STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the School Office.

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.

Fairhills 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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POLICY

1. School profile

Fairhills Primary School is in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne at the foot of the beautiful Dandenong Ranges. With an enrolment of approximately 100 students, it is a small school with a caring, inclusive community.

Fairhills Primary School is committed to providing a nurturing and challenging learning environment where every student is supported to achieve their best. We hold high expectations for all learners and believe that every child can experience success through a balance of academic rigour, wellbeing, and engagement.

Our school places a strong emphasis on developing confident, capable learners through a clear focus on literacy and numeracy. The implementation of a student-facing Instructional Model ensures consistency and quality in

teaching practice across the school. Teachers work collaboratively to analyse data and use evidence-based strategies that respond to individual student needs. Through explicit instruction, targeted intervention, and enrichment opportunities, students are empowered to take ownership of their learning and build the skills necessary for life-long success.

Wellbeing is central to everything we do at Fairhills Primary School. We understand that students learn best when they feel safe, connected, and valued. Our STARR Values – Safety, Teamwork, Achievement, Respect, and Responsibility are embedded in all aspects of school life and guide the way our community interacts, learns, and grows together. We take a proactive approach to supporting student wellbeing, fostering a sense of belonging, empathy, and personal responsibility.

At Fairhills, we are proud of our inclusive culture and work in partnership with families to ensure our students develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally in an ever-changing world.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our STARR Values of Safety, Teamwork, Achievement, Responsibility and Respect underpin everything we do and create a school culture where every student is supported to be the best version of themselves, with a growth mindset and a desire to learn.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Fairhills 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
- Ensure the Mental Health and Wellbeing leader is sufficiently resourced
- 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 Fairhills 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 Fairhills Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the 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, formally and 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 Junior School Council. 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 plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to meet with the Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind.
- We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Mental Health in Primary Schools initiative
    - Respectful Relationships
    - School Wide Positive Behaviour as a whole school initiative
- Programs and processes 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

- Work with students to understand the AToSS survey data
- 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 Action Plan 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
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQA+ Student Support [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQA+ 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

Individual

Fairhills Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- Building relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- Meeting with students and their parent/carers to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- Developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan if needed
- 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 Orange Door or ChildFirst
- Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:
    - being responsive to changes in the student's circumstances
    - 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
    - Engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- Running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    - Who are funded through the Disability Inclusion Program
    - In Out of Home Care
    - With other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Fairhills 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. Fairhills 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
- Detention and suspension data
- Engagement with 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 in their education
- Feel safe and secure 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 should approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team first and foremost, speak to their parents or carers. 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 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. 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, Fairhills 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 implements positive and non-punitive interventions, as outlined in the School Wide Positive Behaviour Matrixes, to support student behaviour.

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
- Re-teaching expected behaviours
- 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
- 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.

The Principal of Fairhills 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

Fairhills 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
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with other curriculum-related activities
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Fairhills Primary School 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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Fairhills 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 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/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 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
- LGBTIQA+ 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	August 2025
Consultation	School Council School community offered the opportunity to provide feedback on updated policy via the newsletter
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2027