

Verney Road School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



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.

Verney Road 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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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Verney Road School was purpose built in 1999 for 74 students. As the school has grown, so has the pressure of the building infrastructure. At the start of 2021, two portable classrooms were added to meet the growing population. The school is landlocked by a housing estate on the north and a primary school on the west. Play space for the students is at a premium and play times are alternated to accommodate each Unit. The majority of students travel to school by contract buses, a small cohort travel independently on mainstream buses and approximately seventy students travel daily with parents /carers by car. Play, car and bus parking space is at a premium.

Verney Road School has a culture of four key expectations and these are embedded through our strong School Wide Positive Behaviour Program:

Be Safe ~ we are committed to the promotion of behaviours and creating environments that ensure the wellbeing of every member of the school community.

Be Respectful ~ we are committed to accepting each other as we are and valuing our strengths and differences.

Be Responsible ~ we are committed to supporting each other, for being accountable for our actions and encouraging all to achieve independence.

Be a Learner ~ we are committed to all members of our school community having a go at diverse learning opportunities and by reflecting on our mistakes and not giving up, we build success.

Our school is culturally diverse with 25% of families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE groups being Chinese (Mandarin), Vietnamese and Hindi. The school also has strong representation from the Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

A broad, but defining, aim is to support our students to be as independent and likeable as possible

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Verney Road School in partnership with parents, carers and the community provides an opportunity for all children to have a meaningful and worthwhile education. We aim to maximise student talents and abilities while promoting respect and self-esteem. We prepare each individual for a purposeful pathway into adulthood. We are a 'Dual Mode Specialist School' for students with a mild to profound intellectual disability in Shepparton, Victoria and services the local area including Nathalia, Murchison, Euroa and Numurkah. Many students have multiple diagnoses of disability which may include Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Down Syndrome or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and associated

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impairments such as sensory and physical impairments. Students' ages range from three to eighteen years of age. The school has an Early Education Unit and four school aged sections, Early, Early and Later Middles and Senior Years. Each of these units is led by a Leading Teacher

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Verney Rd. School is a 'Positive Behaviour Support School' We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or wellbeing support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time dependent on background, personal events and disabilities. School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) is a whole school framework that promotes improved and positive behaviours. PBS uses evidence and data, demonstrating the most effective ways to prevent and respond to problem behaviours at school.

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

Universal school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion.

- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers using four key expectations (see Our Values – above).
- Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plans for every student.
- Student Support Group meetings, with parents/carers twice yearly, setting out SMART Goals and involving every student deemed capable.
- Those students deemed capable have a clear understanding of their learning goals.
- A whole school matrix of expectations of behaviours across the four expectations.
- Consistent use of common language. For example “Is that a red or a green choice?”
- Home matrix to support home behaviours.
- A whole school learning sequence that scopes the teaching of the Matrix over the year.
- Individual lesson plans, explicitly taught weekly across the whole school.
- Prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing.
- Provision of reward based feedback and prompting to support positive behaviour.
- Creating routines and systems to ensure predictability to every learner's day.
- Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems to ensure an inclusive learning and communication environment for every student.
- Welcoming all parents/carers and ensuring high levels of communication occur for every family. (Seesaw, communication book, phone, Facebook)
- Analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student behaviour data and school level assessment data.

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- Delivery of a broad curriculum including Victorian Curriculum, VET programs, VCE and VCAL and adapting to suit the needs and abilities of every learner.
- SoSafe!, social safety curriculum is taught across the whole school as a protective factor for vulnerable students with disability.
- Teachers at VRS use instructional frameworks to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction of evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- *all students are welcome to self-refer to the Wellbeing Staff, School Nurse, Unit Leaders, 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*
 - *Safe Schools*
- *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.*
- Teachers at VRS 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 AITSL.
- Carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling at VRS. (Early Years, Middle Years, Senior Years.)
- Positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in all learning settings, in school assemblies and in communication to parents.
- Students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Leadership and other forums including Home 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.
- Creating multiple opportunities for cross—age connections, peer support of younger students, Seniors project based mentoring in Early Year's classes

Targeted

- Daily breakfast program
- Each Unit alternates play breaks to limit numbers and supervised play activities for the lunchtime break.
- Each Unit is led by a non-teaching leader who is responsible for the learning and wellbeing across that Unit. (EY, EMY, LMY, SY) They monitor the health and wellbeing

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of students in their unit, and act as a point of contact for students and families who may need additional support

- programs developed by allied health team to support students' individual needs
- All students from Year 10 and above will develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future • Connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- • All students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred for an Educational Needs Assessment
- VRS assists students to plan and implement their work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan, across the 3 senior years.
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.
- Restorative practice frameworks between students.
- Monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a cohort and individual level.

Individual

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

- Safety plans are in place for individual students to mitigate risk.
- Support for children with trauma with programs such as 'Horses for Hope.'
- Referrals to Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services
- Referrals to external providers such as Ozchild, Headspace, CAMHS, CASA, Navigator, Lookout, Counselling services Australian Childhood Foundation.
- Access to VRS Paediatric Clinic
- Home visits to complete SSG's, support attendance, support student transport. •
- In depth Behaviour Support Planning
- Wellbeing team meets weekly with SSS to provide wellbeing supports for individual students in need.
- Timetables are adapted to promote engagement and motivation support to support school attendance
- Wellbeing staff providing basic needs to students and families such as clothing, shoes, food.
- Return to School meetings for students and carers ensuring everyone has a voice and making plans for improving problem behaviours post suspension.
- Care Team meetings to support all vulnerable students in the care of DHHS, OoHC, Child Protection.

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4. Identifying students in need of support

VRS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. All staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. VRS will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of emotional, social or educational support:

- Personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- Medical records
- Paediatric, Speech, OT, Physio reports
- Epilepsy, Asthma, Diabetes Plans
- Behaviour Support Planning
- Attendance records
- Assessment results
- Observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, selfcare, social connectedness and motivation

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.

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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, Example 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 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 Unit Leader
- restorative practices
- 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.

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The Principal of Verney Road 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

Verney Road 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

Verney Road 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

Verney Road 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.

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COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following. Available publicly on our school's website

- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2022
Consultation	School Council 2022 School Newsletter/website May 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2024

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