



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (DET Overview) POLICY

Rationale

- Every government school must have a Student Engagement Policy which provides the basis on which they can develop and maintain safe, supportive and inclusive school environments.
- As part of this, Student Engagement Policies should also articulate the expectations and aspirations of the school community in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour.
- A school's policy should be developed in consultation with the wider school community including school leaders, teachers, students and parents. For more information on how to develop a Student Engagement Policy see: [Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance - Student Engagement Policy](#) at the website below.
- A school's student engagement policy should include:
 - a school profile statement
 - a statement outlining the school values, philosophy and vision
 - the engagement strategies to be used across the school, including a reference to universal, targeted and individual strategies
 - behavioural expectations and the consequence for when these expectations are not met which include details of a staged response
 - the process to evaluate and update the policy
 - a statement that corporal punishment is not permitted at the school
- To ensure schools meet the requirements of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards, a Student Engagement Policy must include:
 - details in relation to monitoring the daily attendance of each student enrolled at the school
 - policies and procedures that ensure that the care, safety and welfare of students is in accordance with any applicable State and Commonwealth law (including student welfare and bullying, cyberbullying and harassment)
 - policies relating to the discipline of students that are based on principles of procedural fairness and include an explicit statement that corporal punishment is not permitted.
- The policy also should detail how and when the school implements a staged response to challenging student behaviour.
- Using data about a school to inform the engagement policy is important. Schools can draw on a variety of data sources to gain an understanding of the diversity of the school community and the engagement and wellbeing needs of students.
- A school-level policy needs to be compliant with the Department's policy requirements.

Purpose

- To ensure Footscray North Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines in regard to student engagement.
- To create a school culture that promotes student attendance, positive behaviour and a safe, supportive environment.

Implementation

- In consultation with school staff, parents and students, the school will develop a Student Engagement Policy that contains all the elements that meet DET requirements above.
- To help members of the school community understand the needs of the school, the school profile statement will detail the diversity of the student population and school community.

- The Student Engagement Policy will include a global statement about the philosophy of the school before moving on to more specific statements relating to the school community. Two examples of global statements are:

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

- Information about a school's values, philosophy and vision will set the tone and direction of the Student Engagement Policy. This information will include:
 - the engagement and wellbeing goals and targets related to school improvement strategies and actions identified through the school's Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan
 - a specific statement outlining the school's commitment to addressing bullying, including cyberbullying
 - a statement about the rights and responsibilities of all students, teachers and parents/carers within the school community.
- The Student Engagement Policy will outline a range of evidence-based strategies that the school will use to positively engage students in learning and intervene early when problems arise. These will describe the:
 - **universal** (school-wide) engagement strategies that create a safe, inclusive and empowering environment
 - **targeted** (population-specific) engagement strategies that meet the varied needs of vulnerable cohorts, including both prevention and intervention strategies
 - **individual** (student-specific) engagement strategies for students at risk, including strategies to identify and respond to individual student circumstances when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated.

Responding to Challenging Behaviour

When concerns arise about a student's behaviour, or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of challenging behaviour, a more targeted response is required. This may include both support measures and disciplinary measures.

Successful interventions require:

- strong staff-student relationships
- an understanding of the underlying factors influencing behaviour
- an understanding of the immediate triggers for its occurrence.

Any decisions made about addressing challenging behaviours will be clearly documented and discussed with the student's parent or carer

Where students repeatedly demonstrate challenging behaviour, the school will implement more structured intervention strategies as part of a staged response to address the behaviour.

Intervention strategies to be implemented include:

- assessing the behaviour, focussing on its influences, triggers and function (i.e. what purpose it serves). This should involve observation and talking with the student, their family and relevant wellbeing professionals.
- developing a behaviour support plan and/or individual education plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- explicit teaching of replacement behaviours (recognise students will need time to practice these before they become habit)
- engaging appropriate support services, such as a Student Welfare Coordinator, student support services or community agencies to undertake assessments and/or provide specialist support
- establishing a Support group to establish the student's needs and supports required
- implementing appropriate disciplinary measures that are proportionate to problem behaviours
- considering alternative learning or behaviour management options such as student development centres or re-engagement programs.

Support and discipline responses always will involve the classroom teacher.

Where there are ongoing behaviour issues, teachers will work with school leadership and/or school wellbeing staff to get specialist support for the student. For serious behavioural issues where suspension or expulsion is being considered, the Principal must be directly involved in decision-making.

The school will keep detailed records of instances of challenging behavior and management responses reported by students, teachers, non-school based staff and the school community.

In the event of an incident threatening life or property, the school will contact emergency services by calling **000**. The school also will immediately report to Security Services Unit (phone: 03 9589 6266) any incident:

- posing a risk to the safety of a student, parent, visitor or staff member including:
 - serious injury or death
 - allegations of or actual physical or sexual assault
 - constituting a threat to property or the environment
 - involving physical restraint or isolation of a student.
- The school may also wish to include reference to the Principles for Health and Wellbeing. The Principles are a reminder of good practice when working with children and young people and are intended to promote, nurture and support the health and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.
 - Principle 1 – Maximise access and inclusion**
 - Principle 2 – Focus on outcomes**
 - Principle 3 – Evidence-informed and reflective practice**
 - Principle 4 – Holistic approach**
 - Principle 5 – Person-centred and family sensitive practice**
 - Principle 6 – Partnerships with families and communities**
 - Principle 7 – Cultural competence**
 - Principle 8 – Commitment to excellence**
- The Student Engagement Policy will detail the shared school community expectations for behaviour and the consequences and sanctions to be taken when these are not met. These actions will include both support measures and disciplinary measures.
- The Student Engagement Policy will be treated as a living document and will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure the policy reflects emerging issues and takes account of new data about the school's performance.
- To ensure that the Student Engagement Policy continues to reflect the school community's expectations and aspirations, the school will report on its effectiveness to their community.
- When reviewing the Student Engagement Policy, the school may consider including a reference to the Principles for Health & Wellbeing. For more information, please refer to the website below.
- In informing the Student Engagement Policy, the school will access data from a number of sources. Prominent among these sources will be the School Information Portal and Student Attitude Surveys.
- Please refer also to the school's *Child Safe Policy, Discipline Student (Overview) Policy, Bullying & Harassment Policy, Attendance Policy, Data Analysis & Use Policy, Internet Use/Social Media Policy, Children at Risk Policy, Emergency & Critical Incidents Policy, Responding to Violent & Dangerous Child Behaviour of Concern (Restraint) Policy* and the *Student Wellbeing & Learning Policy*.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update mid-November 2018).

This policy was ratified by School Council 25/03/2019

References:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/policyrequirements.aspx