



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Officer Primary School

### 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.

Officer 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
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

## **POLICY**

### **School profile**

Situated in the South East growth corridor 52 km from Melbourne, within a small but growing township, Officer Primary School is focused on achieving strong learning outcomes for its students within a 'family' small school environment. It is on a small single frontage allotment 1.4 hectares in a variety of portable buildings. Our school facilities are aging and cannot compete with those at the newly constructed schools; however, we pride ourselves in the attractive grounds which contain some unique features such as 130-year old spreading oak trees and other features to engage and excite students.

Parents are attracted to our school by our smaller size, our caring approach, our reputation for supporting the development of every individual and our range of exciting and unique learning programs. The last five years have seen significant changes in our surrounding community influenced by some extensive housing development and the opening of several new State and independent schools.

### **School values, philosophy and vision**

At Officer Primary School we promote the philosophy that all children can learn and become effective learners. As a learning community, made up of parents, staff and students, we hold high expectations of self and others.

Our purpose is to equip the learning environment with the best human and physical resources so that our students are supported to:

- Achieve their full educational and personal potential
- Strive for excellence
- Participate in innovative teaching and learning experiences
- Develop independence and resilience
- Become effective and productive members of a global society

At Officer Primary School we strongly believe that the entire School Community shares responsibility for the learning and development, health, safety and wellbeing of our students. We place great importance on building authentic relationships with parents and caregivers, to promote high levels of involvement in the development and learning of their children.

We set high expectations for our community and expect all members (parents, students and staff) to demonstrate these core values which are directly aligned with the values of:

- **Gratitude**
- **Respect**
- **Outstanding**
- **Wellbeing**
- **Teamwork**
- **Honesty**

A statement about the rights and responsibilities of all students, parents and school staff is included at **Appendix 1**.

## **Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

To realise our vision, Officer Primary School has in place a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviours and respectful relationships for all students in the school. We recognize that some students, as a group or as individuals, may need extra social, emotional or educational support to flourish at school, and so we will put in place strategies to identify these students and provide them with the support they need.

Officer Primary School's positive school culture is predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. The school is actively engaged in developing classroom practice to ensure pedagogy and curriculum engages all students by recognizing and responding to their diverse learning needs.

Officer Primary School understands that full attendance is a key to engagement and to maximize every student's ability to learn and our teachers' ability to teach effectively. Respectful relationships between staff, students and parents is promoted and Professional Learning Teams encourage innovative pedagogy.

A key component of Officer Primary School's approach to engagement is the teaching of positive behaviours. There are also intervention strategies in place to address inappropriate behaviours which can negatively impact on the learning environment of the self and others.

Officer Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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 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 survey data, student management data and school level assessment data*
- *teachers at Officer Primary School use an [Gradual Release of Responsibility] 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*
- *teachers at Officer 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 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*

- *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 Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator 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:*
  - *Respectful Relationships*
  - *Bully Stoppers*
  - *Safe Schools*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs*
- *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.*

### Targeted

- *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*
- *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*
- *staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*

- *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

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Education Plans
- Behaviour - Students
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Support Services

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Mental health toolkit
- headspace
- LOOKOUT

Officer 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 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*
- *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.*

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

Officer 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Officer 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
- kindergarten transition statements
- School Entry Health Questionnaire
- reports from paraprofessionals (e.g.: paediatrician, psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist etc.)
- 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

Student rights and responsibilities

## 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.

## Student behavioural expectations

Officer Primary School has developed shared expectations to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all are respected. The expectations are intended to be positive in that they set out what is expected and appropriate behaviours for our school community. Our shared expectations are intended to support individual students and their families that come to our community from a diversity of backgrounds, communities and experiences.

Shared expectations for students, parents/carers and school staff are detailed at **Appendix 3**.

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 the Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Officer Primary School will institute a staged response, as outlined in **Appendix 4**, 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
- restorative practices
- time out of the playground
- 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 Officer 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. Discipline will be applied in a way that is proportionate to the behaviour and upholds procedural fairness.

**See Appendix 5.**

### **Engaging with families**

Officer Primary School values parent/carer input into its operations and curriculum offerings and seeks feedback through the Parent Opinion Survey, and from parent representatives on School Council and associated sub-committees.

Officer Primary School will support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. It provides an environment that welcomes parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning.

The school will create successful partnerships with parents/carers by:

- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the Student Engagement Policy
- Conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- Providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers and students to contribute
- Involving families with homework and other curriculum-related materials
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school
- Involving families in Student Support Groups

Parent responsibilities for supporting their child's attendance and engagement are outlined at Appendix 3. Furthermore, parents are expected to act in a respectful and constructive manner when dealing with our school. More detail on parent responsibilities and consequences for inappropriate behaviour are outlined in **Appendix 6.**

### **Evaluation**

Officer 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

Officer 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
- 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](#)

## **APPENDICES AND RELATED POLICIES**

Appendix 1: Statement of Rights and Responsibilities

Appendix 2: Student Engagement Strategies

Appendix 3: Behaviour expectations

Appendix 4: Staged response to behaviour issues

Appendix 5: Process for responding to breaches of Behaviour Expectations

Appendix 6: Statement of Values

#### **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	Management and Accountability team, School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2024

**Appendix 1: STATEMENT OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Officer Primary School believes strongly in the rights of every individual and values the diversity that members of our school community contribute. Every member of the school community has a

right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive, inclusive and free of discriminatory behaviour – including racist, sexist, ability based, class-based and homophobic forms of bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment, vilification, violence, abuse, exclusion, discrimination or intimidation. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Our statement of Rights and Responsibilities acknowledges that parents and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child. Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as we do this respectfully as a community working together. All members of the Officer Primary School community have a responsibility to:

- Acknowledge their obligations under the **Equal Opportunity Act of 2010** which sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.
- Acknowledge their obligations under the **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006** which affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasizes the value of difference.
- Meet their obligations under the **Disability Discrimination Act of 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005** which clarify and make explicit the rights of students with a disability and the obligations on schools to provide ‘reasonable adjustments’ to accommodate a student with a disability.
- Participate and contribute to a learning environment that supports the learning of self and others
- Share responsibility for building a safe and respectful school community
- Ensure their actions and views do not impact on the health and wellbeing of other members of the school community

Teachers have the right to be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that may impact on the teaching and learning for that student. Students have a responsibility to contribute positively to the educational experience for themselves and other students, to participate to the best of their ability in the school’s educational program, and to ensure that their behaviours demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community. Parents/carers have a responsibility to take an active interest in their child’s educational progress, model and reinforce positive behaviours and ensure their child’s regular attendance. They have a responsibility to support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, and engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child’s learning. Teachers have a responsibility to demonstrate the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. That is, to know how students learn and how to teach them effectively, know the content they teach, know their students, plan and assess for effective learning, create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments, and use a range of strategies to engage students in effective learning. Teachers also have a responsibility to fairly, reasonably and consistently implement the Student Engagement Policy. All members have an obligation to ensure school property is appropriately used and maintained.

## Appendix 2: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

	Students	Parents/Carers	Principals/Leadership Team & Staff
<p><b>Engagement</b> (Participation in the classroom and other school activities)</p>	<p>All students are expected to:</p> <p>Participate to the best of his/her ability in the school's educational programs</p> <p>Have high expectations that they can learn and take responsibility for their own learning</p> <p>Respect, value and learn from the differences of others</p>	<p>Parents/carers are expected to:</p> <p>Promote positive educational outcomes by valuing the importance of education and taking an active interest in their child's progress/needs</p> <p>Support their child in being prepared for the school day, including support for completion of home tasks and involvement in programs and events</p> <p>Actively participate in their child's learning by building a positive relationship with the school</p> <p>Support the school's efforts to educate young people to live in a diverse world by promoting an understanding of diversity in the home</p> <p>Read school newsletters and information and return notices on time</p> <p>Parents/carers are expected to:</p>	<p>The school leadership team will:</p> <p>Uphold the rights of every child to receive an education up to the compulsory age of schooling</p> <p>Ensure the school complies with its duty of care obligations to each student as well as its obligations under the equal opportunity act and human rights legislation</p> <p>Identify the diversity of the school community and deliver teaching and learning, educational and extra-curricular activities inclusive and responsive to student needs</p> <p>The staff will:</p> <p>Develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners and accommodate the needs of individuals</p> <p>Deliver curriculum and assessment that supports, challenges and extends students learning</p> <p>Develop positive relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning</p> <p>Value parent insights into their child's learning Provide opportunities for student voice developing a positive school culture</p>

<p><b>Attendance</b></p>	<p>All students are expected to:</p> <p>Attend and be punctual to all class sessions every day that the school is open</p> <p>Be prepared for all lessons</p>	<p>Ensure that their child’s enrolment details are correct</p> <p>Ensure that their child attends school regularly</p> <p>Facilitate punctuality, responsibility and independence</p> <p>Advise the school as soon as possible when a child is absent</p> <p>Account for all student absences by providing a note, telephoning or emailing the school</p> <p>Keep family holidays within scheduled school holidays</p> <p>Support their child’s learning during prolonged absences and work with the school to reintegrate students after prolonged absence</p>	<p>The school will:</p> <p>Proactively promote regular attendance</p> <p>Maintain accurate attendance records</p> <p>Contact families when a student is absent</p> <p>Follow up all unexplained absences</p> <p>Report absences in Student Reports consistently</p> <p>Identify trends via data analysis</p> <p>Report attendance data in the school’s Annual Report</p> <p>Support students with prolonged absence by developing an Absence Learning Plan</p> <p>Support students whose absence is problematic by working with families to develop and implement individual strategies</p>
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