. Working as part of the School Improvement Team, Assistant Principals, Professional Learning Community Leaders and Wellbeing & Disability Inclusion Leaders work to support consistent practices across the school.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Whilst literacy and numeracy are our main focuses, the school community recognises and values the need to educate the whole child. Great emphasis is therefore placed on maintaining positive culture of student wellbeing and engagement so students can thrive now and in the future. In addition, the school offers a broad curriculum program to enrich learning and stimulate and develop skills and talents in a range of areas.

Inspired by our multicultural surroundings, Ascot Vale West Primary School empowers students to embrace learning, strive for excellence, and nurture their overall wellbeing. Through an inclusive, caring environment, we engage and challenge students to develop, acquire, and value the knowledge and skills essential for lifelong

curiosity, social awareness, and active citizenship. We foster collaboration and encourage students to work respectfully with others as they grow into informed, responsible members of the community.

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 our 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

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.

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 Student Representative Council, 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
- 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 and school level assessment data
- teachers at Ascot Vale West Primary School use the Instructional Model to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Ascot Vale West Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students ae welcome to self-refer to the Student Welfare Officer, Instructional Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need

support of an kind. We are proud to have an open door policy where students and staff are partners in learning

- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities).

Targeted

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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
- oversee all students in Out of Home Care appointing Learning Mentors, and supporting classroom teachers to develop Individual Learning Plans. Timetabling Student Support Group Meetings with all stakeholders and liaising with LOOKOUT
- 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.
- 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 support of our EAL Learning Specialist
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through the use of the Multi-tiered Strategies of Support (MTSS)
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on *LGBTIQ Student Support* [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students]
- All students in Out of Home Care are supported 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 (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on *Students with Disability*, such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- Wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year

Individual

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 Learning Plan and/or a 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.

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 student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- Developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a 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
    - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, Headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
    - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    - with a disability
    - in Out of Home Care
    - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

3. Identifying students in need of support

Ascot Vale West Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify 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, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- communication with student families
- check-in tool (DET)

4. 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.

5. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

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 implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, 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:

- warning 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 the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- 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.

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.

6. 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.

7. 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/carer 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 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
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2025
Consultation	May 19th 2025 – Parent Group
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2027