Heathcote Primary School - 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.

Heathcote 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
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POLICY

1. School profile

Heathcote is a rural community of approximately 3000 people, some 100 kilometres north of Melbourne and is part of the City of Greater Bendigo. The school enrolment fluctuates between 130 and 140 students with 45% of students included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD). The percentage of EAL students has seen a consistent increase since 2021.

Heathcote Primary School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and engaging learning environment in which each student can achieve their personal best in a secure, caring environment. Individual differences are celebrated and respected with the diverse range of interests, skills, and experiences reflected in the school community acknowledged.

The following values are central to the philosophy of the school and are explicitly taught throughout the school and reinforced through the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support program.

• Respect— treating people well, recognising and accepting individual differences, valuing other students, 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 and accepting the consequences for our behaviour.

In 2025, the school began to formally implement the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) program, working alongside a regional SWPBS coach. In 2026, the school was awarded the SWPBS 'Blue Award' in recognition of our school's commitment to implementing SWPBS with fidelity, establishing leadership structures and foundational practices. Additionally, 2025 was the first of a three year partnership with Real Schools. Zones of Regulation and Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships are taught across all year levels. For further information on our multi-tiered systems of support, please refer to Appendix 1.

In 2026 there are seven classrooms; Foundation, Grade 1/2 x2, Grade 3/4 x2, Grade 5/6 x2. All students participate in a weekly visual arts, performing arts, STEM and PE sessions. Students in Grades 3 – 6 also participate in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Example School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, learning, responsibility and teamwork at every opportunity. At Heathcote Primary School, our vision is to foster the development of curiosity, collaboration, kindness, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. Heathcote Primary School believes students, staff, parents and the wider community are responsible for modelling respectful relationships in their daily interactions. Together with the school's values, Respect, Responsibility, Learning and Teamwork, we continually reflect on ways to enrich and expand relationships that make our school community positive. Our Statement of Values is available on the school website.

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3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Heathcote 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 learn, grow and increase their independence.

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

Universal (Tier 1)

Our whole of school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion are:

- maintaining high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising 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 and 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 use Heathcote Primary School's instructional model which reflects the elements of learning and teaching as aligned in the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0
- Implementing Positive Classroom Management Strategies (PCMS)
- incorporating our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promoting it to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planning transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communications to parents
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- providing students the opportunity to contribute to, and provide feedback on, decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with staff whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through, sports days and events, peer mediators, buddy reading along with a formal buddy program and Clubs
- engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students
- developing programs, incursions and excursions to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. Inform and Empower online safety, Bendigo Community Health friendship program)

- creating opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, Clubs, break time student led clubs activities, hydroponics, chickens)
- putting measures 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.

Further examples are available in Appendix 1 (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS))

Targeted (Tier 2)

Our targeted strategies to address particular groups of students or concerns in certain age groups or friendship circles include:

- having a wellbeing team who monitors the health and wellbeing of students alongside the classroom teacher/s, and acts as a point of contact for students and families who may need additional support
- supporting Koorie students to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- supporting our English as a second language students through our English as an Additional Language (EAL) program, and supporting all cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) students to feel safe and included in our school.
- supporting learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from a refugee background with the support of a social worker and the wellbeing team
- providing a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and following the Department of Education (the department) policy on LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- supporting all students in Out of Home Care 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
- supporting students with a disability 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
- ensuring wellbeing and health staff 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 applying a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- supporting students enrolled under the department's international student program in accordance with our legal obligations and department policy and guidelines at: International Student Program

Further examples are available in Appendix 1 (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS))

Individual (Tier 3)

Heathcote 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 students and their parents/carers to talk about how best to help the students 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 (eg. seating plan)
- 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 The Orange Door
    - 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 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
    - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Further examples are available in Appendix 1 (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS))

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4. Identifying students in need of support

Heathcote 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Heathcote 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, minor and major behaviour data and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers or families
- Student Support Groups and Individual Education Plans

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 and School Philosophy 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, support and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination is not tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy. Please refer to Appendix 4: 'Am I Being Bullied?' flow chart (Kids Helpline resource) for a definition of the term bullying.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Heathcote Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the action taken by teachers and other school staff. The level of communication will match the scale / level of the behaviour.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive, restorative and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as withdrawal of privileges, yard plans, withdrawal from class or suspension.

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. 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, wellbeing team or principal as appropriate
- restorative practices (please refer to Appendix 3: Real Schools Restorative Conversation Prompt for additional information about the structure of a restorative conversation)
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- break time plan
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with department policy:

- Suspensions Policy
- Expulsions Policy
- Restraint and Seclusion Policy

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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.

The principal of Heathcote 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

Heathcote Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we 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/carers have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff Policy and communication pathway (please refer to Appendix 5: Communication Pathway).
- providing parent/carer 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 where appropriate
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Heathcote Primary School collects 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 are assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey

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- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

Heathcote Primary School also regularly monitors 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 is 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 via a QR code to the school website
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter via a QR code to the school website
- Made available in hard copy from the school office 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 policies and resources are relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Attendance
- Behaviour - Students
- Child Safe Standards
- Expulsions
- Koorie Education
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Student Engagement
- Students with Disability
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Suspensions

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

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2026
Consultation	Consultation in progress – November 2026 School Council – XXXX 2026 School Community via newsletter – XXXX 2026 Staff via Consultative Committee – XXXX 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 2028 Note that the mandatory review cycle for this policy is 2 years

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Appendix 1: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)



Academic & Developmental Interventions and Opportunities	• 1:1 Support • Individual Education Plan • ABLES assessment • Speech Pathologist • Occupational Therapist • Provisional Psychologist • Team Around the Learner • Referral to SSS	• Small Group Learning • Scaffolded supports	• School-wide curriculum • Literacy and Numeracy Instructional Models • Positive Classroom Management Strategies • Visual timetables • Little Learners Love Literacy • SAKG • Auslan • Attitudes to School survey • VTLM 2.0 • Saebrs	• Individual Education Plan • Small Group Learning • Energy Breakthrough • Junior Socratic Seminars & Literature Circles • Victorian Mathematics Games Challenge	• Victorian Challenge and Enrichment Series • Victorian High-Ability Program • Write a Book in a Day competition • Dorothea McKellar Poetry Awards • Australian Mathematics Competition • Khan Academy • Girls in STEM
Wellbeing Interventions and Opportunities	• Individual Education Plan • Safety Plan • ABLES assessment • Individualised regulation strategies • Social Worker	• Classroom 'Quiet Zone' • Regulation Strategies	• SWPBS • Zones of Regulation • RRRRs • Peer Mediator support • Junior School Council support • House Leaders support	• House Leader role • Junior School Council role • Peer Mediator role • Boys to the Bush • Energy Breakthrough	• Student Leadership role

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	• Provisional Psychologist • Referral to SSS		• School Leaders support • Wellbeing Room • Saebrs		
Behavioural Interventions and Opportunities	• 1:1 Support • Individual Education Plan • Behaviour Support Plan • Safety Plan • Yard Support Plan • Attendance Support Plan • Social Worker • Provisional Psychologist • Functional Behaviour Assessment • Referral to SSS	• Explicit skill instruction • Social Worker • Classroom 'Quiet Zone' • Social Detectives intervention group	• HPS Behaviour Matrix • SWPBS • Classroom Expectations and Routines matrix • Zones of Regulation • Positive Classroom Management Strategies • Saebrs	• Student Leadership role • Junior School Council role • Peer Mediator role • Community Lunch • Boys to the Bush • Clean up Australia Day	• Community Internships & Advocacy* • Action Research and Problem-Solving**
Family Interventions and Opportunities	• Student Support Group meetings • Referral to Orange Door • Referral to Loddon Children's Health & Wellbeing • Referral to SSS	• Parent Information Sessions - Loddon Children's Health & Wellbeing Local	• Class Dojo • Compass • Newsletter • Surveys • School Council	• Kitchen Volunteer • Event Volunteer	• School Council

***Community Internships & Advocacy:** Partnering with local non-profits, local councils, or local programs to tackle real-world challenges outside school.

****Action Research and Problem-Solving:** Allowing students to identify a complex issue within the school environment (e.g., student burnout, waste management), design data-collection methods, and present structural solutions

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Appendix 2 – School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)



HEATHCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

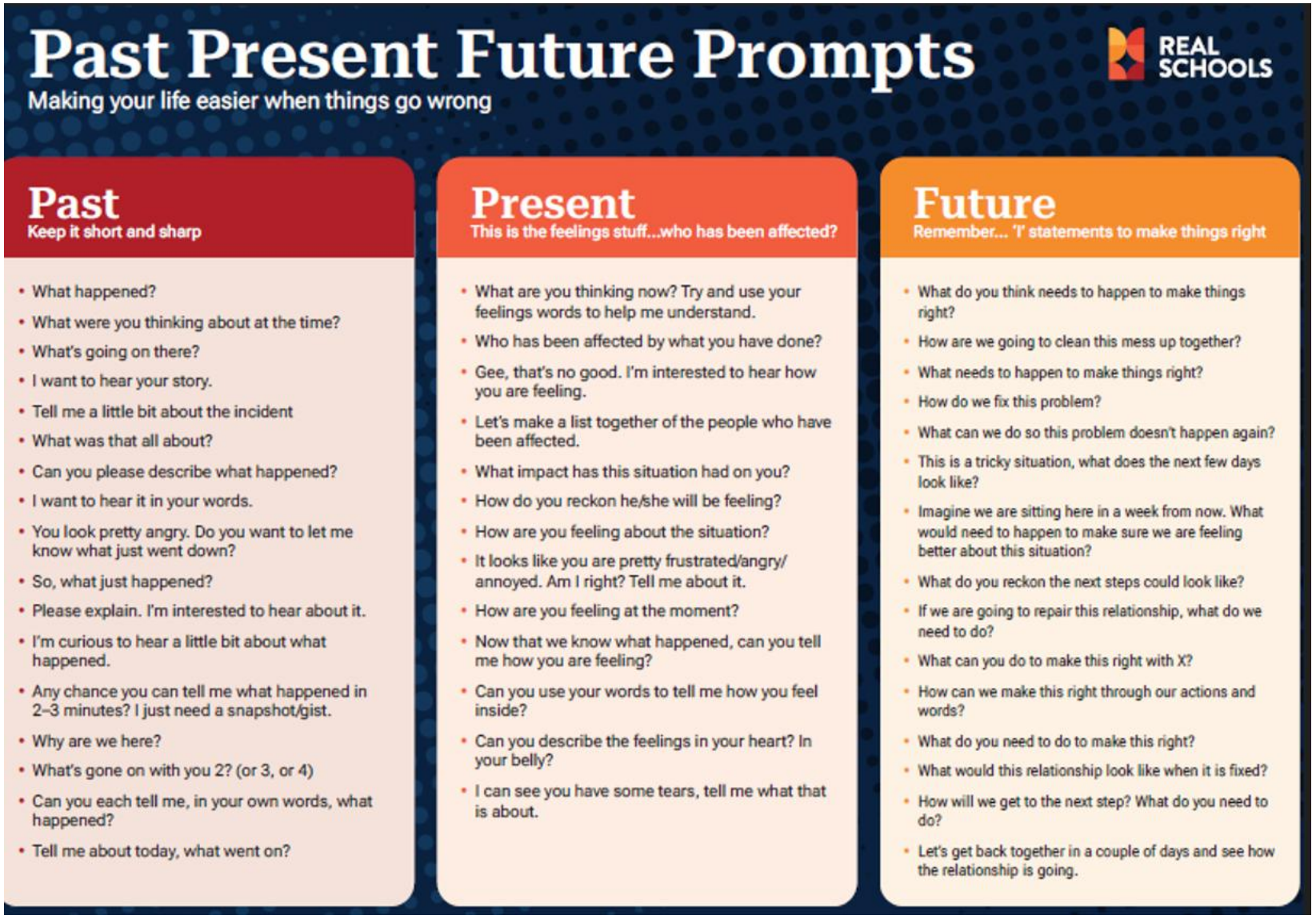
RESPECT • LEARNING • TEAMWORK • RESPONSIBILITY

LEARNING

	ALWAYS	INSIDE	OUTSIDE
RESPECT	We use an appropriate voice We use manners and kind words We follow instructions We keep our hands and feet to ourselves	We follow classroom expectations We walk	We leave nature in nature We share our spaces
TEAMWORK	We are inclusive We share We wait our turn	We pack up	We choose teams fairly We determine and play by the rules
RESPONSIBILITY	We use equipment for its intended purpose We arrive on time We look after school property We place rubbish in the correct bin We use our 'calm down' strategies	We use materials for their intended purpose We participate	We return our sports equipment

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Appendix 3 - Restorative Conversation Prompt (Real Schools)



Past Present Future Prompts

Making your life easier when things go wrong

REAL SCHOOLS

Past

Keep it short and sharp

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What's going on there?
- I want to hear your story.
- Tell me a little bit about the incident
- What was that all about?
- Can you please describe what happened?
- I want to hear it in your words.
- You look pretty angry. Do you want to let me know what just went down?
- So, what just happened?
- Please explain. I'm interested to hear about it.
- I'm curious to hear a little bit about what happened.
- Any chance you can tell me what happened in 2–3 minutes? I just need a snapshot/gist.
- Why are we here?
- What's gone on with you 2? (or 3, or 4)
- Can you each tell me, in your own words, what happened?
- Tell me about today, what went on?

Present

This is the feelings stuff...who has been affected?

- What are you thinking now? Try and use your feelings words to help me understand.
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
- Gee, that's no good. I'm interested to hear how you are feeling.
- Let's make a list together of the people who have been affected.
- What impact has this situation had on you?
- How do you reckon he/she will be feeling?
- How are you feeling about the situation?
- It looks like you are pretty frustrated/angry/annoyed. Am I right? Tell me about it.
- How are you feeling at the moment?
- Now that we know what happened, can you tell me how you are feeling?
- Can you use your words to tell me how you feel inside?
- Can you describe the feelings in your heart? In your belly?
- I can see you have some tears, tell me what that is about.

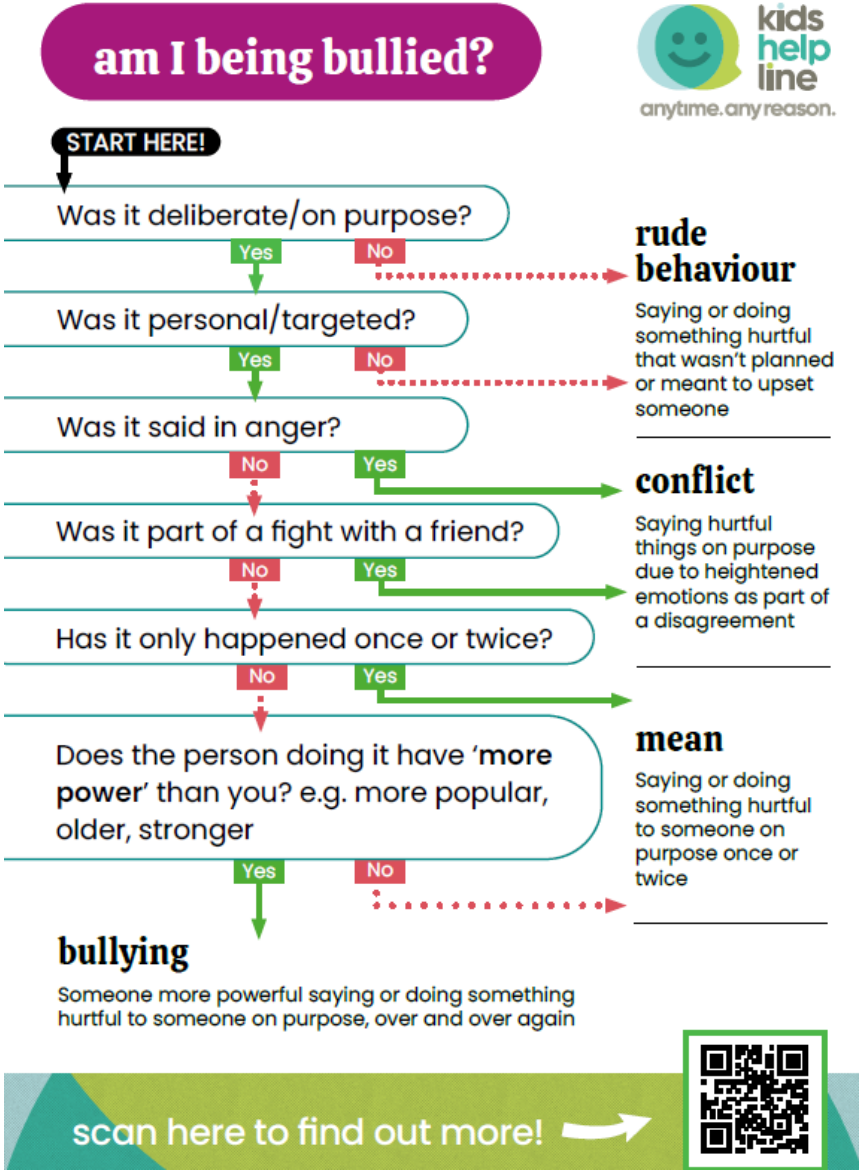
Future

Remember... 'I' statements to make things right

- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
- How are we going to clean this mess up together?
- What needs to happen to make things right?
- How do we fix this problem?
- What can we do so this problem doesn't happen again?
- This is a tricky situation, what does the next few days look like?
- Imagine we are sitting here in a week from now. What would need to happen to make sure we are feeling better about this situation?
- What do you reckon the next steps could look like?
- If we are going to repair this relationship, what do we need to do?
- What can you do to make this right with X?
- How can we make this right through our actions and words?
- What do you need to do to make this right?
- What would this relationship look like when it is fixed?
- How will we get to the next step? What do you need to do?
- Let's get back together in a couple of days and see how the relationship is going.

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Appendix 4 – 'Am I Being Bullied?' flow chart (Kids Helpline)



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Appendix 5: Heathcote PS Communication Pathway

