

Balliang East Primary School

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.

Balliang East 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.

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

Balliang East Primary School is a rural school located on the Werribee plain about 15 km south of Bacchus Marsh. The township of Balliang East consists of a public hall and the school. The surrounding properties are generally small 12-15 acre blocks. There are also several large working farms in the area which are mainly crop and sheep farms.

The school was established in 1913. Currently we cater for children from Balliang East, Rowsley, Bacchus Marsh, Wyndham Vale, Hoppers Crossing, Werribee, Melton and Corio. Enrolments have been as low as 6 and as high as 54 over the school's 108 year history.

The staffing profile has remained fairly stable. The current EFT of 11.70 is made up of the Principal, 7 teachers, 5 Integration Aides and a Business Manager.

The school has 4 operating classrooms, a specialist classroom, a Multi-Purpose Room and the original classroom which is currently being used as the MARC Van store room. There is a basketball court, large oval and shaded playground.

We use our small size to advantage by having multi-age classes. The students are grouped according to ability rather than grade level, in Literacy and Maths. This allows the staff to cater for individual needs as well as develop each student's special interests and strengths.

Our Specialist Programs are run by the classroom teachers and are based on each staff member's area of expertise. Each Specialist class is taught to all students across the P-6 levels by that specific teacher.

Our school has a strong interest in dance and music. Each year our students participate in the North West Region's School of Rock event. Due to its success and our children's enthusiasm, we have developed our own version of this, known as Moorabool Kids Day Out. Schools from our MCG Network attend the event, which is held at the Bacchus Marsh Hall. The event, which is opened by the Mayor, is organised entirely by the Balliang East staff and is in its 7th year of operation.

The students are placed in Social Teams when they enrol at the school and remain in this group throughout their time at the school. These teams are made up of students across the Prep to 6 classes. The students earn points towards their team and a tally is kept throughout the year, encouraging the students to work together.

We provide opportunities for our students to develop leadership skills. Students in Grade 6 are eligible to be recognised as School Captain. All Grade 6 students become members of Junior School Council. They are asked to contribute to fundraising ideas and extra-curricular activities.

The school aims to instil positive values and attitudes in our students. We have developed a whole school eSmart Policy which encourages cyber safety and discourages bullying across all grade levels. We have a Primary Welfare Officer whose role is to provide support to PSD and 'at risk' students and their parents. We have included the Respectful Relationships Program as an important part of our curriculum.

We regularly monitor student attendance and constantly remind the students of the benefits of attending school. We regularly update our Specialist Programs and include activities which students enjoy participating in.

The school has a well-developed technology infrastructure with a stable curriculum network for student use, supported by colour printers, wireless internet, access to cameras, video and online learning. The school has iPads, four interactive whiteboards and a Video Conferencing Unit. Each year we purchase new laptops to ensure we have enough 1:1 devices across all levels. The Grade 4/5/6 students also have the opportunity to lease a laptop over 3 years.

The school provides many opportunities for parents and the local community to be involved in school activities such as classroom helpers, Pink Stumps, Special Person's Day, excursions, art and craft, special food days, library assistance, gardening, helping around the school grounds and social events. We have a strong, committed group of parents on both our School Council and Parent's Association.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our school values the universal aspects of education:

- That all children can learn.
- That schooling is more than academic development, but also includes growth of children's social, creative, physical and moral development.
- That literacy and numeracy skills are critical for development as a life-long learner.
- That schooling is a partnership between parents and teachers.
- That the diversity of skills, interests, abilities and experiences of our children, staff and community members is to be valued.

However, in our place as a small rural school catering for particular communities we have our own particular values:

- **Friendliness** – To make people feel welcome and part of our school community.

- **Integrity** – Showing good character by having strong morals, honesty and sincerity.
- **Respect** – Admiring someone for their abilities, qualities and achievements.
- **Commitment** – Determination to keep trying. Don't give up.
- **Honesty** – Speaking the truth. Giving an honest reply.

At Balliang East Primary School, our purpose is to provide key educational experiences to the children from the local community to enable them to master the skills required to become confident, competent learners.

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment where everybody feels valued.

We support and encourage all students to reach their best academically, socially and emotionally.

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Balliang East 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*
- *deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are exposed to subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Balliang East Primary School use 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*
- *teachers at Balliang East 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 Junior School Council and other forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through Social Teams, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator 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*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, 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.*
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Targeted

- *each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, 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*
- *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, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be 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

Balliang East 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 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*
 - *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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family*
- *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*
 - *with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

4. Identifying students in need of support

Balliang East Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. We 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*

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 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:

- 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 the Principal. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and 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 Discipline Plan, Behaviour Policy and Hands Off Policy.

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

- *Using the school's 'Stay On The Green' system as a visual reminder which includes warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate and is followed by 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 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>

Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. 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 Balliang East Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

7. Engaging with families

Balliang East 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
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- 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

Balliang East 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
- SOCS

Balliang East 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 transition and 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
- Discipline Plan
- Hands Off Policy

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated and approved by Council on 25th July, 2022 and is scheduled for review in June, 2025