

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY WHITFIELD DISTRICT 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.

Whitfield District 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 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

'Exceptional Educational Experiences' is the vision at Whitfield District Primary School. It is a small rural school located in the beautiful King Valley and services children and their families from the locations of Cheshunt, Cheshunt South, Rose River, Whitfield and King Valley. Families derive their incomes from farming and skilled or semi-skilled employment in Wangaratta and the local community.

The school enjoys overwhelming support from these families. They support classroom programs, maintain grounds, and actively participate in camps, excursions and our large gardening and cooking programs.

The school has 35 students enrolled in 2020. It is currently staffed by two highly experienced full time teachers. The school prides itself in providing 'exceptional educational experiences' to all students. 'Authentic' and 'integrated' learning activities provide the stimulus, engagement and opportunities to develop a lifelong love of learning. The school has a great music program and private instrumental lessons in 5 disciplines are offered at the school. Italian language, Library and Art are supported by visiting teachers. The school is part of the Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships program, extensive camps program and Social Enterprise program. The school derives value adding from its active participation in The King Valley Cluster of schools. Cluster initiatives include the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden and Cooking program, a shared Italian teacher, a range of sporting activities including Personal Best athletic sports, cultural days and professional learning initiatives. The school was established in 1875 and many of the families have historic links with the school. The school is the focal point of much community activity.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Vision

Exceptional Educational Experiences

Purpose

To provide a caring, stimulating and safe environment which guides students toward their full potential, in a dynamic learning environment, with a particular emphasis placed on the importance of English and Mathematics.

Values

The values which form the basis of the actions of the Whitfield School community are:

Respect

- Recognising and accepting the differences in ability, race, age, religion and beliefs of others.
- For our environment.

Learning

- Developing and acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes focusing on our personal best at all times.

Goal setting

- Awareness and development of personal goals, both academically and socially.

Teamwork

- Learning together to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

Honesty

- Truthfulness and open communication in everything we do.

Communication

- Developing and practicing good communication and social skills.

3. Engagement strategies

Whitfield District 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.

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
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to develop their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Whitfield District 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
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions and encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through a buddy program, school plays, athletics, music programs and class activities such as gardening and cup-day.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the 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

- Better Buddies
- eSmart
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion through sports teams, buddy program, leadership camps and daily morning games.

Targeted

- each classroom has a teacher responsible to monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their class, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Supports and develop an Individual Education Plan
- 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
- the Principal will respond to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year and access SSSO support and advice as required
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma and access SSSO support and advice as required

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroup.s.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Lookout - Lookout centres are an additional resource to support schools, child protection practitioners and case workers to meet their obligations under the out-of-home care education commitment and to improve educational outcomes for children and young people living in out of home care

Whitfield District 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:
 - 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

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

Whitfield District Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Staff team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Whitfield District 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 the Whitfield District Primary School community have a right to experience a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity at all times. We value and promote the rights and responsibilities of students, staff and parents.

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.
- value and accept the right of all people to live in a free, just and peaceful society
- treat everyone with respect, including self.
- Take responsibility for self and contribute to a culture of community.

Students can expect and are expected to contribute to

- participate fully in their educational program
- respect the right of others to learn.
- safe behaviour and an inclusive school
- attend regularly and participate
- manage their own behaviour
- display positive behaviours that show respect to themselves, the community and the rights of others
- their own safety, with the support of the whole school community, to protect them from bullying behaviours, cyber bullying and any unsafe practices.

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 staff.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Relationship based, whole school and classroom practices are the best way to support positive behaviours. Some students require additional support to develop pro-social, positive behaviours. A staged response, with reinforcement is sometimes required. This is best supported with calm, consistent and predictable school classrooms and environments that recognise all children's individual needs and provide appropriate support.

At Whitfield District Primary School children are supported by caring and astute staff. Classroom behaviour, playground activities, school data and parent communication are all valuable insights into social and learning behaviours. Staff seek appropriate professional advice and when required will implement a staged response. Some interventions and prevention strategies are applied as needed; such as Individual Learning Plans, eSmart curriculum, student designed classroom norms.

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 Whitfield District Primary School's Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Whitfield District primary School 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.

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 Principal

- restorative practices
- detentions
- 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.

7. Engaging with families

Whitfield District 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.

Parents and carers can promote positive educational outcomes by

- taking an active interest in their child's educational progress
- cooperating and communicating regularly with the school
- actively supporting their child's engagement in the school environment
- supporting the school in maintaining a safe, respectful learning environment.
- Positively promote and supervise the use of digital technologies out of school hours

8. Evaluation

Whitfield District 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
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Statement of Values and School Philosophy,

Bullying Prevention,

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child Safe Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 18th February, 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2022.