Arthurs Creek Primary School

Be Respectful • Be Resilient • Be Responsible

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact 9714 8204.

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.

Arthurs Creek 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.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Arthurs Creek Primary School was established in 1876 and is located approximately 40 kilometres north of Melbourne. We have approximately 24 students enrolled from Foundation to Year 6 and fourteen school staff members including part time staff. Our school grounds back onto expansive farmland, and we are surrounded by a supportive community. Students that attend our school live both locally or are driven from the surrounding areas and townships or nearby suburbs. Arthurs Creek Primary School has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local community services.

School values, philosophy and vision

Arthurs Creek Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of Be Responsible, Be Resilient and Be Respectful at every opportunity.
Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: https://www.acps.vic.edu.au

Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Arthurs Creek 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 (cohort specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below.

Universal
- Maintain 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.
- Create a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued.
- Welcome all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning.
- Analyse and respond 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 able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- Ensure teachers 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.
- Ensure teachers 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.
- Incorporate our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy into our curriculum and promote it to students, staff and parents/carers so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community.
- Plan transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling.
- Acknowledge positive behaviour and student achievement 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.
- Provide students with the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the student representative council and other students forums.
- Encourage students to speak with their teachers and principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through buddy programs, school plays, sporting events, music programs and peer support programs.
- Encourage students to self-refer to the principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind.
- Provide an 'open door' policy where students can self-refer to staff if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind.
- Engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Bully Stoppers
  - Safe Schools
  - E-Smart
  - Classroom learning plans
  - Life education.

- Engage in programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs).
- Provide opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities).
- Provide opportunities for students with additional needs, be they related to age, disability, culture, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation, to participate in events and activities that celebrate or bring awareness to their identity.
- Ensure staff are trained to support students with additional needs related to the age, disability, culture, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation of students.
- Provide measures 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

- Ensure teachers monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their class and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support.
- Support Koorie students to engage fully in their education, through creating a culturally inclusive learning environment, teaching a learning program that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and providing access to further Department programs and resources.
- Provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTQI+ and follow the Department's policy to provide them with support.
- Support students in out-of-home care in accordance with the Department's policy on supporting students in out-of-home care including being appointed a learning mentor, having an individual learning plan and a student support group (ssg) and being referred to student support services for an educational needs assessment.
- Support students with a disability 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.
- Incorporate health promotion and social skills development in the learning program in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year.
- Apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.
- Support students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and department policy and guidelines at international student program.
- Incorporation of differentiation, student voice, support and feedback in learning to encourage student engagement in the school's curriculum.
- Provide programs and supports to develop resilience and cultivate strategies to give all opportunities their personal best.
- Develop a teaching and learning program that encourages prosocial behaviours towards others and co-operative work skills.
- Develop team planning practices that ensure individual learning needs are catered for within the teaching and learning program.

Individual

- Build constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances.
- Meet with a student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school.
- Develop an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan.
- Consider if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up.
- Refer the family 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) and re-engagement programs such as Navigator.
- Respond sensitively to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing.
- Collaborate, 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.
- Monitor individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family.
- Engage with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers.
- Run regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out-of-Home Care

o with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

o who are 18 months or more below the curriculum standard expected for a child at their age.

2. Identifying students in need of support

Arthurs Creek Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Arthurs Creek 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
- self-referrals or referrals from peers.

3. 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, 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.

Student behavioural expectations
Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct. The school will support and promote positive behaviour. This is reinforced by the statement; **At Arthurs Creek Primary School we want you to be friendly, we want you to learn and we want you to have fun**.

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, Arthurs Creek 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 implement 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
- 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

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 Arthurs Creek 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.

4. Engaging with families

Arthurs Creek 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, 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.

5. Evaluation

Arthurs Creek 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.

Arthurs Creek 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
- Included in staff induction processes
- Available publicly on our school's website
- 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
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	27th February 2025
Consultation	The following groups were consulted on the contents of this policy: Staff – 25th February 2025 Parents – 26th February 2025 Students – 27th February 2025
Approved by	Principal – Andrew Lamers
Next scheduled review date	On or before the 27th of February 2027