

# 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.

Buninyong 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

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
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# Policy

## 1. School profile

Established in the 1870's, Buninyong Primary School is a Foundation to Year 6 primary school located in the historic township of Buninyong on the outskirts of Ballarat, approximately 110 kilometres from Melbourne. The school includes a second campus at Scotsburn, six kilometres away on the Geelong side of Buninyong. Scotsburn and Buninyong operated as separate schools for many years, coming together as one school in 1994.

The school's enrolment figures have steadily grown during the review period, increasing from 650 students in 2015 to around 690 currently (52 at the Scotsburn Campus). It is anticipated that enrolment numbers will remain steady over the coming few years. Students are largely drawn from the Buninyong, Mt Helen and from the wider rural communities surrounding the township of Buninyong and Scotsburn area. Three country bus runs transport students from outlying areas. The school's Student Family Occupation (SFO) of 0.2988, decreasing marginally over the period of the strategic plan from 0.3256, indicates the expected performance of student achievement to be above that of State means.

The physical environment at Buninyong Primary School encompasses:

- Extensive, well maintained grounds which have undergone major works during the review period, with a focus on providing students with a range of play options.
- A full-sized gym, music room, art room and library; as well as dedicated Japanese room, STEM room and STEM workshop.
- Class sets of iPads for F – 2 and a 1:1 BYOD iPad program for students in grades 3-6

The staffing profile of Buninyong Primary School consists of:

- Principal class - Principal and 2 Assistant Principals, one leading Teaching and Learning and the other leading Wellbeing & Engagement.
- Two Leading Teachers - Campus Head of Scotsburn and Disability Inclusion Co-ordinator
- Four Learning Specialists – three as pedagogy leaders and one with a focus on ICT.
- One Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader (teacher class)
- Teaching staff- 40
- Administration and Education Support staff – 14 including our Business Manager

An inclusive, comprehensive curriculum based on the Victorian Curriculum is provided, with documented scope and sequence materials in the major dimensions of English and Mathematics. The learning program is complemented by specialist programs in Japanese, Physical Education, Visual Arts, Music and STEM.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Buninyong 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 being Respectful, Responsible & Kind at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is individually we strive, together we learn, daring to create our future. We also want to fully equip our students to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <http://www.buninyongps.vic.edu.au>

### 3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Buninyong 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 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 and 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including intervention and extension programs, to ensure that students are able to access supports to ensure their growth and passion in various subjects maintains strong
- teachers at Buninyong Primary School use an instructional framework 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 Buninyong 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 and School Philosophy 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
- 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 VOTS (Voice of the Students) program and other forums including year group meetings and focus groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school concerts, athletics, music programs and peer support programs, such as reading with younger students and 'Buddies'.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to Year Level Leaders, Assistant Principals and Principal 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:
  - Respectful Relationships

- Bully Stoppers
- Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. program)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peer support programs
- 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.

### **Targeted**

- each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and 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 – refer to our Koorie Champions Framework for further information.
- all students are encouraged to undertake goal setting as part of their self-management and learning path development
- 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 will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through utilising the Department of Education “English as an additional language EAL” resources.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through utilising the Department of Education “supporting students from refugee backgrounds” resources.
- 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](#) . This includes utilising resources from safe schools and recognising important events such as Pride month and IDAHOBIT Day.
- 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, such as 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
- Buninyong Primary School assists students to prepare for secondary school transition through a tailored program of events and learning activities
- 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**

Buninyong 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 student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plans, Behaviour Support Plans and/or Safety Plans
- 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 council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst / Orange Door

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
- 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
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

#### **4. Identifying students in need of support**

Buninyong 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. Buninyong 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

#### **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, 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.

## **6. Student behavioural expectations and management**

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 Buninyong Primary School's Bullying Prevention policy.

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, Buninyong 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.

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 Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- behaviour support and intervention programs

- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular 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 Buninyong 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**

Buninyong 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
- 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
- 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.

## **Evaluation**

Buninyong 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. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Buninyong Primary 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 will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- 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
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## Review Cycle

This policy was last updated on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 and is scheduled for review in August, 2025.

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	14 August 2023
Consultation	Wellbeing team (August 2023), School council (Feb meeting 27/2/2023 and August meeting 2023) School community (via newsletter article) 16 May 2023
Approved by	Principal – Bernie Conlan
Next scheduled review date	August 2025 note that the mandatory review cycle for this policy is 2 years



