

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.

Buninyong 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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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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1. School profile

Established in the 1870's, Buninyong Primary School is a multi-campus school with sites at Buninyong and Scotsburn. In 2025 there are 570 students in total with 533 enrolled at the Buninyong Campus and 37 at the Scotsburn Campus. The school has 72 staff members across our two campuses, including principal class, learning specialist, teachers, wellbeing, education support and administration staff. Because of the size difference, the campuses are quite different, however the campuses work as one to provide a consistent classroom experience, regardless of year level or campus.

The physical environment at Buninyong Primary School encompasses:

- Extensive, well-maintained grounds, with a focus on providing students with a range of play options.
- A full-sized gym, music room, art room and library; as well as dedicated Japanese room, STEM room and STEM workshop.
- Across the school, we utilise a range of technology, including iPads, laptops and 3D printers, to name a few.

At Buninyong Primary School we always seek to place the child at the centre. All staff value the individual child, recognising the strengths and diversity each brings to their learning. We seek to develop independent and motivated lifelong learners who are in touch with their learning and are equipped for the 21st century. Our staff are committed to developing their skills in order to do the best we can for each and every child. Teamwork is highly valued as we seek to learn from and support each other.

Our school values are Respect, Responsibility and Kindness, which guide our work. We model and demonstrate:

- Respect - by valuing ourselves, others and the environment;
- Responsibility - by taking ownership of our actions and making wise choices, and by knowing how to be safe and take care of things;
- Kind - by looking after and looking out for everyone and by being inclusive of all.

Our home school partnership, which has developed over many years, is highly valued. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning, which comes in a variety of forms. Typically, we have experienced a high level of parental support and involvement, with large numbers of parents involved with Parent Teacher Interviews, the Celebration of Learning Event, the school concert and school fete, Energy Breakthrough, camps (including the trip to Japan) and excursions, to name a few.

The school offers every student an inclusive, comprehensive curriculum based on the Victorian Curriculum, with documented scope and sequence materials in all key learning areas, including the delivery of specialist programs in the Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education, Japanese and STEM.

Students are encouraged to pursue personal interests and challenge themselves through a wide range of extracurricular activities. Including our scholarship programs for students in grades 4-6 (Photography, Visual Arts, Master Chef & Music), along with a STEM extension program.

Leadership opportunities for students in senior year levels continues to be a feature of Buninyong PS.

The school has a close connection with the local community and enjoys the involvement of community organisations. This includes the regular attendance of Members of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens, who help with vegetable growing and cooking sessions. The school runs an Outside of School Hours Program (including Before School Care and Vacation Care), which continues to be very popular.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Buninyong 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 being Respectful, Responsible & Kind at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is individually we strive, together we learn, daring to create our future. We also want to fully equip our students to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <http://www.buninyongps.vic.edu.au>

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Buninyong 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 including intervention and extension programs, to ensure that students are able to access supports to ensure their growth and passion in various subjects maintains strong
- teachers at Buninyong 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 Buninyong 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 VOTS (Voice of the Students) program and other forums including year group meetings and focus groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school concerts, athletics, music programs and peer support programs, such as reading with younger students and ‘Buddies’.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to Year Level Leaders, Assistant Principals 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
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. program)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- 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

- each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitors 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 – refer to our Koorie Champions Framework for further information.
- all students are encouraged to undertake goal setting as part of their self-management and learning path development
- 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 Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through utilising the Department of Education “English as an additional language EAL” resources.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through utilising the Department of Education “supporting students from refugee backgrounds” resources.
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#) . This includes utilising resources from safe schools and recognising important events such as Pride month and IDAHOBIT Day.
- 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
- Buninyong Primary School assists students to prepare for secondary school transition through a tailored program of events and learning activities
- 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

Buninyong 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 Plans, Behaviour Support Plans and/or Safety Plans
- 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 / Orange Door

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
- 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
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Buninyong 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. Buninyong 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

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, 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, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Buninyong Primary School's Bullying Prevention policy.

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, Buninyong 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.

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 Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- behaviour support and intervention programs
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular 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 Buninyong 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

Buninyong 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.

Evaluation

Buninyong 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. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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

Buninyong 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 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
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Review Cycle

This policy was last updated on 14th August, 2023 and is scheduled for review in August, 2025.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2025
Consultation	Wellbeing team August 2025 School council August 2025
Approved by	Principal – Bernie Conlan
Next scheduled review date	August 2027 note that the mandatory review cycle for this policy is 2 years