



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Whittlesea Primary School on 9716 2140.

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 both positive and negative student behaviour.

Whittlesea 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 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.

SCOPE

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

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POLICY

1. School profile

WPS is located in the township of Whittlesea, 40 kilometres north-east of Melbourne's CBD. The school is steadily growing as population growth continues along the north-east development corridor. The school enjoys a strong connection to the local community which embraces a country feel while being in close proximity to suburban development. WPS was established on the current site in 1878. The school enrolment is currently at 406 with 1.8% of families being of Non English speaking backgrounds. Our school has a relatively low percentage of families in receipt of CSEF.

2. School expectations, philosophy and vision

Involvement in the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) initiative is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school expectations and vision. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core expectations at every opportunity. Our community expectations of 'Respect Your school', 'Do Your Best' and 'Help Others Succeed' are pivotal to our school's success. Explicit teaching of the school expectations and clear communication of what this looks like in all areas across the school ensures consistency. The use of a school wide reinforcement system encourages students to make positive choices and ensures success. Teaching behavioural expectations and ensuring these are clear for all students to follow is a proactive approach that supports students to make appropriate choices. We provide an array of experiences and opportunities that strive to meet and challenge our students so they can be the best they can be.

WPS has a strong vision statement, which drives our direction. It states:

'At Whittlesea Primary School the student is the centre of everything we do. Our vision is to be an inclusive community where learning is highly valued. We strive to develop and support the emotional, social and physical wellbeing of the whole child. We create a positive climate for learning that encourages all children to become collaborative and innovative members of local and global communities.'

3. Engagement strategies

Whittlesea Primary School implements 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. Whittlesea Primary School uses a tiered intervention framework to support students.

Universal Interventions

Universal interventions are evident in every area across the school. The school expectations, behaviour matrix, behaviour flowchart, targeted curriculum and the reinforcement systems form the common language and climate of SWPBS. These systems cater for all our students.

The following whole school strategies promote positive behaviour at Whittlesea Primary School:

- 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 survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- delivering a broad curriculum including inquiry based learning, career electives, leadership training F-6 and PATHS social emotional learning
- teachers at Whittlesea Primary School use an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Whittlesea 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 Philosophy, coupled with our school's expectations 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
- acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including class meetings and Student Agency Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through buddies, athletics, music programs such as State school Spectacular and mentor programs
- all students and families are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team, classroom teachers, Principal and Assistant 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
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - The Resilience Project
- providing opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, special interest groups, buddy programs and mentor support programs)

Targeted Interventions

Targeted group interventions are aimed at cohorts of students that may have a similar point of need or interest. The following targeted group interventions are implemented at Whittlesea Primary School:

- each year group has a PLC Leader and a learning Specialist responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support with the support of the Wellbeing Team.
- connect at risk 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
- wellbeing and school leadership teams 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
- Where appropriate, the school refers students 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
- school provides a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follows the Department policy on LGBTIQ+ Student Support
[LGBTIQ+ Student Support: Resources | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/lgbtiqa+student-support/resources)
- utilising social stories, Boardmaker and other targeted resources for specific cohorts of students
- supporting staff to undertake targeted training to support their students
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour
- outreach services are engaged for targeted interventions such as ICYMHS, Autism Connect
- a designated sensory space for group social skills activities and explicit teaching of how to interact and play with others
- targeted camp, excursion and incursion preparation will be planned and implemented to ensure success of all students

Intensive, Individual Interventions

Students with high-risk behaviour require targeted interventions to support them to be successful at school. These students require 1:1 interventions, individualised schedules, acknowledgment programs and individualised approaches to their routine. At WPS we refer to this as being a student's "Program".

At WPS we implement 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 Positive Behaviour Support Plan
- developing Student Safety Plans
- incorporating targeted 'jobs' and tasks to support transitions to the classroom
- utilising social stories
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example student positioning at the classroom tables, use of a sensory stool
- ES support
- student mentor support
- referring the student to school-based wellbeing supports
 - Wellbeing Leader for check in and referral
 - Student Support Services

- Access to a psychologist at school through a Mental Health Plan
- Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, Yarra Me, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, DHHS, Lookout, Child First and Orange Door.

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

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances, health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- inviting and supporting allied health professional to Student Support Group Meetings
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- facilitating regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - Eligible for the PSD program
 - In Out of Home Care and
 - With other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Whittlesea 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. Whittlesea 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 families

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
- adhere to the principles of the SWPBS framework including the School Expectations, Behaviour Matrix and Behaviour Process
- adhere to the WPS Acceptable Use Agreement that outlines safe, responsible and acceptable behaviours when using online devices.

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

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, Whittlesea 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 and Training.

The Principal of Whittlesea 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

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

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

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

8. Evaluation

Whittlesea 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

Example 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 as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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

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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

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

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

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Wednesday 5 th June 2024
Consultation	Consultation – School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2026