



# East Bentleigh Primary School

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

### 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

East Bentleigh 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 and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

### 1. SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT

East Bentleigh Primary School strives to meet the individual learning needs of all students by offering a mainstream and Steiner education. Both educational streams aim to develop children

academically, socially, physically and emotionally. Through rich and engaging curriculum programs, students are encouraged to develop a passion for learning, to make connections to the world through real life experiences and to build a sense of respect for themselves, others and their natural environment.

East Bentleigh Primary School is located in the Southern Metropolitan Region. The school was built in 1960 and is situated in an attractive natural environment with abundant grassed and treed areas, open spaces and views of the Yarra Yarra Golf Course. Through regular working bees, a small, dedicated group of school community members continue to develop and maintain the school grounds.

In 2022, the enrolment of 380 students includes 34 students receiving support from the Program for Students with Disabilities, with the level of funding for these students ranging from Level 1 to Level 5. Although most children are from English speaking background, the mix of cultural backgrounds of students is quite diverse

Currently students are organised into eleven Steiner classes and seven main stream classes. The school offers a range of specialist and support programs to promote learning for all students. These include Literacy and Numeracy support, music, movement, woodwork, French and Craft, alongside regular subjects.

There is a strong school wide focus on improving student learning outcomes. The school improvement team support all teachers to develop goals and strategies to improve wellbeing and curriculum. The 2022 Annual Implementation Plan outlines actions to be taken to develop areas in order to improve teaching, learning and student engagement. Results from the 2022 Attitudes to school survey indicate student voice and agency to be an area for future growth across levels 4 to 6. The school continues to focus on supporting regular school attendance.

## **2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION**

*Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core school values of respect, empathy, confidence, integrity, perseverance and collaboration, at every opportunity.*

*Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.*

East Bentleigh Primary School is committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment that recognises and caters for the different academic, artistic, cultural, health and pastoral needs of students. Our aim is that students from East Bentleigh Primary School will make positive choices and develop into self-disciplined, resilient, confident, creative, passionate and compassionate individuals who care for each other.

## **STRATEGIES**

Social and emotional wellbeing underpins effective student learning and positive behaviour management. At East Bentleigh Primary School 'Student Wellbeing' is everyone's

responsibility and a shared concern. A positive school culture and classroom environment ensures that students feel valued and cared for, and can effectively engage with their learning. The school aims to develop social competencies through pedagogy, curriculum, behaviour management, shared expectations and values.

Effective schools that engage students are inclusive, recognise and respond to individual student learning and engagement needs. East Bentleigh Primary School aims to support the different learning needs of students, build learning confidence and engagement. The teachers are committed to developing sound teaching practices and delivering a range of learning opportunities and co- curricula programs, including the Stephanie Alexander Garden Project, to engage students and to promote learning.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

**East Bentleigh Primary School Student Engagement Policy will focus on:**

- *High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *Prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, by promoting pro-social values and behaviours, 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 and student management data*
- *Deliver a broad curriculum, including specialist and intervention programs, to ensure that students are able to access learning tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *Implementing preventative and early intervention approaches to anti-social behaviour*
- *Deliver a broad curriculum across both streams to ensure that students are able to participate in subjects and programs that meet their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *Teachers at East Bentleigh Primary School use the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model, (VTLM), incorporating High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction so that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *Teachers at East Bentleigh 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 in both streams*

- *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 Leadership teams and other forums including Class meetings and a suggestion box. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, classroom assistants, 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 their own teachers, 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*
- *Engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:*
  - ❖ *Respectful Relationships*
  - ❖ *Restorative Practices*
  - ❖ *Positive Education*
- *Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address specific issues, needs or behaviour (i.e. social learning and emotional development performances)*
- *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**

- *Our English as a second language students are supported through our Literacy support program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school, including through our whole school social and emotional wellbeing programs*
- *We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background by developing Individual Educational Plans and providing referrals to supporting agencies*

- 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 developing reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- All 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**

East Bentleigh Primary School is developing processes to identify and intervene early when individual students are at risk of disengagement from learning or from school. Teachers have a responsibility to respond when students experience difficulty with their learning. The school aims to develop a planned, sequential, whole school approach to support students and to provide ongoing professional learning to assist with the implementation.

*Individual students are supported through:*

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [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](#)

East Bentleigh 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 Education 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 youth mental health services, ChildFirst or Orange Door*

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 any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student, with the support of the student and their family,
- Monitoring individual student attendance and where possible developing an Attendance Improvement Plan 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
  - ❖ With other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

#### 1. Identifying students in need of support

*East Bentleigh Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. All teachers, together with the school improvement team, the Student Wellbeing team and the DET Educational Psychologist, play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. East Bentleigh 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, appearance, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
  - Attendance, detention and suspension data
  - Engagement with families
  - Allied health care contacts or reports
- #### 2. 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.

### 3. 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 our Response to Bullying Policy and our staged response to student management.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, East Benteigh 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, 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. Our Restorative Practices program ensures 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
- Restorative practices
- Withdrawal of privileges
- 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 East Bentleigh I 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.

#### **4. Engaging with families**

East Bentleigh 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 in school decision making through parent surveys, classroom parent representatives and school council parent members
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families

- Including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

East Bentleigh 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

East Bentleigh 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:

- School operations manual
- School Administration Google Drive
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Response to Bullying Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

#### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	Parent Groups – via website and Newsletter reminders over three months – June – September - 2022
Approved by	Principal and School Council
Next scheduled review date	July 2024

## **Restorative Practices**

Restorative Practices are being introduced in the school to develop respectful communication responsibility, positive relationships, empathy and engagement in every classroom and in the school ground.

Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying.

It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim.

### *Rationale*

The rationale behind this approach is that when a person *reflects* upon the harm they have caused others:

- They become remorseful and act restoratively.
- Practitioners can focus on the unacceptable behaviour of offenders rather than their moral character.
- This can lead to healthier interpersonal relations among members of the school community and more effective learning.

### *Application*

Restorative practices can be undertaken in a variety of forums. It may be conducted with varying degrees of formality and may include just those students most directly involved in the incident, or in some circumstances a whole class.

Restorative discussions are guided by an agreed script, that directs teachers to ask the person who has done the harm to describe what happened and to reflect on what harm has occurred. The person harmed is asked to say how she or he has been affected and what needs to be done to put things right.

In the spirit of personal responsibility, forgiveness and commitment to positive future behaviour, both the person harmed and the person who has done the harm, express their acceptance of the proposed solution/s and discuss what can be done to prevent a recurrence.

(Department of Education and Early Childhood Development | Dr Ken Rigby - leading authority on bullying)