
STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact The Patch Primary School 9756 7463.

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.

The Patch 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
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
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POLICY

1. School profile

The Patch Primary School is located in the Dandenong Ranges. Its large grounds include student designed landscapes that have won many awards for both design and sustainability. They provide

nature-based learning and play opportunities. Students participate in regular and meaningful projects to improve biodiversity in the school grounds, reduce resource use and improve sustainability.

Our vision is to provide innovative learning that encourages excellence through high expectations. We aim to strengthen resilience, support deep creative thinking, recognise diversity, develop compassion and respect our environment. We want all our students to have the skills to fully participate in a sustainable global future.

Our school offers students a comprehensive education based on the Victorian Curriculum including Literacy, Numeracy, Physical Education, the Humanities, Auslan, Art, Music and STEM. In addition, students take part in Philosophy each week. Our Respectful Relationships curriculum combined with the Berry Street Education Model help students to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. We offer a Forest Classroom Program with the adjoining kindergarten.

The active involvement of parents at all levels of the school is critical to the success of our students. They help out in the school gardens, in classrooms, in reading programs, at sports events and during social and fundraising events. They share their skills in lunchtime clubs.

The school also works actively with the wider community to provide more real world experiences for our students. These include involvement with tertiary institutions, other schools and using the experience of knowledgeable local people in the delivery of our programme.

Across all levels of our school community, The Patch Primary School values respect, responsibility and integrity –

- **Respect** for the Wurrundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and caretakers of the land our school is on and we recognise their continuing connection to it. We respect one another's achievements, views, dignity, privacy and property and accept that everyone is different.
- **Responsibility** through being accountable for our actions.
- **Integrity** through high standards, open and honest communication and trustworthy behaviours.

Our whole school commitment to our vision, values and our high expectations supports a learning environment that maximises student wellbeing.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

The Patch Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

The Patch Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

The Patch Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in The Patch Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, The Patch Primary School ensures ongoing compliance with the 11 child safe standards.

Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

Our school is also committed to preventing and addressing bullying, including cyberbullying. Please see our Bullying Prevention Policy and Acceptable Internet Use agreement or more information.

Mission

At The Patch Primary School, our fundamental purpose is to work with our community to provide innovative learning that encourages excellence, strengthens self-belief, supports deep creative thinking, recognises and accepts diversity, develops compassion, respects the environment and gives all students the choices to fully participate in a sustainable global future.

Through our purpose, we develop reflective and independent learners for life. We believe that effective learning occurs when outstanding and innovative teaching environments provide a variety of tasks that actively engage students who are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

Vision

To work with our community to provide innovative learning that encourages excellence, strengthens self-belief, supports deep critical and creative thinking, recognises and accepts diversity, values and embeds creativity, develops compassion, respects the environment and gives all students the choices to fully participate in a sustainable global future. We are committed to continuous improvement and achieving excellence at every level and aim to instil all students with a sense of: -

- Identity based on understanding ourselves, our community, our own past and the story of our unique land and its people;
- Integrity based on treating others in a truthful, compassionate and cooperative way;
- Community based on connecting with others, understanding diversity, respecting the rights and views of others and living sustainably;
- Determination based on being challenged, thinking creatively and critically, believing in our ability to achieve our best and being resilient and persistent

We succeed when our students are:

- Always seeking to understand and respect the views, values and cultures of others
- Literate and numerate; read with comprehension, write clearly, compute accurately
- Responsible, organised, cooperative and independent
- Respectful of others and demonstrate empathy to others
- Able to learn and adapt to change and new technologies
- Resilient and persistent
- Able to recognise and understand their impact on their community and environment
- Critical thinkers, problem solvers and willing to have a go
- Inclusive of everyone
- Self-motivated to be lifelong learners
- Displaying a positive self-image.

Values

The Patch Primary School Community values respect, responsibility, and integrity –

- **Respect** for the Wurrundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and caretakers of the land our school is on and we recognise their continuing connection to it. We respect one another's achievements, views, dignity, privacy and property and accept that everyone is different
- **Responsibility** through being accountable for our actions
- **Integrity** through high standards, open and honest communication and trustworthy behaviours.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

The Patch 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
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at The Patch Primary School use The Berry Street model to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of teacher practise to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at The Patch 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 Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Wellbeing Coordinator, 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, Teachers, 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
 - Berry Street Education Models
 - Smiling Minds
 - Safe Schools
 - Restorative Practices – conferences, circle time and Marmook
- programs, incursions and excursions developed 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, peer 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

- each year group has a senior teacher responsible for their year who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koori 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 with targeted IEPs and SSGs
- 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 including through the school tutoring program
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds
- 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 with support from Lookout
- 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

- 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 (using [Calmer Classrooms: A Guide to Working with Traumatized Children](#), and similar resources including the Berry Street model)

Individual

This section should include student specific strategies that may be considered and applied on a case by case basis:

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

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

The Patch 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
 - First Nations students
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

The Patch 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. The Patch 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.

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.

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, The Patch 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 uses a trauma-informed approach 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 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 Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices including Marmook
- 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 The Patch 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

The Patch 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

The Patch 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

The Patch 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 in transition and enrolment packs
- 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](#)
- [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 and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	28 th May 2024
Consultation	School Council, SRC
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2028