
ESSEX HEIGHTS PRIMARY SHOOOL

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Essex Heights Primary School on 9807 4944.

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.

We at Essex Heights Primary School are 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

Essex Heights Primary School is situated in Mount Waverley, Melbourne. It provides high quality education that strives to prepare and empower students for meaningful and responsible involvement in a changing global society.

Through our core values children develop positive attitudes and acquire skills that equip them for their future. All children are valued within a supportive and stimulating school environment where each child is encouraged to reach his/her potential. Essex Heights Primary School employs a “Restorative Practice” approach to relationship building and behaviour management that recognises the explicit link between student wellbeing and educational outcomes.

The whole community encourages high expectations and promotes innovative and contemporary curriculum, differentiated to cater for the needs of all children. The school strives to equip students for the modern world by promoting a culture of connectedness and creativity and by developing literacy in all realms.

Our staff value a culture of inquiry, reflection and learning as they are committed to professional and personal growth. There is a continuous focus on school improvement and Professional Development.

The school community strives to upgrade and improve the school’s facilities and resources to support innovative and rich learning.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Essex Heights Primary School strives to prepare and empower students for a meaningful and responsible involvement in a changing global society.

We are committed to improving student outcomes in a safe and happy environment that fosters our school values of respect, friendliness, honesty, persistence and inclusiveness.

3. Wellbeing and engagement Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Essex Heights Primary School uses a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework to promote positive behaviour, safety, engagement and respect. We provide effective supports for all children, and we acknowledge that some students may need additional social, emotional and educational support and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of our universal, targeted and individual strategies are listed below:

UNIVERSAL – TIER 1: Primary prevention – school-/classroom-wide systems for all students, staff and settings:

- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers.
- Commitment to child safety and compliance with all Child Safe standards.
- 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, Resilience Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data.
- Deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to experience a variety of educational, social and emotional experiences.
- Teachers at Essex Heights Primary School use an instructional framework with an explicit common and shared model of instruction to ensure evidence based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons.
- Teachers at Essex Heights 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 out by the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- Our School's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community.
- 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.
- Teachers monitor student attendance and, with support from the School Leadership Team, implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole school, cohort and individual level.
- Students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council and other forums including topic-/project-based focus groups, circle time, student leadership and feedback surveys. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, mentors, Year Level Coordinators, Assistant Principals and Principal when they have questions or concerns.
- Create opportunities for cross-age connections among students through our buddy program, and school events such as assembly, school concerts, whole school fun run, athletics, music programs and peer support programs.
- We engage in promoting school wide positive behaviour with our staff and students through reward systems, behaviours and expectations matrix, whole school behaviour management focusses and Compass chronicles for tracking and monitoring of behaviour incidents.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the School Nurse, Year Level Coordinators, Assistant Principals, Principal or teachers if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning.
- We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - ArtSEL
 - The Resilience Project
 - Respectful Relationships
 - 'Parenting Ideas' webinars
 - Explicit teaching of behaviours in the EHPS Expectations Matrix.
 - Alannah & Madeleine Foundation – Cyberbullying - Bully Stoppers - eSmart PD opportunities
 - Safe Schools
 - EHPS Personal & Social Capabilities Overview

- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (e.g., resilience building programs; Bully Busters incursion etc.).
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, targeted social group activities, recess and lunchtime activities and calm areas such as the library, meditation/maths garden and The Wellbeing Hub room).

TARGETED – TIER 2: Secondary prevention – specialised group systems for students with at risk behaviour:

- Designated Student Management and Wellbeing Team with school referral process in place and liaison with external agencies and supports such as the Monash Counselling pre-service teachers.
- Each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support.
- Training and information programs and webinars for parents e.g. parents as literacy helpers, Parenting Ideas newsletters and The Resilience Project.
- Connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer.
- All students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment.
- Provision of peer mentor and buddy programs with training.
- Modified curriculum support where appropriate e.g., Catching on Early, Child Safe, eSafety.
- As appropriate staff will undertake updates/refreshers/introduction for new staff to health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year e.g., Zones of Regulation, ArtSEL, The Resilience Project.
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.
- Transition for students moving into and out of Essex Heights Primary School supported through Assisted Transition plans and Monash City Council Transition Program.

INDIVIDUAL – TIER 3: Tertiary prevention – specialised, individualised systems for students with high-risk behaviour. Essex Heights Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- Appropriate external support such as therapists, TESSA MAT Program, Wavecare, Headspace, On Psych Referral, DHHS, Child FIRST, Anglicare, EACH, Monash Links, School Focussed Youth Services, and DET School Nursing.
- Analysing and responding to student behaviour and management on Compass.
- Developing Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plans.
- Student Support Programs in Literacy, Social Competencies (self-regulation, sensory regulation) and Mathematics.
- Ongoing mentor support programs e.g., Kids Hope
- Program for students with disabilities.
- Return to school plans for long absences.
- Referral to Student Management and Wellbeing Team and Student Support Services.
- 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.
- Considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up, access to the Wellbeing Hub.
- 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 Child FIRST
 - 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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Essex Heights Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Management and Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Essex Heights 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
- fortnightly student wellbeing trackers
- twice yearly department student wellbeing trackers.

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 Essex Heights Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Essex Heights 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 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:

- restorative practices
- 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 Year Level Coordinator
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used 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 Essex Heights 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

Essex Heights 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
- referring to the Code of Conduct for parents
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- providing parent 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
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students
- ensuring that all families have access to participate in Parent Teacher Interviews

8. Evaluation

Essex Heights 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
- ABLES reports.

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](#)

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Provided to staff at induction and included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our school website
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2022
Consultation	Staff, Policy and Planning Committee, School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 2024

George Perini

Jennifer Bittner

Principal

School Council President

School Council – November 2022