

## Student Engagement and Wellbeing

### 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.

Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten 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 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 on and off campus, including camps and excursions.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
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### POLICY

#### 1. School profile

Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten was established in 1869 and is located approximately 30 kilometres east of Melbourne. We have students enrolled from Foundation to Year 6 and over 64 school staff members including a School Nurse, a Wellbeing Coordinator and Chaplain.

Our school grounds back onto Vermont Reserve, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Most students that attend our school live locally, Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten has developed close ties to the local community, and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Our school is culturally diverse with 41% of families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE groups being Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Sinhalese, Hindi and Gujarati. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

### School Values

- **To be respectful** - respecting ourselves, others and the environment around us. Treating everyone with tolerance, acceptance and understanding.
- **To be responsible**- taking care of our own and other people's property. Taking ownership for our actions and realising that there are consequences (both positive and negative) for these actions. Being organised, ready and prepared for the school day and completing any tasks or duties that have been committed to.
- **To care** - being polite, friendly and inclusive. Giving our time and resources to help people in need and accepting different opinions, cultures, religions and languages.
- **To strive** - We are all members of the school community who are encouraged to be confident, positive, persistent and resilient, and to strive for our personal best. We follow our school values, take pride in ourselves and school. We always try our hardest and encourage others to do so to.

### Mission Statement

Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten's mission is to be a safe, inclusive and challenging learning environment that continues a tradition of excellence in education. We will prepare all students to become effective twenty-first century learners and instil an enduring appreciation of life-long learning. Our dedicated staff will provide an innovative and comprehensive curriculum. This will develop the academic, social, physical and emotional growth of every student and empower them to become positive members of a global society. We will provide a supportive community, that develops self-esteem, positive values, respect for others, cultural diversity and an appreciation of globalisation.

### Vision

We succeed when our students are:

- Always seeking to understand and respect the views, values and cultures of others
- Actively engaged in their learning
- Literate and numerate; read with comprehension, write clearly, compute accurately
- Responsible, organised, cooperative and independent
- Respectful of others and demonstrate empathy towards others
- Able to learn and adapt to change and new technologies
- Resilient and persistent
- Able to recognise and understand their impact on their community and environment
- Critical thinkers, problem solvers and willing to have a go
- Inclusive of everyone
- Self-motivated to be lifelong learners
- Displaying a positive self-image.

### 3. Engagement strategies

Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten 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.

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

#### Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise 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 Survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten 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 Vermont Primary 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
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Student Leaders program. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Year Group Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal 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 learning
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships
  - eSmart Madeline and Alannah Foundation
  - Better Buddy Program
  - Restorative Practices
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)

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

### Targeted

- each year group has a Year Level Leader who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their Level in consultation with classroom teachers, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- the following programs are implemented at various Year Levels
  - Foundation – Year 6 Buddy Program and Creating a Learning Community Unit of Work
  - Year 1 – Year 5 Buddy Program and How Full is Your Bucket Unit of Work
  - Year 2 – A Spotlight on School Values Unit of Work
  - Year 3 – Bounce Back Unit of Work
  - Year 4 – Stamp Out Bullying Unit of Work
  - Year 5 –Year 1 Buddy Program Becoming a Leader Unit of Work and Passion Project
  - Year 6 – Foundation Buddy Program, Being a Leader Unit of Work and Passion Project

### Individual

Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten 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 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
  - 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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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

Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten 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. Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten 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 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, 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.

#### **6. Student behavioural expectations**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten and Kindergarten's Bullying policy. All students must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct formed in consultation with the students and wider community.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Ratified by School Council August 2021

Due for review 2024

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
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

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

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

**Consequences for choosing to break the rules are;**

Steps 2-3: *Length of 'Time Out' in each classroom varies according to grade-agreement to be made between pupils and teachers.*

**Step 1. Reminder.**

**Step 2. 2nd Reminder and move.**

**Step 3. 3rd Reminder Offending student exited to another classroom .**

*(This time to be spent making up lost work-time and spent with the teacher discussing the in-appropriate behaviour.)*

**Step 4. If a child significantly interferes with the rights of others to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, he/she may be withdrawn from the class without following the above steps.**

**If a child is exited from their classroom, parents will be notified.**

*Refusal to exit: If a child refuses to exit when instructed to by the teacher, a red tag will be sent to the Principal (or another teacher) to visit the class and escort the student to the Principals office OR if necessary other children will exit the classroom and work in another room.*

**Re-Entry Procedure: To return to the classroom, the student needs to discuss the following five questions with the classroom teacher, before they can re-join their class.**

1. What were you thinking when you .....
2. What have you been thinking since .....
3. Who has this affected?
4. What should you do / say to fix up the situation?

## 7. Engaging with families

Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten 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 and carers 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

Vermont Primary School and Kindergarten will collect data 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
- SOCS
- Sentral

## 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
- 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](#)

**This Policy works in conjunction with:**

- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Management Policy and procedures
- Bullying and Harassment Policy and procedures including restraint procedures
- Internet Policy and Procedures
- eSmart Policy and Procedures
- On-site Supervision Policy and Procedures
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Welfare policy and Procedures

**REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with Department Guidelines.