

# Bendigo Primary School Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

## 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.

Bendigo 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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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Bendigo Primary School is situated in central Bendigo. Our school community is diverse and includes families that live in our school zone as well as a number of families from neighbouring suburbs. Many of our families have close links to the school forged over many years with multiple members of the family attending school here, including grandparents, parents and now their children. In 2022 we have an enrolment of 206 students in Grades Foundation- 6. We operate 9 grades- F, F/1, 1/2 x3, 3/4 x2, 4/5 and 6. The school presently has 10 Koorie students enrolled and the school ensures their culture is recognised throughout the curriculum and school activities.

We are committed to providing personalised learning in a supportive community environment. Our Kitchen/Garden program has gathered momentum, engaging families and extending links to local community groups such as St Matthew's Hope It Grows Garden Club and Friends of Ironbark Gully group. The implementation of the Developmental Curriculum in Foundation to Grade Two allows students to transition to school, direct their own learning and lay the foundations for Inquiry Learning in the senior grades. The school has a strong focus in Literacy and Numeracy. Vic curriculum is delivered in all curriculum areas. Specialist Art, Music, Chinese Mandarin and PE programs are also planned and taught by specialist teachers.

Under the umbrella of our school values of integrity, respect and honesty, sits the conviction that our school is built on Play is the Way's five founding pillars: self- awareness, self- control, self-motivation, being able to manage our relationships and empathy. Our school community values relationships with: a supportive Parents and Friends Group, a pro-active School Council and the unique presence of our past students, parents and staff group, known as the Violetarians.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Bendigo Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to support our students to become emotionally and socially responsible, empathetic global citizens.

Our Statement of Values is available online on our website <https://www.benviolet.vic.edu.au/>

## 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Bendigo Primary School is committed to developing Student Engagement, Well-Being and Behaviour Education encompassing Self-Management in students. We embrace a values-based approach that underpins our school culture. Students, parents and teachers need to have a clear understanding of what is expected in regard to how we treat each other, to ensure a welcoming learning environment that is supportive and safe.

We believe that students come to school to better themselves by being able to work with others. Students with well-developed social and emotional skills find it easier to manage themselves, relate to others, develop resilience and a sense of self-worth, resolve conflict and engage in teamwork and feel positive about themselves and the world around them.

### Universal Strategies.

- Staff and parents/carers are to model rational, emotionally regulated behaviour.
- Ensuring all staff, contractors, visitors and volunteers are made aware of the Child Safe Standards and our Child Safe Code of Conduct and connected policies. This information is included as part of our Induction process.
- Create a welcoming learning and work environment for students, staff and visitors.
- Develop positive working relationships with families.
- 'Play is the Way' practices will be implemented in all classrooms and reinforced by all staff.
- All students will be exposed to and experience 'Play is the Way' games every week.
- We focus on the values of self-control, self-motivation, self-awareness, empathy and managing relationships.
- Encourage the development of empathy in our students.
- We will hold high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents/carers.
- Encourage self-motivation and the ability to persevere.
- Teachers at Bendigo Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- Monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level.
- Create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through buddies, athletics and music programs.
- Carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling.
- Our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy 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.
- We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Bully Stoppers
- Measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as child abuse, racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.
- **3R's Method**

The school follows the 3R method, Reflection, Repair and Restitution which aims to assist students in understanding their behaviour and how it affects everyone in our school community. As a whole school we need a comprehensive understanding of the following terms and how they support and affect this policy.

What we understand

1. Consequence: The effect that behaviour has on oneself and other people.

What we do

2. Restitution: A means to undo the damage and reconnect with your community. A means to rebuild trust.

What we resist doing.

3. Punishment: The deliberate inflicting of physical or emotional discomfort pain and or fear to control behaviour. Delivered after the event

**The 3R steps method** - Helping students make strong decisions.

1. Name the person/s
2. Find value in that person and tell them
3. Identify the virtue that needs to be focused on.
4. Identify the weak decision made and how it affected others
5. Make it right – Identify an act of restitution
6. Say sorry- verbal or written
7. Inform parents

Our focus is on educating students to change their behaviour based on their understanding of how it affects others, rather than on the fear of punishment. We are here to help children not hurt them.

**Targeted Strategies.**

- 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.
- 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.
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through connecting with their resettlement support person, interpreters, supporting them with free uniform items and connecting them with community support services if required.
- 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

**Individual Strategies.**

Bendigo 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 through [SSG](#) meetings, gardening program, buddy program, individual/small group intervention programs.
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school.
- developing an [Individual Learning Plan](#) and/or a [Behaviour Support Plan](#).
- Connecting with any therapists, support workers, community organisations supporting the child/family
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to/for:
  - 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

- A Disability Inclusion profile.

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.

#### **4. Identifying students in need of support**

Bendigo 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. Bendigo 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
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

#### **5. Student rights and responsibilities**

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment, violence, discrimination and intimidation. 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 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, Bendigo 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 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 and Training.

The Principal of Bendigo 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**

Bendigo 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 [Feedback 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

Bendigo 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
- Sentral attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Bendigo 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
- referenced in transition and enrolment packs
- 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 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	December 2022
Consultation	School Council 5/12/2022 Staff via Consultative 7/12/2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before December 2024

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learn in a safe and secure environment where, without abuse, intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment, they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition</li> <li>• participate fully in the school’s educational program</li> </ul>	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participate fully in the school’s educational program</li> <li>• to attend regularly.</li> <li>• display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.</li> <li>• demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn.</li> <li>• contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.</li> <li>• take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community.</li> </ul>

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<p>Parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• educated in safe and secure environment in which empathy towards all students is encouraged</li> </ul>	<p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child’s educational progress</li> <li>• to model positive behaviours.</li> <li>• ensure their child’s regular attendance</li> <li>• engage in regular, constructive and respectful communication with school staff regarding their child’s learning.</li> <li>• support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.</li> </ul>

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<p>Staff have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expect that they will be able to work in an orderly and cooperative environment</li> <li>• be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student</li> </ul>	<p>Staff have a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy.</li> <li>• know how students learn and how to teach/support them effectively.</li> <li>• know the content they teach.</li> <li>• know their students.</li> <li>• plan and assess for effective learning.</li> <li>• uphold our Child Safe Code of Conduct and associated policies, implement the Child Safe Standards and take all precautions to prevent child abuse.</li> <li>• create and maintain safe, respectful and challenging learning environments.</li> <li>• use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to act with integrity and to behave with trust, honesty and respect.</li></ul> |
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