

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 Heathcote Primary School.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- 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.

Contents

- School profile
- School values, philosophy and vision
- Wellbeing and engagement strategies
- Identifying students in need of support
- Student rights and responsibilities
- Student behavioural expectations and management
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- Evaluation

School profile

Heathcote is a small rural community of around 3000 people, some 100 kilometres north of Melbourne and is part of the City of Greater Bendigo. Most recent census data indicates that the

proportion of the population made up of older childless couples was considerably higher than the state average, and the proportion of families with children was lower than the state average, confirming the larger number of retired couples living in Heathcote.

The school enrolment at the beginning of 2023 was 125 students. The school has a transient population with an average of 10 to 12 students coming and going throughout each year.

The values of Respect, Learning, Teamwork and Responsibility are central to the philosophy of the school. These values are explicitly taught throughout the school and reinforced through the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support philosophy, the Bounce Back wellbeing program and some Restorative Practices strategies.

The school is organised into two teaching units: the Junior Learning Community – one F-2 classroom and two Year 1-2 classrooms. The Senior Learning Community – one Year 3-4 classroom, one Year 4-5 classroom one Year 5-6 classroom. In addition to an emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy, reflected in the strong improvement in NAPLAN results over the life of our previous Strategic Plan, the school operates a whole school inquiry curriculum planned over a two-year cycle, which is based on the Victorian Curriculum.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, established in 2012, complements the inquiry curriculum and has been significant in adding diversity to the learning environment. It has also proven to be beneficial for the physical, social and emotional growth of our students.

School values, philosophy and vision

Heathcote Primary School's Statement of Values 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, Teamwork and Responsibility at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best.

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 some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and 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 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
- teachers at Heathcote Primary School use Maths, Reading and Writing instructional frameworks to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure evidenced-based teaching practices are incorporated into lessons
- teachers at Heathcote 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 are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents, they are shared and celebrated as a foundation of our school community
teachers support students moving into different stages of their schooling, into Foundation and into Year 7
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom and formally at our school assemblies, achievement is communicated with parents via the weekly school newsletter
- staff 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 year group meetings and Junior School Council. Students are encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Staff create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music program and Buddies support programs
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes fostering Respectful Relationships
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, guitar club, activities at break times)
- 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. We encourage students to call out inappropriate behaviour, not be 'by standers' to inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour.

Targeted

- each year group has a Year Group Leader responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of their students, they act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie 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
- our English as a second language students are supported through involvement in the VSL, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- 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)
- 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](#), through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- wellbeing and health 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

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 parent/carer to talk about how best to support school engagement
- 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 support or 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 Orange Door (Child First)

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 strategies 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 or with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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 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, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families

Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect 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 Principal. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

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, 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 will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements 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
- restorative conversations
- before or after school 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.

Shared expectations:

	Students	Parents/Carers	Staff
Engagement, participation in the classroom and other school activities.	Demonstrate preparedness to engage in and take full advantage of the school program effort, to do their very best self-discipline, to ensure a cooperative learning environment and model the school values team work,	Promote positive outcomes by valuing the importance of education and liaising with the school on their child’s progress/needs Support their child in their preparedness for the school day and in the provision of a supportive home environment Monitor their child’s school involvement and progress, communicate with the school when necessary	The school will comply with its duty of care obligations and have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that can engage students The school will provide appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to have input

		Are informed and supportive of school programs and actively participate in school events	into their learning and experience success
Attendance	<p>All students are expected to:</p> <p>attend and be punctual for all timetabled classes every day that the school is open to students</p> <p>be prepared to participate fully in lessons</p> <p>may bring a note from their parents/carers explaining an absence/lateness</p>	<p>Parents/Carers are expected to:</p> <p>ensure that enrolment details are correct</p> <p>ensure their child attends regularly</p> <p>advise the school as soon as possible when a child is absent</p> <p>account for all student absences</p> <p>keep family holidays within scheduled school holidays</p> <p>Support their child's learning during absences and work with the school to reintegrate students after prolonged absences</p>	<p>In accordance with DET procedures the school will:</p> <p>Proactively promote regular attendance</p> <p>mark rolls accurately twice a day and follow up on absences</p> <p>celebrate positive attendance at assembly</p> <p>Identify trends via data analysis</p> <p>Report attendance data in the school's Annual Report</p> <p>Support students whose attendance is problematic by developing individual strategies</p>
Behaviour	<p>Students are expected to:</p> <p>take responsibility for their learning and have high expectations that they can learn</p> <p>take responsibility for their behaviour and its impact on others</p> <p>model the schools core values of respect,</p>	<p>Parents/Carers are expected to :</p> <p>have high expectations of their child's behaviour and an understanding of the schools behavioural expectations</p> <p>Communicate with the school in regards to their child's circumstances</p> <p>Cooperate with the school by assisting in the development and</p>	<p>The school will deliver an inclusive and comprehensive curriculum which promotes positive behaviour and emphasises the wellbeing of every child.</p> <p>The school will employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students and focus on</p>

	<p>responsibility, learning and teamwork</p> <p>comply with the schools Behaviour Policy and work with teachers and parents to develop positive outcomes</p>	<p>enforcement of strategies to address individual needs</p>	<p>the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues</p> <p>The school will consistently apply its Behaviour Policy through a shared collegiate understanding, following up with students in accordance with the behaviour management policy.</p> <p>The school recognises that for some students additional support may be needed when staged responses are put in place, the school is committed to working with families.</p>
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School Action and Consequences

Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the School under any circumstances. Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school classroom practices, including targeted and individualised support when required.

Whole school practices include:

- Establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and a school environment that is consistent
- Encouraging student participation in the implementation of classroom and whole school expectations
- Providing differentiated learning programs
- Consistently acknowledge students demonstrating positive behaviours, fairly delivering consistent known consequences for those doing the wrong thing
- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

- Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be supported through a staged response, including:
- Understanding the student's background and needs
- Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- Providing consistent school and classroom environments
- Consistently following our school behaviour matrix

Broader support strategies will include:

- Involving and supporting the parent/carer
- Involving appropriate personnel from the regional DET office where appropriate
- Seeking out support from the school DET Social Worker or our School Community Worker
- Convening Student Support Group meetings
- Involving community support agencies

Discipline Procedures – suspension and expulsion

A student may be excluded from school as identified in our staged response to behaviour management, or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour which puts the health, safety and well-being of other students, staff or themselves at significant risk.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Students will be issued orange or red behaviour cards in accordance with our policy
- Behaviour notes will be sent home with the issue of a red card
- Students will be given time out of the yard as a result of receiving an orange or red card

Teachers may require a student to complete school work during their time out at first or second break. No more than half the break time may be given to time out. Detention after/before school will be given on the receipt of a third red card, it will generally be a before/after school detention of thirty minutes duration. Parents will be informed at least 24 hours prior to the detention.

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

Convening of a School Support Group where appropriate.

Individual consideration must always be given when implementing behaviour management strategies for students with disabilities, to ensure these students are not discriminated against as a result of their disability.

Engaging with families

Heathcote Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and 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
- where appropriate, involving families in school decision making, including families in Student Support Groups to develop individual learning plans
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families

Evaluation

Heathcote 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, incident data, school reports, parent survey, case management, including attendance and absence data, SOCS. Our 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 is available publicly on our school's website, is included in staff induction processes and is 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

Bullying Prevention Policy

Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	April 2023
Consultation	School Council, May 2023 Invitation on website for feedback
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2025