



Castlemaine Primary School

Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Castlemaine Primary School on 03 5472 1452 or castlemaine.ps@education.vic.gov.au

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 responsible student behaviour
- c) support available to students and families
- d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Castlemaine Primary School is a RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, LEARNING COMMUNITY, 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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
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1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Castlemaine Primary School is a RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, LEARNING COMMUNITY, committed to ensuring all students have the opportunity to develop their academic, artistic, physical and social skills in a safe and caring environment. We encourage our students to strive for excellence and foster a commitment to continuous learning. We believe these qualities will equip students with the necessary tools to enable them to reach their full potential and achieve their goals in an ever-changing society.

2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Castlemaine Primary School's core purpose is to deliver the best possible learning outcomes for all children through the provision of common understandings within our school, quality curriculum and recognition of the individual needs of children. To achieve this, our school utilises the following strategies: Core SWPBS (School Wide Positive Behaviour Support) values at Castlemaine Primary School that reflect a common understanding within our School Community are:

- Respectful
- Responsible
- Learning and
- Community.

The school shares high expectations with the whole community and accept that student well-being is everyone's responsibility. We have a belief that students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe and when there is a positive school culture to support them. This interdependent relationship between student wellbeing and student learning is fundamental to our students' positive and successful engagement with their education. Our positive school culture ensures that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage in their learning. We acknowledge that when a child receives positive recognition of their behaviour and achievements, it not only provides them with confidence, but also a feeling of self-worth. Programs and strategies being implemented by Castlemaine Primary School to promote student engagement, high attendance and positive behaviours are:

Curriculum

- Specialist areas: LOTE (French), Art and Performing Arts (Choir, Ensemble, Marimba Club, Drama, Ukulele, Private Music Tutoring, School Concert, Castlemaine State Festival performances, Cultural Performances)
- Physical education program including: class PE sessions, swimming programs, Cross Country, Jump Rope For Heart, AFL 9s, Cricket, Golf, Interschool and Division competitions
- Camps, whole school and local excursions involving all year levels
- ICT resourcing in all classrooms (high ratio of iPad and netbook devices to student numbers), Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms
- Education support staff
- Cross age activities – Science days, Sports afternoons, Buddy Program
- Access to the Victorian High Ability Program
- Tutor Program

Student leadership programs:

- Buddy Program
- SRC

Positive Behaviour Support

- Student of the Week Value Award
- Positive acknowledgment system (Gotcha)
- Classroom and individual rewards systems
- Buddy Program
- Cross age activities (whole school sport, Buddy sessions, Science days)
- e-Smart
- The Resilience Project
- Berry Street Education Model
- Smiling Mind
- Lunchtime Clubs

Through the attitudes to school survey, staff survey and parent opinion survey, Castlemaine Primary School has direct feedback on expectations and understandings of all members of the community and uses this feedback to fine tune policy and process on an ongoing basis.

3. WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Castlemaine 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 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
- teachers at Castlemaine Primary School use the Gradual Release of Responsibility 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 Castlemaine 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
- The 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 Student Representative Council and other forums including year Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Leading Teacher and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through sports afternoons, science days and peer support programs (E.g. Buddies)
- all students are welcome to speak to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, class teacher, Leading Teacher and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. The school is proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- Castlemaine Primary School engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - The Resilience Project
 - Berry Street
 - eSmart
 - Smiling Mind
 - Kids Helpline
- programs, incursions and excursions are developed to address specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, recess and lunchtime activities, lunchtime clubs)
- buddy programs, peer support 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

- Indigenous 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 – refer to our **Aboriginal Learning Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan** for further information
- Castlemaine Primary School provides a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQ+ Student Support
- 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, having an Individual Education Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being 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 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

Castlemaine 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 the student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school through regular [Student Support Group](#) meetings
- developing an [Individual Education Plans](#) and/or a [Behaviour Support Plan](#) or Safety Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom environment
- using supports offered through the Department's [Mental health toolkit](#)
- liaising with staff from [LOOKOUT](#) to ensure the needs of students in OOHC are being fully supported
- referring the student for funding support under the Disability Inclusion Profile (previously the [Program for Students with Disabilities](#))
- referring the student to school-based wellbeing supports:
 - [Student Support Services](#)
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader
 - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, [headspace](#), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or Child First
 - School re-engagement programs

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 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
 - who identify as Indigenous
 - or with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Castlemaine Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team, Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader and the Disability Inclusion Coordinator, play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Castlemaine 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 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
- referral advice from SSSO staff (Speech pathologist, psychologist, visiting teachers)
- advice from external supports (Play Therapists, Occupational Therapist, etc.)

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

6. STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's 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 Bullying Prevention Policy.

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

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- classroom consequences e.g. allocated seating or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- 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>

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 Castlemaine 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 circumstance at our school.

7. ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Castlemaine 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. The school aims to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

Castlemaine Primary School works hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all families have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website

- 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 and;
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. EVALUATION

Castlemaine 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
- student wellbeing records
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Castlemaine 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

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	August 2023
Consultation	School Council & SRC
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2025