

## STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Yarra Road Primary School on 9723 4182.

### 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.

Yarra Road 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**

### **1. School profile**

Surrounded by the suburban areas of Croydon, Croydon Hills, Chirnside Park and Wonga Park, Yarra Road Primary School benefits from a central and accessible location in the outer east of Melbourne.

With an enrolment of 254 students, we are proud to boast a team of dedicated educators and support staff who are deeply committed to nurturing the holistic development of each child.

At Yarra Road Primary School, while we have traditionally had a small population of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) (3%) and Indigenous and Torres Strait Islands backgrounds (1%), we are witnessing an exciting demographic shift. We are delighted to see many nationalities joining our school community, reflecting the rich cultural diversity that makes our school so vibrant. We believe that this diversity enriches the educational experience for all students, fostering cultural understanding, empathy, and global awareness. As we continue to welcome new families from diverse backgrounds, we are committed to ensuring that every student feels valued and supported.

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

At Yarra Road Primary School, our vision is to cultivate a vibrant learning community where every child is not only valued but also inspired to reach their full potential. Our educational philosophy is grounded in the core values of safety, respect, and kindness, and our motto 'enjoying the road to success,' which serve as the cornerstone of our approach to teaching and learning, empowering each student to become confident, resilient, and compassionate individuals.

We prioritise a favourable staff-to-student ratio, ensuring personalised attention and tailored support to address the diverse needs of our student body effectively.

In addition to our commitment to academic excellence, we prioritise the well-being of our students. Our comprehensive well-being programs and support services prioritise the mental, emotional, and social health of our students, ensuring they feel safe, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Our school grounds provide a safe and nurturing environment conducive to learning, offering ample opportunities for outdoor activities and community engagement.

At Yarra Road Primary School, we recognise the importance of collaboration and partnership with parents, caregivers, and the broader community. Through open communication channels and active involvement, we foster strong relationships that contribute to the success and enrichment of our students' educational journey.

Yarra Road Primary School is dedicated to providing a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where every child can flourish academically, socially, and emotionally.

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

Yarra Road 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

At Yarra Road Primary School, we:

- have 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, where all teachers develop classroom connectedness through the use of class building exercises and cooperative learning structures
- create a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- celebrate and recognise events and dates that are culturally important for our community
- celebrate and acknowledge events and dates that are significant to our First Nations People
- welcome all parents/carers and are responsive to them as partners in learning
- analyse and are 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
- have teachers that use a Workshop Instructional Model to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- have teachers that 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
- incorporate our school values into our curriculum and promote this to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully plan transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- include a buddy program to support prep transition and develop responsibility and leadership in our senior students
- acknowledge positive behaviour and student achievement 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
- give students the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council (JSC) and other forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities to encourage student voice and develop student agency in our students
- split all students into multi-age 'Mateship' groups to create ongoing connections throughout the school
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through Mateship, school productions, house competitions and buddy programs
- welcome all students to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Year Level Coordinator, 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
- engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships and Friendology
- provide opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

### Targeted

At Yarra Road Primary School:

- each level takes a shared responsibility for the wellbeing of all students in the level
- Level leaders support teachers to foster the personal growth of students in their class including developing learning which develops intercultural capability, promotes student voice and agency embeds indigenous perspectives
- all staff monitor the health and wellbeing of students, identifying those who may need additional support

A designated Wellbeing Officer has a significant role in ensuring all students identified as Koorie, Out of Home Care or with disability are provided appropriate support.

- Koorie students are additionally supported by our Marrung Leader and KESO to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- 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 working with a designated teacher who has completed training, 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 with reasonable adjustments made to learning programs, the school environment and school events to accommodate diverse learners and create an inclusive environment. In addition, in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#), students are further supported through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans.
- 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 provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ+ Student Support](#)

#### Individual

At Yarra Road Primary School student specific strategies are considered and applied on a case by case basis. Resources from the Department's Policy and Advisory Library such as the following may be utilised:

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

In addition, other Department resources, program and services may be used, such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026.pdf](#)

Yarra Road 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's parents/carers to talk about how best to help the student to engage with school
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- creating social stories or providing sensory supports

- developing Return to School Plans or Safety Plans including student voice
- working with external Allied Health professionals
- 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, Orange Door, child and adolescent mental health services, ChildFirst or Oonah Belonging Place
  - Re-engagement programs, such as Navigator for students 12 years and over

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 and outside agencies
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - Koorie students
  - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

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

Yarra Road Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing Curriculum Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing teaching and learning approaches which include strategies to support and enhance student wellbeing.

All staff have a shared role in identifying students in need of support. Yarra Road 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, incident 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, supportive and inclusive 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.

## **6. Student behavioural expectations**

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school values of safety, kindness and respect.

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, Yarra Road 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 to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as 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 within a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to level leader, wellbeing coordinator or principal class

- restorative practices
- development of a behaviour support plan
- 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 Yarra Road 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**

Yarra Road 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 homework and other curriculum-related activities
- providing regular updates to parents about classroom learning topics and upcoming events
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and in the development of individual plans for students.

## **8. Evaluation**

Yarra Road 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

Yarra Road 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 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](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Policy last reviewed  | 2024                                    |
| Consultation is mandatory   | Endorsed by school council October 2024 |
| Approved by   | Principal                               |
| Next scheduled review date<br>(mandatory review cycle for this policy is 2 years) | 2026                                    |