BLACKBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL
Est. 1889

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

October 2026

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.

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;

Blackburn Primary School (BPS) 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.

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
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Policy

School Profile

Founded in 1889, Blackburn Primary School is located about 25 kilometres to the east of the city of Melbourne. In addition to the original schoolhouse, the school is accommodated in a complex of modern and older–style classrooms with a full–sized basketball stadium and purpose–built facilities for Visual Arts and Music. The school buildings are set in landscaped gardens with a grassed oval with a 250m running track, tennis courts, small games areas, adventure playgrounds and quiet areas for more passive pursuits. A sustainability garden provides opportunities for horticulture, science and cooking activities.

The school offers its students a comprehensive curriculum based on the Victorian Curriculum. In addition to the core subject areas of English and Mathematics the school provided specialist tuition in Music, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Science, Mandarin Chinese as well as EAL, MiniLIT and the VHAP program for high achieving students. An integrated studies program covered learning in other areas of the curriculum such as Creative and Critical Thinking, STEM and Digital Technologies and the Humanities. Each classroom is equipped with technology to aid learning advancement and inclusivity.

The curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of co–curricular activities including instrumental tuition, school band, choir, Chinese dance, a multi-age Buddy program, extended student leadership opportunities including a Junior School Council, camps, excursions and in–school workshops and performances. A feature of the school is its sister–school relationship with a school in Nanjing, China. For each of the previous eight years the school organised an exchange program with this school and since 2021 is able to maintain this as a virtual relationship.

The school's enrolment has been relatively stable over recent years. The overall socio–economic status of the school community was rated as low, referencing the high socio-economic status of the school. There are 31 percent of English as Additional Language (EAL) students. BPS is proud of its diversity and inclusive school community.

BPS values partnerships between students, staff, parents and the local community. BPS has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from local shops and community services.

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The Foundation/Grade 6 Buddy program allows new Foundation students to connect with older students in the school and fosters a deep sense of care, familiarity and support. Our School Wellbeing Officer provides excellent support to students and their families and offers a unique counselling service to students requiring additional well being care. The Wellbeing-Officer also offers a Hobby Club program each week which allows students opportunities to connect with each other. The school also offers a Kids Hope youth mentoring program. Key staff have been trained in the Peaceful Kids and Seasons for Growth programs to support our students. The introduction of the Smiling Minds has also been of huge support to our students and teachers and we have continued that into 2026. Through our connectedness to the local supports via the men's shed the school has been able to introduce a breakfast club one morning a week which is heavily attended.

Staff continue to work with the community to provide a consistent approach to managing student behaviour and dealing with incidents of bullying and harassment. Student average attendance at all year levels was well above the median for all Victorian Government schools and better than similar schools. One of the school values is Celebrating Diversity which highlights the importance of being inclusive and celebrating all of our unique qualities. The school holds many community cultural celebrations including Harmony Day and week, A Cultural Festival (welcome picnic) and curriculum based activities which promote inclusiveness.

The school offers a multi-tiered system of support for all students to assist with furthering wellbeing and promote a healthy mindset and mental health initiatives for students. The school offers a huge number of Tiered supports for students in the area of wellbeing. As well as a school well-being officer, the school offers a regular school psychologist once a week, a student counsellor once a week, and a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader. The school Wellbeing Leader oversees curriculum delivery in the area of wellbeing and oversees the Positive behaviour support model that is documented in every classroom.

The school offers a Disability Inclusion team which seeks funding for students who have disability. Students who are funded for a disability have an assigned Integration Aide, a program that is overseen by the Assistant Principal, Disability Inclusion Leader and Education Support Personnel. As well as this, the school offers accommodations for all students who have a documented disability or those needing additional support. All students who require additional support or extension, have a First Nations background, are funded for additional support or are in Out of Home Care all receive regular documented Individual Education Plans. Our school has two Designated Teachers who oversee the LOOKOUT program which co-ordinates accommodations and care for any OOHC students.

A Marrung Lead has been in place since 2024 and the school has a Reconciliation Plan in place. BPS strongly celebrates and commemorates all key dates to do with our Indigenous Peoples including Sorry Day and Reconciliation week with whole school activities but also with a strong cultural link in the teaching of our curriculum at every single year level.

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The school believes student wellbeing is enhanced by strong connections with our students and their families. To this end, all staff are on duty and available to our community every day after school. This has had a positive impact on relationships and is highly valued by the community.

The school communicates with parents and carers via a fortnightly online newsletter, Compass, the school website and social media. These platforms provide parents and the community with up-to-date information about our school, and are used to encourage participation in school activities and events.

Families are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities including weekly assemblies, shared reading, fundraising, cultural celebrations, sport days and the school's annual open night.

School Values and Vision

At BPS we nurture students to believe in themselves as learners who persevere through challenge. Our students graduate with kind, compassionate hearts, ready to be positive changemakers in our community and world. BPS graduates understand that our school values are fundamental human values. They leave our school as curious, confident, life-long, open-minded learners.

As educators we respect the powerful impact we have on our students' learning. We feel a sense of belonging and community towards one another and our school. We teach in a way that exemplifies best practice with a commitment to continuous self and student learning. We accept responsibility for upholding our collective professional values.

As a school community of learners we:

- believe in providing the opportunity for all to strive to be their personal best in learning.
- respect and celebrate the diversity of all cultures, identities and abilities in our community
- provide opportunities for student voice, choice, action and encourage our students to be confident and successful learners.
- work together to foster a love of learning to produce students who are independent, confident and engaged problem solvers with high self-worth.
- are positive about the school experience.

BPS's values are integral to our work and are the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values at every opportunity. Our core values are:

- Respect;
- Co-operation;
- Celebrate diversity;
- Manners and respect;
- Fairness and honesty; and
- Friendship.

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Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

BPS 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) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal Strategies – Tier 1 Supports

- maintaining high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers;
- assistance from individual staff in creating a soft start to school for a short period of time to help re-engagement for students who find it difficult to acclimatise and transition to the classroom;
- 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;
- supervision in the school yard by school staff, before and after school as well as during recess and lunchtimes to ensure safety and wellbeing of all students;
- 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, wellbeing surveys;
- delivering specialist subjects to allow students to broaden their interests, strengths and aspirations;
- teachers at BPS 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 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 particularly related to our school values and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents;
- monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level;
- students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council, student leadership, and in classroom forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns;
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through athletics, cross country and the buddy program;
- all students are welcome to approach a member of the teaching staff, School Wellbeing Officer, Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal or 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 based positive behaviour expectations with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Smiling Mind
    - Cyber Safety Project
    - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour;
- professional learning for staff centered around wellbeing, mental health for students, addressing individual wellbeing needs for students and in the classroom;
- weekly peer mediation at lunch time run by Grade 5 students including a day of training at the beginning of the year for the students and teachers involved;
- Blackburn Primary School Friendship seat – Daminon-Inon Willim;
- a weekly commitment to Breakfast Club that promotes engagement through connection;
- opportunities for student inclusion including weekly grade 3-4 sport, grade 5-6 sport, grade 5- 6 interschool sport, running club, hobby club and recess/lunchtime activities; BPS band program, whole school special days that have a focus on positive inclusion;
- buddy program between grade 6 and foundation students;
- documented Tier 1 supports for student wellbeing.

Individual Strategies – Tier 2 and 3 Supports

Our targeted strategies to address particular groups of students or concerns in certain age groups or friendship circles include:

- Student Support Group meetings;
- Individual Learning Plan, Wellbeing Plan, Student Safety Plan and Behaviour Support Plan when required;
- Disability Inclusion Program for students identified with disability needs;
- referral to Student Support Services for students requiring individualised support;
- referral to external community programs such as ChildFirst, Headspace, Kids Hope Line and other programs that are tailored to individual wellbeing;
- LOOKOUT services for Out of Home Care services;
- referral to School Wellbeing Officer;
- referral to Kids Hope Mentoring;
- meaningful strategies implemented with support from the Disability Inclusion officer or Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader;
- referral to internal psychology support or on site student counselling services;
- where students have NDIS support, an application for on site therapy is advised and granted on a case by case basis;
- referral to private psychology support, social services or other community services outside of the school;
- 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 such as the School Wellbeing Officer; or
    - appropriate external supports such as council based family services, other allied health professionals, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First.

BPS 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;
- providing a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and following the Department of Education (the department) policy on LGBTIQA+ Student Support [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQA+ students]
- supporting all 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 ;
- supporting students with a disability 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;
- ensuring wellbeing and health staff 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 applying a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma;
- year level coordinator/mental health and wellbeing leader; a senior teacher responsible for their year group, who monitors the health and wellbeing of the students in that year and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support;
- supporting our English as a second language students through our EAL program and supporting all cultural and linguistically diverse student to feel safe and included in our school including through providing interpretation services, and targeted classroom support

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; and monitoring individual student attendance and working with their family to support attendance.
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing 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
    - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Identifying students in need of support

BPS 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 to help identify students in need of support and to enhance student wellbeing. BPS 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;
- Student Support Groups and Individual Education Plans; and
- annual Nationally Consistent Collection of Data.

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 and School Philosophy 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:

- understand and uphold the school values;
- always strive for excellence in learning;
- participate fully in their educational program;
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community; and
- respect the right of others to learn.

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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 staff. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our values. Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy/Student Code of Conduct. Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination is not tolerated and will be managed to be consistent with BPS's Bullying and Harassment policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, BPS will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement Guidelines. 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:

- application of BPS's Supportive Classrooms 5Rs approach;
- 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;
- restorative practices;
- behaviour support and intervention meetings;
- suspension; and

- 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:

- Suspensions Policy
- Expulsions Policy
- Restraint and 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.

The principal of Blackburn 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.

Engaging with families

BPS 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 relevant school policies, available on our school website;
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents/carers 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;
- co-ordinating resources and services from the community for families;
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

Evaluation

BPS 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
- Student Online Case System

Further Information and Resources

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school values and the following school policies:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

BPS also regularly monitors 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.

The following department policies and resources are relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Attendance
- Behaviour - Students
- Child Safe Standards
- Expulsions
- Koorie Education
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Student Engagement
- Students with Disability
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Suspensions

Communication

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This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

The following websites and resources provide useful information about student wellbeing:

- Kids Helpline
- Student Wellbeing Hub

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	October 2026
Consultation	October 2026
Approved by	School Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2028