Heathcote Primary School

Student Engagement Policy
School Profile

Social-community and demographics
Heathcote Primary School provides a quality education for the students of Heathcote and its surrounding districts. Heathcote Primary School aims to develop in each student an ability to maximise their potential and respect themselves and others. The school continues to build a culture that is positive, stimulating, harmonious and safe. The principles of healthy living strongly influence policies and practices within the school. The school embraces restorative practices to repair the damage when students make poor choices in the playground.

Purpose
To provide a caring and motivational learning environment, developing links with the wider Heathcote community, and preparing all students to become life-long learners in a constantly changing global society.

Core Values
The following values are central to the philosophy of our school and express how all members of the school community will conduct themselves:

- **Respect** – recognising and accepting individual differences and valuing our environment and belongings
- **Learning** – developing the skills, values and attitudes to become a lifelong learner
- **Teamwork** – learning together to achieve the best possible outcomes for all
- **Responsibility** – being accountable for our own actions, what we say and what we do

Student Engagement Philosophy
Heathcote Primary School aims to develop each student to their potential and build individual respect for themselves and others. The school community endeavours to maintain a school culture which is positive, stimulating, harmonious and safe. The Student Engagement Policy explains how members of the school community can play their part in supporting the school to make it a safe and happy place for all. The school aims to provide a vibrant curriculum that is relevant to the current and future needs of the students. We consider a positive staged approach to behaviour management is desirable to foster a school climate within which personal responsibility and self-discipline are developed. The Student Engagement Policyrecognises rights and responsibilities of students, teachers and parents and explains the next steps (consequences) taken after helping a child work through inappropriate behaviour.

Student Engagement and Wellbeing - Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies

**Goals:** Provide a stimulating learning environment that builds student engagement in learning and strengthens student relationships with peers and teachers.

**Key Improvement Strategy:** Develop and implement teaching approaches and classroom management approaches across the school that supports an engaging and productive learning environment.
Attendance

Overview

Regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full educational potential and to actively participate in their learning. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their education and social development.

Shared Expectations of Attendance

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Ensure that their child attends school at all times when school is open for instruction
- Promote and provide organisational support to their child for full attendance and participation at school on all designated school days
- Ensure that their child is on time for school each day
- Notify the school of their child’s absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child’s absences
- Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note or return a completed absence form to the school explaining why an absence has occurred when the child next attends
- Notify the school in advance if an absence of any period is planned
- Support their child’s learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of agreed student absence learning plan
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school
- Work cooperatively with the school in supporting the child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence

Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction
- Arrive on time to school

School

The school is expected to:

- Promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures
- Develop systems to record and monitor attendance
- Ensure that attendance is marked twice a day
- Process student transfers promptly
- Maintain accurate records on CASES 21 using the appropriate codes
- Monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly for early identification and the provision of timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school
- Pursue and record an explanation for every absence
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time. This process should involve discussion with the parents/carers about the possible impact of the proposed absence on the student’s learning
- Convene a student support group meeting which is attendance focussed with parents/carers and students when a student’s attendance pattern is of concern to the school
- Provide ongoing support for students if their attendance pattern continues to be a problem after the initial student support group meeting
The Heathcote Primary School student management philosophy involves recognition of mutual rights, responsibilities and fair rules. Our school aims to achieve a happy, secure and rewarding environment for our children, based on the recognition of the following rights and responsibilities and basic school rules.

The Student Engagement Policy also acknowledges the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* which supports racial and religious tolerance and prohibits vilification on the grounds of race or religion.

**Objectives**

Our school promotes a positive approach to behaviour through the following objectives:

- Developing respect and consideration for others and acknowledging diversity
- Encourage a safe and productive learning environment within the classroom
- Encouraging safe and responsible play within our school ground
- Highlighting student achievement
- Improving self-awareness and self-discipline
- Encourage sharing, tolerance and compassion
- Develop in each child, a sense of responsibility for their own behaviour
- Encourage positive parent/teacher contact
- Being consistent and fair in applying consequences

**Implementation**

Each representative group of the Heathcote school community (teachers, student & parents) has a role to play in the implementation of the Student Engagement Policy.

**These roles include:**

**The Role of the School**

- The school will promote open and positive communication between home and school
- To arrange school based individual assistance and School Support Services
- The implementation of a whole school approach to student welfare
- To provide an inclusive and engaging curriculum that ensures all students are able to reach their full potential
- To develop a range of strategies that assist in dealing with unacceptable behaviour

**The Role of the Teacher**

- To provide a caring, inclusive environment which is tolerant of individual differences
- To provide rich and engaging learning tasks, allowing all students to experience success
- To maintain clear and positive lines of communication between home and school
- To regularly discuss rules (classroom and school) with the children
- To identify children who are at risk and develop individual learning plans for them
- To support school-based assistance, DEECD School Services and external agencies
The Role of the Student

- To contribute positively to the classroom environment so that all children feel secure and safe
- To co-operatively support and develop classroom rules
- To accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviours
- To act in a manner that develops mutual respect between students and staff

The Role of the Parents

- To ensure children are punctual and attend school regularly
- To ensure that their children are well nourished and rested
- To provide the school with relevant information that may pertain to their child’s wellbeing and learning at school
- To support the school with issues relating to behaviour management and discipline
- To contribute to the positive links between home and school
- To support the school in developing a positive learning environment for their child

Targeted Behaviours

Utilising the School Values:

- Develop respect and consideration for others, acknowledging diversity
- Encourage safe and responsible play within our school ground
- Highlight student achievements
- Improve self awareness and self discipline
- Encourage sharing, tolerance and compassion
- Encourage positive parent/teacher contact
- Be consistent and fair in applying consequences
- Nurture positive social interactions
- Encourage and facilitate parental involvement
- Develop pride in our school identity
- Exhibit appropriate behaviour and respect toward all members of the broader community, particularly when representing the school
- Demonstrate the behaviours outlined on our Behaviour Expectations Matrix

Whole school strategies will include:

- To ensure consistency of the Student Engagement Policy implementation – regular and ongoing discussion of the policy will be held at staff and team meetings
- Early each year, teachers establish a set of classroom rights, responsibilities and rules for their own classes that are consistent with the whole school rules.
- School and class rules are to be displayed prominently
- Consistent use of a staged process for bullying and harassment situations using the restorative justice approach
- Use program support group structures to facilitate effective communication and planning
- Ongoing staff professional learning, with a strong focus on the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support program
- Ensuring work tasks are achievable and relevant to the student, and cater for special abilities
- Working partnerships between Regional School Support Staff, other schools and specialist settings
Student Management
Rights and Responsibilities of Students, Parents and Teachers

Behaviour management at Heathcote Primary School involves recognition of mutual rights, responsibilities and fair rules. All the members of the Heathcote Primary School Community have rights; classmates, teachers and parents. A right is something that belongs to each person. In order for everyone to enjoy those rights we also have responsibilities. Those responsibilities are to follow the school rules set out in the Student Engagement Policy. Our school aims to achieve a happy secure and rewarding environment for our children, based on the recognition of the following rights and responsibilities:

Children
Children have the right to:
- work and play without fear of harassment
- be treated with respect and kindness
- express their feelings when appropriate
- tell their side of the story and be listened to
- expect that their person and property will be safe and secure
- be treated as an individual at school

Responsibility to:
- show respect for our school property and for other people
- behave in an acceptable manner and follow/obey the rules
- represent the school with pride
- be honest and truthful
- strive to achieve their personal best
- come to school every day, unless sick or for a legitimate reason

Parents
Within our school community, parents have the right to:
- express their opinions through the appropriate channels
- be treated with respect
- be informed of their child’s academic progress

Parents are asked to support the Student Engagement Policy through their responsibility to:
- reinforce school and classroom rules and community consequences
- encourage their children to develop productive work habits
- provide an appropriate environment in the home, conducive to learning
- ensure their children attend school on a regular basis
- ensure their child/children arrive at school on time

Teachers
Teachers have the right to:
- teach in a safe and non threatening environment
- be treated with respect by all members of the school community
- express themselves using the appropriate channels

Teachers will support the school and Student Engagement Policy through their responsibilities to:
- implement the Student Engagement Policy and regularly review its effectiveness
- provide a stimulating learning environment
- implement school rules and carry through the consequences in a whole school approach
- provide an appropriate role model.
Restorative Practices

*Philosophy*

Restorative justice is a philosophical framework that focuses on the harm that results from wrongdoing and the actions that are needed to repair the harm wrongdoing causes. This approach is based on the belief that wrongdoing is a violation against a person and a community and that through negotiation and dialogue among victim, offender and community, the goals of restitution, reconciliation and restoration will be achieved.

Within this framework, offenders are held directly accountable not only to the individual victim but also to the community, and they are expected to assist in the reparation of personal damage and the restoration of social harmony. This process allows victims to be involved in the shaping of the offender’s future obligations and encourages the school community to become directly involved in supporting victims, holding offenders accountable and providing opportunities for offenders to reintegrate into their community.

*Restorative Practice as a Strategy*

Where appropriate a restorative practices approach will be used in dealing with student management issues. Students will be led through a scripted restorative dialogue so that the wrongdoer can be held accountable for their actions and put right the wrong done. The procedure will enable the victim to begin the healing process given the opportunity to say how the wrongdoer will make amends for their wrongdoing.

The level of intervention will be determined by the wrongdoing committed and the number of victims involved. The level of intervention will fall somewhere on the restorative practices continuum.

*Standards and Rules to Guide the Management of Student Behaviour*

Each teacher will be responsible for promoting and developing classroom strategies consistent with the Student Engagement Policy. Students will be involved in the development of co-operative strategies to encourage appropriate positive behaviour in the classroom. This will include the elimination of all forms of bullying, harassment and violence which obstruct the educational progress of students and the general management of the school. The consequences for breaches of these rights infringements should be well established and consistently applied in the classroom and throughout the school and playground.

**To ensure a safe and secure environment these forms of behaviour are therefore unacceptable:**
- any behaviour that fits on the “Violence Continuum”
- any behaviour that is considered bullying or harassing, including cyber bullying
- throwing sticks, stones or dangerous objects
- destroying, damaging, or stealing school property or another individual’s property
- climbing buildings, fences, up trees or structures other than designated playground equipment
- being in the school buildings without teacher supervision
- leaving the school grounds without permission
- riding bikes, skateboards, scooters, within the school ground
- running in or around school buildings
- refusing to follow instructions from any *school personnel*

Temporary or short term rules may be established on specific occasions e.g. excursions, camps to ensure the safety of children. *School Personnel refers to teachers, office staff, cleaners or parents acting in a supervisory capacity.*
Steps to be followed by staff for Inappropriate behaviours (a staged approach):

1. Non verbal communication to redirect attention to task eg. gesturing.
2. Gentle verbal reminder e.g. What should you be doing?
3. Verbal reminder of the rule being broken/restate the rule.
4. Advise student that they have been reminded (twice) etc. then withdraw student from the activity within the room for a short period of time. Quick private discussion on return to activity.
5. Should further inappropriate behaviour occur within the same lesson, the student is removed from the class activity or playground altogether and taken to a buddy classroom or to the Office.
6. Incident is recorded on an Incident Report.
7. If inappropriate behaviour continues, parents are contacted and a Behaviour Note is sent home with student. Student returns parent reply slip the next day, if not returned Principal to make contact with the parents the following day.
8. If there is further concern, a referral to regional staff needs to be made after consultation between parent, teacher and Principal.
9. If any violent behaviour occurs at any time, student is sent home for the remainder of the day. Any subsequent violent behaviour will result in suspensions and possible expulsion.
10. Suspension.
11. Expulsion. See 'The Student Code of Conduct – DEECD for Process Detail'.

Breaches of our Student Engagement Policy:

The students need to understand the Student Engagement Policy and know that there will always be a consequence for unacceptable behaviour. The following sanctions may be used:

- Discussion and counselling (recording of offence on student behaviour tracker)
- Participation in a mediation as part of the Peer Mediation program
- An individual program to reinforce a concept or school rule
- Repeat a given task to an acceptable standard or making up work, or extra tasks
- Complete a period of detention
- Deprivation of privileges
- Contact made with parents
- Written and/or verbal apologies
- An appropriate/relevant consequence
- Reimbursement of lost, stolen or damaged property
- Referral to the Principal
- Suspension procedures where disruptive or dangerous behaviour continues
- Expulsion in line with DEECD guidelines
Ministerial Order No 625 – Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion

- Under Ministerial Order No 625, Discipline of Pupils, principals have the power to suspend a student.
- Under Ministerial Order No 625, Discipline of Pupils, principals have the power to expel a student, in extreme circumstances.
- Directorate Personnel approved for Expulsion Review Panel – Cluster nominated Principal.
- School Council Personnel approved for Expulsion Review Panel.
- Accurate records are to be kept of significant disciplinary actions.
- Principals are required to maintain a register of all suspensions and expulsions.
- The Director of School Education is to be notified as soon as a student is expelled.

For further information refer to the DEECD Website [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)