

# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



**Help for non-English speakers.** If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact administration.

## 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.

Ngarri 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.

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2. School values, philosophy, and vision
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Ngarri Primary School was established in 2023 and is located approximately 33 kilometres south-west of Melbourne. We have 560 students enrolled from Prep to Year 6 and approximately 30 school staff members.

The learning spaces offer state of the art facilities, equipped to meet the learning needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers and students. The school boasts exemplary indoor learning spaces that flow seamlessly out to vibrant outdoor learning environments. Equipped with two full sized outdoor basketball courts, a soccer field, a multipurpose gymnasium and multiple outdoor play spaces, Ngarri Primary School leads in innovation and design.

Most students that attend our school live locally and tend to walk or ride their bike to school. Ngarri Primary School has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Ngarri Primary School is a diverse and culturally rich community with the majority of children coming from a non-English speaking background. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

We cater to students at the school who are at emotional, social and educational risk. Our school is focussing on the provision of educational programs that are targeted to individual students' learning needs, particularly in English and Mathematics. We use a growth mindset to overcome learning and life challenges to enable our student to be their very best.

### **School values, philosophy and vision**

Ngarri Primary School 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 pride, respect, integrity, determination and excellence.

Ngarri Primary School values are:

#### **PRIDE, RESPECT, INTEGRITY, DETERMINATION, EXCELLENCE**

We take **pride** in ourselves, our school and our community.

We **respect** ourselves, our school and each other, and understand the importance to treat others with compassion, care and courtesy.

We model and demonstrate **integrity** by being, honest, true and fair in all interactions.

We show **determination** by using a growth mindset to overcome challenges and use new and innovative ways to achieve our personal best.

We strive for **excellence**, aiming to be the very best we can be by setting goals and striving to gain new knowledge.

Our school's vision is to provide the opportunity for our students to dream big and inspire others. To show pride in themselves and draw strength from their community. Ngarri Primary School strives to allow all students to learn, grow and succeed-

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available on our website.

## **2. Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

Ngarri 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
- teachers at Ngarri Primary School use an Gradual release of responsibility 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 Ngarri 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 Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the buddies program, school plays, athletics, music programs, peer support programs and house colour activities
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Assistant Principal 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. anger management programs)

- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers 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 PLC leader and an Assistant Principal, 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
- 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 through the Early Years Koorie Literacy and Numeracy program and support from the Marrung Champion staff member
- 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 through a whole school approach using the curriculum companion documentation
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background by providing teachers with targeted resources to support all refugee students and by collaborating with Foundation House
- 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](#) and the implementation of Safe Schools
- 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) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.

### Individual

Ngarri 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 [Individual Education Plans](#) and/or [Behaviour Support 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, 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
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers
- running regular [Student Support Groups](#) meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Ngarri Primary School may also utilise other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

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

Ngarri 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Ngarri 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

### **4. 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 and School Philosophy 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.

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

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy and the 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, Ngarri 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 implement 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
- referral to an assistant principal
- restorative practices
- 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.

The Principal of Ngarri Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on Compass.

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

## **6. Engaging with families**

Ngarri 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, Disability Inclusion Profile meetings and developing individual plans for students.

## 7. Evaluation

Ngarri 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
- Compass, including attendance, absence data
- SOCS.

Ngarri 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 in our staff handbook/manual
- discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- included in transition and enrolment packs
- discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- 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 Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):
  - [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](#)



- Related Policies:
  - Child Safety Policy
  - Bullying Prevention Policy
  - Inclusion and Diversity Policy
  - Statement of Values and School Philosophy
  - Complaints Policy
  - Duty of Care Policy

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 1-2 years thereafter.

Policy last reviewed	June 2024
Approved by	Principal & School Council
Next scheduled review date	2026