

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.

Balwyn 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

Balwyn Primary School was established in 1868 and is located in the eastern metropolitan suburb of Balwyn, approximately 10 kilometres east of the Melbourne, in Boroondara. The school is a diverse and multicultural community that aims to develop in our students a love of learning, strong communication skills, the ability to be responsible, creative and critical thinkers and to be socially connected and resilient.

The school has just under 600 students enrolled, with the number of students fluctuating during each year due to students transferring into and out of the area from other Victorian schools, interstate and overseas. The dedicated and professional staff include learning specialists, teacher leaders, classroom

teachers and specialist teachers in Reading Recovery, English as an Additional language (EAL), Learning Intervention through the Teacher Learning Initiative (TLI), Visual Arts, Mandarin, Music and Physical Education (PE). They are ably supported by the *Wellbeing Officer*, Administration Staff, School Nurse and Student Support Staff and demonstrate expertise, enthusiasm and commitment to continuous learning.

Balwyn Primary School's multi-age class structure, which is based on the belief that learning is developmental, and a focussed teaching approach enable students to grow and achieve as individuals. Students are taught in a multi-age setting and flexible grouping is used to meet student needs. Some students join other classrooms to work at or above their Victorian Curriculum level.

Balwyn Primary School has a whole school Instructional Model for teaching that was developed to ensure that all students are taught at their academic and social emotional point of need and are provided a targeted and stimulating learning program.

The school is continually evaluating student and school needs, planning future developments and providing the best education for our students. The school has many visitors from Victoria, interstate and overseas to view the excellent teaching and learning programs.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Balwyn Primary School aims to create a collaborative, enriching and challenging learning environment that provides opportunities for success in all students. Balwyn Primary School highly values education as a partnership of children, staff, parents and the local community. Our motto "Aim High" and School Values underpin our philosophy, and these values are embedded in our teaching and learning programs and reinforced through our student-negotiated norms. The values that form the basis for learning are **Responsibility, Respect, Integrity, Belonging and Empathy**.

Balwyn Primary School vision is 'Nurturing global citizens for personal success in an ever-changing world.' We strive to provide educational excellence through vibrant teaching and a challenging, innovative and relevant curriculum, which enables students to become internationally minded, responsible and respectful lifelong learners. Our school values the whole child and strives to develop strong self-esteem, confidence and independence within a stimulating, supportive and collaborative learning environment. Student voice and learner agency is valued and encouraged to shape and influence learning.

Our Statement of Values is available on the school website at <https://balwynps.vic.edu.au/about-us/#strategic>.

3. Engagement strategies

Balwyn Primary School implements a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our learning community. We acknowledge that some students may need additional social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students may change over time as they develop 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

- 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
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive through the school values program, 'You Can Do It' YCDI program, Statement of Values, and student Code of Conduct, with high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents/carers
- building and sustaining positive relationships between staff and students through the school's values program, Code of Conduct, Respectful Relationships program, and development of class norms
- prioritising positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- encouraging a partnership with the school and parents/carers through open communication, School Council, PFTA, parent groups and classroom helper programs
- 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 Attitudes to School Survey
- 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
- using explicit and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, teaching practices are incorporated into lessons
- using 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
- embedding a whole school Instructional Model into teaching practice in order to ensure students' academic, interests and social emotional needs are met
- implementing wellbeing approaches and practices that reflect a restorative framework
- using a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- conducting an intensive transition program implemented to support students moving into different stages of their schooling and to support new students to the school, such as the 'Bright Beginning' sessions
- carefully planning transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- celebrating and acknowledging student achievement and positive behaviour in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies with 'Balwyn Achievers' and 'Values Keepers' and via the newsletter
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitoring student attendance with an emphasis on consistent attendance, which is communicated to the community on a regular basis via the newsletter
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance, attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- facilitating student voice and learner agency where students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through student focus groups
- providing students with opportunities 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, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns

- facilitating opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through multi-age learning, school choir and ensembles groups, musical, school events and celebrations and cultural days
- creating opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- encouraging a support circle where students are able to approach the Student Wellbeing Leader, School Nurse, Year level Leaders, Assistant Principals and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support
- welcoming all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, Year Group Leaders, 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
- promoting opportunities for student inclusion through activities, clubs and learning opportunities (e.g., lunch time activities and before school sporting activities and clubs)
- engaging school-wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
- facilitating programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- offering buddy programs offered to every student across F-6
- encouraging opportunities for student leadership roles across F-6 as ‘Junior School Council’ (JSC), with 2 representatives from each class across the school. JSC are involved in decision-making, coordinating student wellbeing initiatives such as the Friendship Bench. JSC regularly meet as a whole and in sub-committees focusing on Sustainability, Values and Fundraising.
- creating opportunities for students to fulfil senior leader roles in Year 6 through the ‘Student Leadership Program’, which provides a forum for students’ voice and agency through which the appointed senior student leaders can represent their peers in the following leadership roles; Principal Advisory Leaders (PALs), Student Wellbeing Action Team (SWAT) leaders. Additional Year 6 leadership roles include Digital Technologies, Library, LOTE, Visual Arts, Music and Physical Education
- providing a wide variety of engaging curriculum, extracurricular activities, and learning opportunities that includes Interschool Sport, excursions, enrichment orchestras, choirs F-2, 3-4, 5-6 and Balwyn Singers, musicals, coding, camp programs from F-6, Instrumental Music Program, inquiry learning, High Ability Learners, parent experts, lunch time activities such as Chess Club, library and games club. This allows the students to take greater ownership of their learning, by increasing their choices and enhancing their engagement.

Targeted

- each year level has a Year Level Leader responsible, who regularly liaises with class teachers to monitor the health and wellbeing of students, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support (in addition to classroom teacher support)
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- new EAL students entering the school for the first time are assessed and included in the EAL program if required or provided an in-classroom program to support their transition

- all PSD students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and are referred to Student Support Services (SSS) for an Educational Needs Assessment
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- wellbeing leaders in support of the Wellbeing Strategic Plan PLC undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- 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

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)
- referral to Student Wellbeing Officer and Student Support Services for specific trauma or incidents
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- engagement with the School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports

Balwyn Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- facilitating SSG meetings to discuss how best to help the student in need engage with school
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an IEP and/or a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example arranging recess and lunch play options and/or changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing workshops
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, or ChildFirst

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 Plan 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

Balwyn Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Classroom teachers in consultation with level leaders and the Wellbeing leader play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to assist in identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing.

Balwyn Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

Balwyn 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. Balwyn 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, behaviour management data
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- local and referrals and assessments and external assessment reports
- 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 the 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:

- positively participate fully in their educational program
- regularly and punctually attend school
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- be familiar and follow the school Code of Conduct and Statement of Values
- 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 and management

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

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 Example School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of expected behaviour stipulated in the Statement of values and Code of Conduct, Balwyn Primary School will establish staged consequences, 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, other staff or leadership 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 and restorative 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 Balwyn Primary School will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary and restorative 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
- time to reflect on incident
- withdrawal of privileges or local BPS community service
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator/ Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal

- apology made (verbally or written or both) if required
- facilitated restorative dialogue
- consequences
- behaviour reviews with School Leadership
- 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 Balwyn 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

Balwyn 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, Compass and newsletters
- 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 through working bees, classroom helpers, event days, Show Days, PFTA and School Council
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families in need
- involving families in other curriculum-related activities such as the school's bi-annual Carnival
- involving families in school decision making through parent forums, School Council and Surveys
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Balwyn 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, including attendance and absence data
- Student Online Case System (SOCS) referrals

Balwyn 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 and COMPASS.

- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	21 October 2021
Consultation	October 2021
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2023