

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school by phoning 5439 7232

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.

Axedale PS 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
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

Axedale PS is situated 20kms from Bendigo and has served the community for 152 years since opening in 1870. The setting is a rural environment that is safe, attractive and provides a stimulating learning environment. We are a growing rural school serving a vibrant and caring local community.

Axedale's motto is "Excellence Through Endeavour" and the school aims for this in every respect. Students are encouraged and equipped through our broad based curriculum to strive for academic and personal excellence, as well as excellence in values, attitudes and behaviour. Senior students are provided with a range of representative and leadership opportunities involving School and House

Captains, Junior School Council, ANZAC Day involvement, School Choir & Rock Band, Regional Sport representation and Axedale-based community events.

Axedale Primary aims to foster a culture of contributing to and being involved in, a strong local community. There is a strong partnership between parents and staff with a high level of positive parent participation on School Council, committees, as classroom helpers and social activities.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Axedale Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work 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 respect, personal best, resilience and co-operation at every opportunity. Our school vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults. Our Statement of Values and Philosophy is available on our website.

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Axedale Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, 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

Whole school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- 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 Axedale 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
- 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.

- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through whole school events and activities, buddy activities and school yard play.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - eSmart
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. Inclusive Play space, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy 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

Targeted strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- each classroom teacher monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their class and acts 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. Strong connections/relationships are established and maintained between parents, carers, students and school staff. Regional support, through the KESO, is sought on a as needed basis.
- English as a second language students are supported, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school.
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from a refugee background.
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the DE policy on LGBTIQ Student Support.
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with DE policy
- 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

Strategies to promote individual student positive behaviour and inclusion include:

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

- building and maintaining relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- all staff build and maintain a relationship with all students, across all year levels
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan for students significantly below or above the expected academic level

- developing a Behaviour Support Plan for students who require assistance to increase positive behaviours and/or who display challenging behaviours
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports, including School Chaplain
 - 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 Orange Door
 - 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, 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
- maintaining regular communication, sharing positive and negative behaviours
- 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

Axedale Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing Team (Principal, Student Wellbeing Worker) play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Axedale 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 whilst enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- engagement and ongoing communication with families
- observations by and self-reporting/responding to School Chaplain
- Expression of concern by peers

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. Axedale PS acknowledge that the behaviour of students, students, staff, parents and

carers has an impact on our school community and culture. We expect all students, staff, parents and carers to treat each other with respect and dignity.

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 the school values of respect, personal best, resilience and co-operation, for themselves and in interactions with school community members
- 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 the Principal. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Respectful Relationships & Expected Behaviours Policy and School Values and Expected Behaviours Matrix.

- 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, Axedale 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 implements positive and non punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as withdrawal from the school yard, withdrawal from privileges or 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
- Removal from the yard or classroom
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- restorative practices

- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged eight or younger can be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education. The Principal of Axedale PS is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES 21.

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

7. Engaging with families

Axedale 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 endeavour 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 or by request via the Office
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- Provision of opportunities for families to meet with other families, ie. Family games nights, school concerts and family BBQ nights
- 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, when applicable
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Axedale 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
- behaviour logs, include on school digital management system
- incidents data, including those on school digital management system
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21/SOCS

Axedale PS 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 enrolment packs
- 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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2024
Consultation	School Council and Staff
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 2026