

## **STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY**



### **Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the office on 9740 8666

### **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.

Sunbury West 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**

Sunbury West Primary School is located approximately 42 km from Melbourne, situated among well established and developing residential areas. In 2021, the school celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary, providing quality education to the children of Sunbur since 1971.

The school's vision states, 'In the safe, caring and stimulating environment of Sunbury West Primary School, each child is given the opportunity and encouragement to strive towards their maximum potential as a confident individual and responsible member of society.'

The school's motto is, 'Together We Learn. Together We Grow'.

Sunbury West Primary School strives for social, emotional, and educational excellence in an environment where children of all ages mix cooperatively. The school encourages staff, students and parents to value diversity, promote inclusion, and the development of individual strengths and talents. Skilled, enthusiastic, and committed staff use a range of innovative and evidence-based teaching practices that reflect current education initiatives. This provides the best possible learning environment, whilst considering the individual needs and multiple entry points of all students.

In 2024 Sunbury West had an enrolment of 214 students from Foundation to Year 6. Our staffing consisted of 2 Principal Class officers, 12.6 EFT teachers and 4.19 ES Staff. The school operated 10 classrooms, with all classes being organized into composite groupings except for Foundation level. In the 2020 State Budget, Sunbury West received Capital Works Funding to the value of \$10.497 million. In 2022, construction commenced to fully upgrade the school with state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor facilities. The school maintains refurbished facilities including the gym and Out of School Hours Care setting as part of this.

Our teaching teams work closely together as Professional Learning Communities to plan for continuity of practice within teams and across the school. Teaching and learning programs are tailored to meet the distinct learning needs of all students with a strong emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy. We use an inquiry approach to our integrated curriculum, promoting voice and agency as students help to shape the curriculum and experiences relative to their stage of learning.

Our skilled teaching teams are committed to lifelong learning and the school places great importance in ongoing professional learning at every stage of their careers.

Our core curriculum is further complemented by programs in the areas of Visual Arts, Physical Education, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and Japanese. Performing Arts is available via outsourced dance programs and the Wakakirri Performing Arts Story Challenge. The school also promotes 21st Century learning through its Digital Literacy Program and access to laptops, iPads and smart TVs in all areas of the school. Students in Years 3 – 6 are able to opt in to a BYO iPad program.

Our school has continued to offer many opportunities designed to assist children in developing connectedness with each other and build resilience and self-esteem. Examples of these are: Junior School Council, House / Vice Captains, Student of the Week, Buddies and Peer Support Programs, House Mates Program, School Performances, Art displays and Sporting Opportunities. Extra-curricular activities such as camps, instrumental programs, incursions, and excursions complement our core curriculum. Each of these offer our children a chance to participate at a level of confidence and interest and provides them with a sense of accomplishment and achievement over time. Parents as partners in education are also highly valued with many parents supporting programs and school activities.

Student wellbeing is of paramount importance and the school adopts School Wide Positive Behaviours in its approach to Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Behaviour Management. In 2021 Sunbury West became a Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships lead school promoting personal strengths, social competency, and emotional literacy. This is further complemented by the school's participation in The Resilience Project.

Wellbeing is further supported via the National Schools Wellbeing Program. Sunbury West currently has a Chaplain on site two days a week to work with individual students, run wellbeing programs and support families. A Mental Health in Schools leader is also employed in a 0.6 capacity and is instrumental in fostering a whole school community approach to wellbeing.

Our practices are well documented to ensure understanding and clarity in relation to expectations. Our school values are defined by our commitment 'To Strive', 'To Respect', 'To Belong', and underpin our daily interactions and practices at our school.

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

At Sunbury West Primary School we value and promote a culture where 'We Belong. We Respect. We Strive.' We want our students to be independent and empowered learners and we encourage self-belief, self-worth and mutual respect between all members of our school community. We support a strong sense of belonging and connectedness enabling our students to become resilient and active members of their community. We foster a strong home / school partnership with a positive school spirit.

The school's vision is: In the safe, caring and stimulating environment of Sunbury West Primary School, each child is given the opportunity and encouragement to strive towards his / her maximum potential as a confident individual and responsible member of society.

The school's motto is, 'Together we learn. Together we grow.'

### **3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies**

Sunbury West 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
- 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 Sunbury West 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 Sunbury West 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 decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and 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 self-refer to the Student Wellbeing 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
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Alannah and Madeline Foundation Better Buddies and eSmart programs
  - Kids Matter
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific 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

- connect Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- 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 and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- wellbeing 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
- 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 specifically tailored programs to meet their individual needs.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through specifically tailored programs to meet their individual needs
- 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](#)
- 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.

#### Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Sunbury West 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

- 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
- 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 Engagement Support Officers
- 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**

Sunbury West 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. Sunbury West 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

#### **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
- 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 and management**

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student Code of Conduct. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Sunbury West Primary School's Anti-Bullying/Cyber Bullying policy.

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.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Sunbury West 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.

Our school considers, explores and implements 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. Please refer to the Sunbury West Primary School Behaviour Management policy for further details.

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
- 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 Sunbury West 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**

Sunbury West 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**

Sunbury West 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
- Compass and CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Sunbury West 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 and Compass
- Included in staff induction processes
- 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*
- *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	10/2024
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student representative groups</li> <li>• parent groups</li> <li>• school council</li> </ul>
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	10/2026