Eastwood Primary School

Student Wellbeing
&
Engagement Policy

**Produced in consultation
with the school community**

To be read in conjunction with
*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools –
Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*

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Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Overview:

This Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy articulates the Eastwood Primary School community's shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, attendance and behaviour. The policy supports the rights and articulates the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment.

Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked, and we aim to promote an understanding of this link in both the school environment and in the classroom. It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher is a vital source of support and a determinant in the success of their students.

1: School Profile Statement

Our school, Eastwood Primary School, is located in the quieter suburban streets of Ringwood East and has a stable population of nearly 600 students. Housing developments and the increase of new families settling in Ringwood East and surrounding suburbs have contributed to enrolment growth in recent years. The vast majority of our students live in the surrounding suburbs of Croydon, Heathmont, Ringwood, Ringwood East and Bayswater.

Our enrolment has increased in recent years from 307 in 2013 to a peak of nearly 600 in 2021. This increase has now stabilised to around 600 with a higher number of students commencing in prep than those leaving at Grade 6. In 2015-16, with the completion of our new facilities and environment, interest in our school has strengthened and as was anticipated, we experienced a high growth over the next four years.

Eastwood Primary has a Deaf Facility within the school which provides targeted learning and support to hearing impaired students. These students receive added funding through the PSDMS program and are catered for by specially trained Teachers of the Deaf (TOD). The enrolment of students in this program has ranged from 8 to 21 and is currently in 2021 providing a supportive program to 20 students. All of these students are fully integrated into the mainstream classroom and supported by the TODs and the classroom teacher. They are also withdrawn to the Deaf Facility rooms for 1:1 and small group instruction.

Our SFO (Student Family Occupation) is 0.2. Our community is predominantly mid-high socio-economic with families coming from a wide mix of social backgrounds. We have a growing proportion of families with a language background other than English. English as an Additional Language (EAL) support is provided for EAL students. Our school currently has 14 students who qualify for funding under the Program for Students with Disabilities and 20 students in our Deaf Facility. The school community does include families experiencing financial hardship, and some students experience learning and social-emotional challenges. As a School, we devote time to respond to these challenges, utilising a broad range of support services inclusive of a network psychologist, speech therapist and a school based Chaplain. External services provided by Anglicare and EACH, as well as linking with the Options Capacity Building Team have all been important supports in meeting the growing complexity of student needs.

2: Whole School Prevention Statement

The Eastwood School community of learners, teachers and parents have developed a set of core values that underpin the way in which we live, work and play together. These values are:
- Respect
- Kindness
- Honesty
- Resilience

The values support the school community to work collaboratively and respectfully together for the common good and are used to reflect on the way we interact with each other. The values are also taught explicitly through regular wellbeing programs. These values also provide the whole school community with a common language around community 'norms'. The school supports the development of these values within students through a range of programs including:
- Positive Education
- Real Schools
- Respectful Relationships
- Buddy Program
- Parents as Helpers Program
- Student Leadership
- Peer Mediators
- Kids Hope Mentors
- Literacy Partners

Diversity in the school community
Eastwood Primary School is a learning community that embraces the diverse cultural backgrounds of our global community. The school community recognises the right of its members to celebrate their cultural background under the banner of multiculturalism. The students, families and staff of the school operate in an atmosphere of acceptance, mutual understanding and respect.
The school aims to address diversity by:
- Attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer.
- Creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems.
- Incorporating a focus on global perspectives into the curriculum
- Celebrating multiculturalism through the curriculum whenever possible.

Student engagement can be defined as three interrelated components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive.

Behavioural Engagement
At Eastwood Primary School, students are provided with an opportunity to participate in various academic, social and extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is run inclusively and is structured in a manner that enables all students to have access to knowledge in an engaging, creative and relevant manner. The various learning styles, abilities and where possible, interests are used to create a school culture in which the students learning and personal development are central. There is an expectation of academic excellence and the staff and parents within the community are encouraged to work co-operatively to provide students with opportunities to a high standard.

Emotional Engagement
A feeling of connectedness with one's peers and teachers are fundamental elements to ensure

that students are engaged with their school. At Eastwood Primary School the opinions, ideas and aspirations of students are encouraged, respected and where possible implemented. Students are encouraged to help organise the structure of their classroom and foster a positive school environment through the use of class meetings, student focus groups and the junior school council. Teachers listen to and respect student ideas, actively seeking to develop positive working relationships. Students are encouraged to develop positive relationships with their peers through small group activities and school wellbeing programs.

Cognitive Engagement
For students to succeed in their learning it is crucial that they develop a love of learning and a sense of intrinsic value in the attainment of knowledge. Students are, where possible, encouraged to pursue areas of academic interest. They are encouraged to use learning styles and presentation methods of their choice. Students' effort and achievement is highly valued at Eastwood Primary School, where students are supported to achieve at their cognitive level.

3: Rights and Responsibilities

Guiding principles
Every member of the Eastwood Primary School community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.
All students and adults also have the responsibility to contribute to creating both a safe and supportive environment.

We all have **a right** to:
- be an individual at school and be treated fairly whatever our appearance, beliefs or abilities
- be respected and treated with kindness and courtesy at school
- express our feelings and opinions in appropriate ways
- work and play and feel safe in a supportive and cooperative environment
- expect that rules and expectations are fair, consistently implemented and that everyone's rights are supported.

We all have **a responsibility** to:
- be courteous, kind and respectful to others
- listen to others with mutual respect
- maintain a safe and secure school environment
- support school rules
- develop responsibility for our own actions
- value others for their individual differences
- work to achieve our personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.

Bullying and Harassment
Definitions:

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.
Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, towards an individual by a person or group.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through electronic media such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web

pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings)

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

Eastwood Primary School will provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include
• poor health – anxiety, depression
• lower self esteem
• reduced study performance
• missed classes, social withdrawal
• reduced career prospects in the longer term

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that they witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully

Harassment can include but is not limited to comments directed to a person because of their appearance, gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle: (The most common)
They include:
• Offensive staring and leering.
• Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
• Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
• Questions about another's sexual activity.
• Persistent comments about a person's private life or family.
• Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body.
• Offensive name calling.

Explicit: (obvious)
They include:
• Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
• Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
• Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
• Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
• Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
• Displays of sexually graphic material– pornography.
• Requests for sexual favours.
Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

Bullying can involve such things as
• grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.

• publicly excluding a person from your group
• taking or breaking a person's property
• knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
• teasing a person because of their looks

Cyberbullying
Being involved in online spaces, either at home or at school, requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:
- the language used and the things said
- how students treat others
- respecting people's property (e.g. copyright)
- visiting appropriate places

Behaving safely online means:
- protecting privacy and personal information
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something 'not right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher

If someone is being harassed or bullied they should:
- tell the person what they are doing and that they should stop
- discuss the matter with a suitable student leader or teacher/co-ordinator

All concerns will be taken seriously

Shared Expectations
The behavioural and emotional engagement of students is a crucial component to the smooth operation of the educational program at Eastwood Primary School. It is the school community's responsibility (including students, teachers, other staff, the principal and parents), to provide a curriculum that will support the sense of connectedness that provides the foundation for a student's well-being at school. Without this support, significant behavioural and emotional problems may be encountered, influencing not only the student involved but his/her fellow students and other members of the school community as well.

Students
Students have the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment in which their academic and social needs are recognised and where possible met. Students have the responsibility to support the development of a positive school environment by acting in an appropriate manner, respecting teachers and other school staff and not disrupting the learning of other students.

Rights and responsibilities of students

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Rights	Responsibilities
Students have a right to: • work in a secure environment, without intimidation or bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition • participate fully in the school's educational program	Students have a responsibility to: * participate fully in the school's educational program regularly.

	Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community. • Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, and will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. • As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals. • Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.	regularly. Students sho to display positive beh demonstrate respect fo peers, their teachers ar of the school commun • Demonstrate respect others, including the ri contribute to an engag experience for themsel students. • As students progress will be encouraged and greater responsibility f and participation as m school community. Th developing as individu increasingly manage t growth by setting goal resources to achieve th • Students should, with to participate fully in t educational program a Students should also d behaviours that demon themselves, their peers

Parents

Parents have the right to expect their child will be treated with respect and courtesy. They have the right to expect their child will be provided an education that is inclusive and supportive of their child's needs. They have a responsibility to treat school staff respectfully and provide a supportive learning environment for their child outside of school hours.

Rights and responsibilities of parents

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers	Responsibilities
Parents/carers have a right to expect: • That their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others is encouraged. • The school will engage in constructive communication with them regarding their child's wellbeing.	Parents/carers have a responsibility to: • promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours. • Ensure their child's regular attendance • 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.

Principal, Teachers and School Staff

Teachers have the right to carry out their duties in an environment in which their professionalism, property and personal safety are respected. Teachers have the responsibility to be fair and equitable to all students. They should be professional, organised and display a commitment to life-long learning. Teachers have a responsibility to provide an engaging and inclusive curriculum that incorporates the academic, emotional and social interests of all students in their care.

Rights and responsibilities of Principal, teachers and school staff

Rights and Responsibilities of the Principal, Teachers and School Staff Rights	Responsibilities
Teachers have a right to • 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	Teachers have a responsibility to • fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the 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 • Differentiate the curriculum through inclusive teaching practices • use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning • Model school values • Provide support programs and student services that meet the needs of individuals

School actions and consequences

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

All students at Eastwood Primary School have the right to engage the curriculum in a safe and positive learning environment. Students will be encouraged to demonstrate positive classroom behaviours and the school values through various programs and rewards. These include the use of positive reinforcement by teachers E.g. Student of the Week awards, class or table points, raffle tickets, award boxes etc…

At times, students may be prevented from learning by the behaviours and actions of some students.

If a student is in breach of class rules through the use of inappropriate behaviours the following processes will be implemented by the teacher:
1. A verbal warning for the student to desist and a distraction offered
2 If a student remains disruptive then they will be sent to a buddy classroom, with work to complete, for a period of time not exceeding 15min
5. Ongoing behaviour could result in a Time Out and possible Detention, these processes are administered by the Principal and Assistant Principal and involve conversations with the parents of the student.

In the case of serious behavioural breaches, or as a result of continued poor behaviour, the Principal or Assistant Principal may consider a more significant consequence. Serious behavioural breaches may include the use of abusive language, violent actions against another student, staff member or a visitor. These potential consequences include internal suspensions for a day or various days. In some extreme situations of continued poor behaviour students may be excluded from school.

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:
- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:
- understanding the student's background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program

Broader support strategies will include:
- involving and supporting the parents/carers
- involving the student wellbeing co-ordinator
- tutoring/peer support
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings. The SSG is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour and attendance plans
- involving community support agencies

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion
When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in Section 4.3 of the DET guidelines published in **Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines.** 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 an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour. Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time. Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.

- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. 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 (for example, where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.

Attendance

The school provides a safe and supportive learning environment which aims to develop student connectedness to school. For students to be engaged in their learning, regular consistent attendance is necessary. Eastwood Primary School will promote the DET strategy of 'It's Not Okay To Be Away'. Student absences are recorded in CASES and closely monitored. If irregular attendance is evident it will be addressed by:

- taking into account the individual student's background and needs
- ensuring clear expectations are understood by the student, teacher and the parent/carer
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the students learning
- involving the parents/carers
- providing counselling for the student and their family if required
- convening a student support group if required
- developing a Student Attendance Improvement Plan
- involving community agencies if required.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Statement of Values and School Philosophy
Bullying Prevention Policy
Child Safe Standards Policies and Procedures

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on March 2021 and is scheduled for review in 2023.

References

EPS	OHS Policy
Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/codeofconduct.htm
School Accountability and Improvement Framework	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm
Effective Schools are Engaging Schools	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm
Safe Schools	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/default.htm
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchhrcharter.htm http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eeo/eeoact.htm
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf