

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

Birmingham Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment, where risk of harm is minimised. Student Wellbeing and Engagement encompasses the physical, social, emotional and educational growth of students and underlies all the school's policies, programs and activities. It addresses the health, safety, wellbeing and guidance of students and is a fundamental aspect of all staff roles.

Birmingham Primary School will implement a range of procedures to ensure a safe and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values. The policy sets out the rights, responsibilities and shared expectations of the school community including students, parents, carers, teachers and staff. There is a strong focus on positive behaviours, prevention, and early intervention in response to individual student needs.

The Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy relates to the three interrelated components of student engagement and school connectedness:

- **Behavioural engagement** – Students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extra-curricular activities of the school.
- **Emotional engagement** – Students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school; their sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.
- **Cognitive engagement** – Students' investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self regulation.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Birmingham Primary School is situated in a semi-rural area at the foothill of the Yarra Valley. The school population for 2018 was 695 students.

We offer a wide variety of programs, both academic and extra curricula. We are an accredited school with the Council of International Schools, and are very proud to have achieved the accreditation. Our work with this organisation is about continuous school improvement, looking at every aspect of our school. In 2018, we revamped our Mission and Vision Statement's to better reflect our values and beliefs. We also revamped our Whole School values after much consultation with students, parents and staff.

Our ISSE program (International School to School Exchange) travelled to Mexico and it was a highly successful exchange bringing the world to our community. Our delegation were present during the earthquake, and helped with the humanitarian efforts in its aftermath. We were extremely proud of the students and the teachers. Our sister school relationship continues, and are hoping for a student exchange with our sister school in 2018.

Our Harvest to Table, program which is linked in with our sustainability program has embedded itself into our curriculum with over 70 children taking part on a regular basis.

We have invested in developing a Grounds Masterplan of which the first part will be completed early in first term next year. We also received a significant maintenance grant of \$303,000 to refurbish some areas of the grounds and of the buildings. These works were completed early 2018.

We continually strive to provide our students with meaningful learning experiences and opportunities. We have a competent and dedicated staff and a supportive community, which allows our school to flourish.

2. School values, mission and vision

Our vision is to inspire the development of global citizens by providing a high quality international standard for all.

Our mission is to create a stimulating learning environment that inspires every individual to realise their unique potential as a global citizen

As global citizens we value: Courage, Compassion, Community and Curiosity

3. Engagement strategies

Universal

Positive programs and practices have been established to encourage the full participation and wellbeing of all students at Birmingham Primary School:

- A relevant and stimulating curriculum.
- Enthusiastic teachers providing learning opportunities that engage student interest.
- Teachers catering for individual learning styles.
- High expectations for all students and staff.
- Teachers being positive role models.
- Opportunities to participate in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, recess and lunchtime activities).
- Encouraging parental involvement in all aspects of school life.
- Actively encouraging high attendance.
- Building positive relationship between teachers, students and parents.
- The school's values and the promotion of positive relationships and interactions.
- The development and encouragement of student leaders.
- Celebrating student achievements both in and out of school.

- School rules agreed to by each student to encourage positive behaviours.
- Whole school transition program.
- Year 6/Prep and Year 5/Year 1 buddy system.
- Victorian Curriculum – Health Education is an area of the curriculum that is part of every aspect of the student day, including: The Berry Street Model, Personal Development, Respectful Relationships and Life Education.

Group

- Connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer.
- All students in Out of Home Care will have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment.
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.

Individual

- 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 Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan.
- 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Birmingham Primary School is committed to providing the necessary assistance 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.

Child Safety – Prevention Guidelines

Birmingham Primary School has a zero tolerance towards Child Abuse – all staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of a Code of Conduct when working with children.

Birmingham Primary School will

- Promote a culture where children are safe, happy and empowered.
- Provide staff with a child safe Code of Conduct.
- Provide all staff and volunteers with regular training on child abuse risks.
- Ensure all staff are aware of and act on their legal responsibilities under mandatory reporting.

- Ensure and monitor that all people engaged in child related work, including volunteers are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.
- Ensure recruitment for all staff and volunteers indicate our zero tolerance of child abuse and child safe expectations.
- Ensure staff are aware of risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks.

5. Rights and responsibilities

Students

Students have a right to:	Students have a responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in a secure environment, without intimidation, bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment, where they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition • participate fully in the school's educational program • be treated with respect • expect a learning program that meets their individual needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate fully in the school's educational program • attend school regularly • display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community; including during school hours and when travelling to and from school • develop as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals

Parents/carers

Parents/carers have a right to:	Parents/carers have a responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others is encouraged • expect communication about, and participation in their child's education • expect that parents of other students will not approach their child for purposes of discipline, untoward interference or censure • expect that their child will not be approached by other parents regarding school matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote positive educational outcomes for their children • take an active interest in their child's educational progress • model positive behaviours • ensure their child's regular attendance at school • engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning • support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students • ensure their children's care and supervision to and from school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise concerns about a child other than their own with the Principal, Assistant Principal or class teacher, but not directly with the student
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Teachers

Teachers have a right to:	Teachers have a responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment • be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student • use discretion in the application of consequences and sanctions in keeping with Birmingham Primary School's strategic intent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement this Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy • know how students learn and how to teach them effectively • know the content they teach • know their students • plan and assess for effective learning • create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments • use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning

Students who 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

Birmingham Primary School has developed shared expectations to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all members of the school community are respected. Shared expectations are intended to support individual students, families and visitors from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

As an effective school, Birmingham Primary School has high expectations for the whole school community.

Our shared expectations are:

- Jointly negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, including students
- Clear and specific
- Focused on positive and pro-social behaviours
- Focused on prevention and early intervention
- Supported by relevant procedures
- Consistent, fair and reasonable
- Linked to appropriate actions and consequences.

Birmingham Primary School is committed to:

- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and engagement in learning.
- Creating opportunities for students to take responsibility and be involved in decision making through leadership initiatives and Junior School Council/ Student Leaders.
- Providing predictable, consistent and fair classroom and school environments that link to appropriate actions and consequences.
- Obtaining student agreement to school rules and applying a whole school approach to discipline.

Birmingham Primary School encourages student engagement, regular attendance and appropriate behaviours through the implementation of whole-school strategies supported by targeted and individualised support when required. Prevention and early intervention forms the basis for all strategies.

In promoting positive behaviours the school will:

- Explain and teach school-wide and classroom expectations.
- Seek to understand the student.
- Ensure there is a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers.
- Establish consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for inappropriate behaviour.
- Enact a staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour.
- Involve and support parents and carers.

When required Birmingham PS will:

- Develop individualised learning, behaviour or attendance plans.
- Convene Student Support Group meetings when appropriate.
- Refer students to community support agencies for specialist intervention.
- Involve key welfare staff including the Principal and Assistant Principals as well as specialist support staff including psychologists and school chaplain
- Involve community support agencies when appropriate.
- Implement consequences for serious behaviour breaches which may include an in-school suspension, regular suspension from school, as well as expulsion from school.

Discipline Procedures

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

- 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
- Referral to the Principal Class
- Restorative practices
- Detentions- to finish uncompleted work, No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work. Where students are required to undertake school work after school, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes. The Principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of after school work would create undue hardship (eg: where students are regularly supervised by older siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.
- Behaviour reviews
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Suspension and Expulsion

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

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

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the school under any circumstances

When considering suspension or expulsion Birmingham Primary School follows the procedures listed in section 4.3 and 4.4 of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development guidelines published in the Student Engagement Policy Guide. Appendices 12 to 18 of the guidelines provide flowcharts and proformas for use in suspension and expulsion procedures.

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

7. Engaging with families

Birmingham Primary School values the input of parents and carers. 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.

8. Evaluation

Birmingham 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

DEPARTMENTAL REFERENCES

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/improvement/Pages/FISO.aspx>

Disability Standards for Education

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/disability_standards_for_education_2005_plus_guidance_notes.pdf

Safe Schools

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/health/Pages/sexualassault.aspx>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/health/Pages/mentalhealth.aspx>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/health/pages/bully.aspx>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/health/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

Charter of Human Rights

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm>

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433

Equal Opportunity Act

<https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/the-law/equal-opportunity-act>

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Statement of Values and School Philosophy,

Bullying Prevention Policy

Child Safe Standards

See Child Protection and Reporting Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on October 2018 and is scheduled for review in 2020