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Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Purpose

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

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

St. Andrews 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 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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Policy

1. School Profile

Established in 1858, St. Andrews Primary School serves a local community on the fringe of the metropolitan area, approximately 40 kilometres from the City of Melbourne.

We take pride in being a school that focusses on the whole child. Our school community's purpose is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and passion they need to be caring, responsible and courageous learners who will positively contribute to our community.

St Andrews Primary School is a vibrant part of the town where our students are keen to come to school to learn and to be part of something special. Our small size and location make us a unique place for young people to start their primary educational journey.

Being adjacent to the Diamond Creek and surrounded by bushlands, our students have spacious grounds to play and learn in as well as an abundance of wildlife to observe. We have a full-size football oval, access to tennis and basketball courts, two fantastic playgrounds and a sand and water play area. One of our most favoured play areas is Cubby Land, a bush based play space where students work together to build cubbies, using the natural resources found around the grounds.

By virtue of the beautiful bushland surrounds of St. Andrews, the school is on the Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR) and ensures robust bushfire management plans are in place.

Students experience learning in a multi-age setting and receive instruction from all members of staff in different groupings according to need. Our explicit teaching and integrated inquiry-based curriculum is aligned with the Victorian curriculum and incorporates the use of up to date technologies into the classroom programs.

There is a strong tradition of school artistic presentations through the fine arts, a commitment to broad participation in physical activity and education and a very strong music program. The school encourages and fosters resilience and connection to the wider community.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

St Andrews Primary 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 **Caring, Responsibility and Courage** at every opportunity.

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

Our Statement of Values is available on the school website.

3. Engagement strategies

St Andrews Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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 grow and learn.

A summary of the engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

- 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
- 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
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students participate in programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations

- teachers at St Andrews Primary School use the Victorian Curriculum, the HITS and an Explicit Instructional model to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at St Andrews 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
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Grade Six Leadership Group, Student Representative Council and other forums, class meetings and whole school meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through integrated units, inquiry rotation groups, interschool sport, our band program and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to seek out any staff member, including the principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel they may need any kind of support
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships, SWPBS, Better Buddies Program, Bullying Prevention programs
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. CASEA, cyber bullying, health and wellbeing)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, music, mixed age groupings and Cubby Land time) are encouraged
- buddy programs and peers support programs are used to engage students and promote inclusion.

When necessary, targeted support will be facilitated for students, by the principal, who will act as a point of contact to:

- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- ensure all students in Out of Home Care are appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- ensure that staff are equipped and trained to apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- connect students and /or families with providers to assist with mental health issues, such the Austin School, CASEA, CAHMS or private educational psychologist.

Where necessary individual support and specific strategies will be applied on a case-by-case basis. St. Andrews Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement.

These strategies may include:

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to [Student Support Services](#)
- referral to ChildFirst, [Headspace](#) / [Navigator](#) / [Lookout](#)
- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances

- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an [Individual 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 supports
 - [Student Support Services](#)
 - Appropriate external supports such as local council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, [Headspace](#), child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
 - 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 an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

St. Andrews Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Principal and teaching staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. St Andrews 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
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- observations, referrals and assessments for Student Support Services staff

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, 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with our School's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, St. Andrews Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action (if taken) taken by teachers and other school staff.

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 Principal
- restorative practices
- time out / community service
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

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

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of St Andrews Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

7. Engaging with families

St. Andrews Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website or Skoolbag app
- 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 home learning and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

St. Andrews Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

St. Andrews Primary School's grounds are supervised by school staff from 8:45am before school and until 3:45pm after school. Outside of these hours, school staff will not be available to supervise students.

Communication

- This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways
- Available publicly on our school's website <https://www.standrewsps.vic.edu.au/>
- Included in staff induction processes
- 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](#)

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	March 2021
Consultation	School Council February 2021
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2023