



# Strathmerton Primary

## 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.

Strathmerton Primary 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

Strathmerton is situated near the Murray River on the Murray Valley Highway approximately 15km from Cobram and 23km from Numurkah. It is part of an expansive dairying district and tourist area. Enrolments at the school come from the township itself as well from the outlying district. Buses transport students from as far away as Bearii in the west and Yarroweyah in the east.

The school first opened in 1876 and has occupied four sites since then. The present building opened in 1984 and is of a modern brick construction consisting of five well equipped classrooms, a large well stocked library, a fully equipped staff and administration area and a spacious multi-purpose hall. There is also an additional portable classroom that is used for specialist groups and a 'Bristol' building currently used as an art room. Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and projector and a bank of desktop computers. Senior classes also have access to laptops and i-pads.

The grounds are well maintained with attractive garden beds, shaded grassed areas, a synthetic multi-purpose play area, basketball court, two large soft fall play areas with a range of interactive play stations, and a combination of weather shelters and shade sails. The school is also fortunate to have the local swimming pool right next door.

The school has a current enrolment of around 100 students, with a principal, five full-time teaching staff, part time Art, Music, Auslan, PE and Intervention support teachers, two part-time Education Support staff and a full-time office manager.

The school is supported by an active School Council and the Parents and the Friends Association does a great job of raising much needed funds to assist with the purchase of additional resources.

The school offers a comprehensive curriculum program in the following learning domains: Physical, Personal and Social Learning (Health and Physical Education, Personal Learning, Interpersonal Development, Civics and Citizenship) Discipline Based Learning (Arts, Humanities, Mathematics, English, Science) and Interdisciplinary Learning (Communication, Design, Creativity and Technology, ICT, Thinking). There is a very strong focus on Literacy and Numeracy at the school, with students timetabled for one hour Numeracy and two hour Literacy sessions each day. In addition, ES staff offer extra support to the students with special learning needs. Reading Recovery is also provided to those Year One students who are most at risk.

Strathmerton Primary is also a member of a network of local rural schools that combine to provide sporting and cultural opportunities for all the children throughout the year. The school plans extra curricula activities regularly, such as the swimming program, Sporting Schools program, school camps, excursions and family involvement days.

The school has the School Wide Positive Behaviour Strategy in place, with the values of **Support** each other, **Try your best**, **Act** safely and **Respect** (Strathy **STARS**).

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

*'The core purpose of this school is to provide a rigorous, inclusive learning environment that challenges and engages young people to grow as passionate learners. The school seeks to develop motivated, creative and independent learners who demonstrate strong social values and whose leadership, resilience and self-esteem is evident when interacting with the community.'*

## 3. Engagement strategies

*Strathmerton Primary has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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*
- *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 the Victorian Curriculum across the school, with a particular focus on Literacy and Numeracy instruction.*
- *teachers at Strathmerton Primary 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 Strathmerton 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 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 Student Representative Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Well-Being Coordinator and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, 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 incorporate the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support program into our teaching practices across the school with our staff and students. This program sets expectations of behaviour in different environments, such as the classroom, playground and camps/excursions, and students are rewarded for demonstrating those positive expectations.*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issues of specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs*

### Targeted

- *connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer*
- *all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *SSSO Social Workers 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, see:*  
*<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>*
- *Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan*
- *Program for Students with Disabilities*
- *referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services*
- *referral to ChildFirst, Headspace*

*Strathmerton Primary 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*

*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 Plans 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*

- *of Koorie background*
- *and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

#### 4. Identifying students in need of support

*Strathmerton Primary is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The School improvement Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Strathmerton primary 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 a member of the school leadership team.

#### 6. Student behavioural expectations

*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 Strathmerton Primary School's Bullying policy.*

*When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Strathmerton Primary 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 Well-Being Coordinator or principal*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*
- *behaviour reviews*
- *suspension*
- *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 our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

## **7. Engaging with families**

Strathmerton Primary 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
- 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
- organising regular opportunities for parents/carers to participate in the life of the school
- 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

Strathmerton Primary 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
- SOCS

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

*Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards.*

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on May, 2022 and is scheduled for review in May, 2024.