

# Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school on 9802 0663 for support

## 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.

Weeden Heights 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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1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
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## Policy

### 1. School profile

Weeden Heights Primary School was established in 1980 and enjoys a unique parkland environment with beautiful, quiet and safe indoor and outdoor learning spaces. The school atmosphere is supportive and friendly where every child's education is of the highest priority.

The school prides itself on providing a personal approach to student learning, through highly engaging programs that supports every student to achieve their full potential physically, emotionally and academically. The school's focus is on nurturing students and providing them with the opportunity to learn the skills and resilience to be successful in life. The school shares a unique relationship with the wider community.

Our school is also culturally diverse with an increasing number of families having a language background other than English (LOTE).

Weeden Heights Primary School has a strong tradition of excellent educational provision. We provide a rich and stimulating education program incorporating discipline based, interdisciplinary and physical, personal and social learning with a focus on the development of sound literacy and numeracy skills. The school has an excellent reputation for delivering high quality programs. Specialist programs for Prep to Year 6 (non-grade committed) teaching is provided in Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) and Language (French). The curriculum is further enriched by such programs as Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, Life Education, Family Life, Swimming Program and purposefully selected excursions and camps. Extracurricular activities include a Chess Club, Choir, Wise Ones, instrumental music lessons, Coding Club, musical production, student leadership, enrichment and extension activities.

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

Weeden Heights Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do. The values of personal excellence, respect, curiosity, creativity and collaboration underpin the school's operation. For our School Community this means that everyone will be treated with respect. Every student will be supported and encouraged to reach their full potential through a stimulating, challenging inquiry based curriculum. We will equip our students to embrace their future with curiosity and creativity, optimism and confidence with an ability to communicate, share and make informed choices. We care about students and understand the importance of student wellbeing. We are committed to the development of social competencies and life skills such as persistence, independence, problem solving and resilience in our students and believe that they are fundamental to success and happiness.

At Weeden Heights Primary School we believe in focusing on the individual's needs and building on their strengths is the way to meet the changes in our society and the challenges of the future. The school operates in an environment that is supportive and promotes the developments of knowledge, skills and attributes which allows children to be critical and analytical thinkers and problem solvers. We believe, therefore, in a philosophy of differentiating the curriculum to meet the needs of individuals. These are the core values of our school. Personalised learning is implemented through Individual Education Plans for any student operating below or above expected levels.

Our Statement of Values is included in our Values and School Philosophy Policy which is available online at: [Our School | Weeden Heights Primary School | Vermont South \(weedenheightsps.vic.edu.au\)](https://www.weedenheightsps.vic.edu.au)

### **3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

Weeden Heights 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 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 guardians
- 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/guardians 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, PIVOT survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- Teachers at Weeden Heights Primary School use an instructional framework based on Bounce Back and Respectful Relationships 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 Weeden Heights 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 school decisions or procedures through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Classroom meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers or Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school events and programs such as the buddy program, school plays, athletics, music programs and whole school days

- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator 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; Bounce Back and Respectful Relationships
- Programs, incursions and excursions can be developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (eg social connections, anger management programs)
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, 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**

- All students have access to the school's Student Wellbeing Officer who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- 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 – refer to our Child Safety Policy for further information
- 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 through the school's commitment to smaller class and access to EAL support via the implementation of Individual Education Plans within the classroom
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through the implementation of Individual Education Plans within the classroom
- 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](#)
- 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**

Weeden Heights 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
  - School’s locally employed Wellbeing Officer
  - 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/Orange Door
  - 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 Education Support Officers
- Conducting 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
- Connecting with Department of Education’s programs and services
  - [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
  - [Mental health toolkit](#)
  - [Headspace](#)
  - [Navigator](#)
  - [LOOKOUT.](#)

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

Weeden Heights Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Weeden Heights 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 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
- Gradually take on greater responsibility for their own learning.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or guardians 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, Weeden Heights 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, in line with Restorative Practices language and approaches 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
- Think sheet to reflect on behaviour and repair relationships
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Referral to the Principal
- Restorative practices approach to managing larger issues
- 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 Weeden Heights 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**

Weeden Heights Primary School values the input of parents and guardians, 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 guardians 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 Communication 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**

Weeden Heights 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 including case information from the Wellbeing Officer
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Weeden Heights 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
- Consulted with the community via School Stream mobile app
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as reference in school newsletter
- 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## Policy review and approval

Policy last reviewed	2019 (due 2021 but not reviewed due to Covid)
Consultation	Principal Staff Education Sub Committee and School Council Newsletter item to the school community
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2024 <i>Mandatory review cycle for this policy is 2 years.</i>