



Pascoe Vale North Primary School

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Pascoe Vale North Primary School on 03 9354 3343 or pascoe.vale.north.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 positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Pascoe Vale North 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

Pascoe Vale North Primary School is located in the city of Merribek, Melbourne and was established in 1956. The school buildings comprise of

- one building which houses five classrooms and small group learning spaces
- a main building which contains 7 classrooms, music room, art room, STEM room, conference room, small group learning spaces and the school library. Attached to this building is an inbuilt multi-purpose room and the Out of Hours School Care space.
- 8 semi-attached portable classrooms
- The administration building which houses the reception, leadership offices, first aid room and staff facilities.

The school grounds include an outdoor playground with two adventure play areas, a large sand-pit, external basketball courts, five bat-tennis courts, a naturally grassed sports oval, an outdoor performing arts stage, a vegetable garden area, garden spaces and a student run canteen.

As of 2023, the school's current enrolment is approximately 410 students in Prep through to Grade 6, across 18 classrooms. Our learning areas are structured with Prep, Year 1 and Year 2 grades and composite year levels across our 3/4 and 5/6 grades. Our extra-curricular learning includes dedicated library time and our students enjoy weekly STEM, Art, Music, Auslan and Sport lessons. Our 5/6 students participate in a rich interschool sports program and students from all year levels have access to additional sporting experiences such as junior and senior school athletics days and sport incursion programs.

Pascoe Vale North Primary School participates in a number of different additional learning programs, celebrations or observances that help enrich our students' learning.

Our school celebrates its cultural diversity as one of our strengths, with approximately 18% of our families speaking a language other than English at home. As of 2023, we have 7 families within our school community who are Indigenous. Our school integrates the learning and celebration of indigenous culture throughout our regular curriculum, and we work alongside our Koorie Education Support Officer (KESO) to support our students, teachers and families. Student additional needs, whether involving intervention or extension are supported by a range of programs. We have a dedicated Wellbeing and Engagement Leader and a Programs for Students with Disabilities Coordinator who help support teaching staff to meet the various needs of our students.

Wellbeing and Learning are deemed equally as important in our school. We have a multi-faceted approach to developing the social, emotional and wellbeing needs of our students. Pascoe Vale North Primary has partnered with The Resilience Project as our primary wellbeing program. We also engage with the Smiling Minds (Meditation and Mindfulness Program) and the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Program to further support the wellbeing needs and development of our students.

Our school has an 'open door policy' that typifies the notion that 'it takes a village to raise a child'. We emphasise open communication as a means for fostering strong partnerships between home and school. We encourage the integration of external support services on-site at our school. We advocate for family or school engaged specialists to attend on-site, such as Speech Pathologists, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists in addition to a variety of Department Support Service Staff.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Pascoe Vale North Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and it can be located on the school's website.

Vision

Pascoe Vale North Primary school's vision is to see everyone happy to be at school and learning, proud of what we achieve, and caring for and respecting all members of our diverse community.

Philosophy

Our philosophy is underpinned by the belief that all students can learn and that our strategic actions as a school can make a difference.

Values

At Pascoe Vale North Primary School, our values are part of our everyday behaviours and attitudes which are 'lived' by all staff, students and families and they underpin our actions and provide direction in our decision-making.

Our school values consist of:

Excellence in Learning

This means – having high standards, always being ready to learn new things, trying our best in EVERY area of school life and being proud of what we achieve.

A Safe, Caring Environment

This means – looking after our buildings and grounds, making sure everyone is happy to come to school and valuing EVERY member of our community.

Community

This means – wanting to be a member of Pascoe Vale North PS, having open and honest relationships between parents, teachers and students, behaving only in ways that are best for the school, and being accepting of others.

Responsibility

This means – being an excellent role model for others at PVNPS, always having a positive attitude, wearing our uniform with pride, and remembering that the school belongs to ALL of us.

Respect

This means – using our very best manners at all times, being loyal to our school and listening to everyone's point of view.

We value high expectations and authentic relationships which enables learning, confidence, curiosity and challenges to flourish.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Pascoe Vale North 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 (group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

Through the following universal supports/strategies, we aim to proactively set up our school, classrooms and staff to develop and maintain positive wellbeing and engagement behaviours:

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- a school-wide philosophy of responding to behaviour that emphasises coaching students through their mistakes and learning appropriate social/emotional skills necessary to help prevent undesirable behaviours from reoccurring
- consistent school-wide integration of expected positive behaviours into different aspects of learning
- 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 Pascoe Vale North Primary School use Evidence Based instructional frameworks to ensure consistent teaching practices are embedded across the school.
- teachers at Pascoe Vale North 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 Junior School Council (JSC) and other forums including year group meetings, student surveys and student focus groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, year level leader, Assistant Principal, Principal and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leader whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through student-run lunch clubs, teacher run extra-curricular programs, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leader, Assistant Principal 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 wellbeing and behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - The Resilience Project
 - Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships
 - Smiling Minds
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. interschool sports teams, student-run lunch clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- Senior student and early years 'student buddy' 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

At Pascoe Vale North Primary School, it is the responsibility of all classroom teachers and the Professional Learning Community Leader (year level coordinator) who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their different learning cohorts, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support. Concerns relating to additional support are addressed with the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leader and/or the Leadership Team.

Targeted supports for students with additional wellbeing and behavioural needs may include:

- 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.
- Koorie Cultural Learning/Social groups are run with our indigenous student cohort, in conjunction with our KESO (Koorie Education Support Officer)
- our English as a second language students are supported through the use of the Victorian EAL Curriculum and continuum to support teachers to effectively plan and differentiate the learning to ensure our and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- EAL students requiring additional support are involved in regular language experience groups

- 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 \[insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students\]](#)
- 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 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
- all relevant staff undertake 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
- students with similar social/emotional/wellbeing needs may be involved in social groups or language experience groups./

[Individual](#)

At Pascoe Vale North Primary School, we recognise that there are students whose wellbeing or behavioural needs may require specialised/individual supports.

Pascoe Vale North Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- **Individual Education Plans** - these plans aim to build on the strengths of students whose additional needs may require individualised goal setting and monitoring. Further information on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) can be found at [Individual Education Plans](#)
- **Student Support Groups** - regular collaborative meetings between teachers, coordinators, parents and students (where appropriate) to jointly plan and evaluate individual goals, strategies and resources to support the child's needs. These groups are run for students with a disability, in Out of Home Care or with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring. Further information on Student Support Groups (SSGs) can be found at [Student Support Groups](#)
- **Behaviour Support Plans** - for students exhibiting challenging behaviours that are deemed outside of the reasonable expectations or for students requiring additional wellbeing support. These plans aim to develop the understanding of the child's behavioural needs and plan for procedures/supports that will best support their success at school. Further information can be found at [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- **Student Support Services** - students who have significant additional needs may be referred to Student Support Services, a department team of social workers, psychologists and speech therapists who can assist with different levels of support and assessments for the child and supports for the teacher, school and family. Further information can be found at [Student Support Services](#)
- **Program for Students with Disabilities** - Students with severe additional needs may be referred to this program to potentially access funding support for a variety of needs (for example, severe behaviour disorder or severe language disorder). Further information can be found at [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- **Learning mentor** - For students placed in Out of Home Care (OOHC), they are placed with a learning mentor. This is a trusted staff member at school that the child has a positive relationship with. The learning mentor meets with the child regularly and will help maintain the student's positive engagement with their schooling
- **Mediation/Coaching** – some students with additional social emotional/behavioural skills may require support through one-to-one discussions to help better respond and learn from common challenges in the school environment. This can often be directed by the teacher and in certain circumstances may require referral to the school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leader
- **External Referrals** – certain students with additional wellbeing needs may be referred to the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leader who will liaise with families about those needs presenting at school.

Families may be connected with appropriate external supports such as youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services

- **Individual learning experiences** – some students with considerable learning/wellbeing needs may find it extremely challenging to maintain full days of learning in the regular classroom setting. At Pascoe Vale North Primary School, we understand that some students may require very specific changes to their learning spaces. An individual's adaptations may include small group or individual sessions in our Language Experience rooms, working in small, shared learning spaces or completing lessons or breaks in the outside areas.
- 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
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- constructing individualised reward systems for the child
- referring the student to the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leader, along with the Leadership Team to access school-based wellbeing supports

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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Pascoe Vale North Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Leadership Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Pascoe Vale North 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/parent referrals
- 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.

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

At Pascoe Vale North Primary School, we maintain high expectations of the learning and behavioural efforts of our students that are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and Philosophy. In conjunction with our overarching school values, our school-wide document - PVNPS' Positive Behaviour Expectations (PBE), outlines the every-day positive behaviours we expect of our students in the different learning environments.

At Pascoe Vale North Primary School, we have an approach to managing inappropriate student behaviour that aims to ultimately 'coach our students through the behaviour' with the intention of learning from their mistakes and developing the necessary social emotional skills required, whilst still addressing the rights and needs of the individual/s affected.

In addition to this, we aim to identify the necessary environmental or teaching changes that may need to occur in order to prevent such behaviour from reoccurring. We have a developed staged response to manage inappropriate behaviour that primarily involves positive redirection, coaching and de-escalation of inappropriate behaviours. We understand that there are times where inappropriate behaviours require further responses and classroom teachers may need to refer to the School Leadership Team for intervention and assistance with individualised support. 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 our Response to Negative Behaviour process and our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in significant breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Pascoe Vale North 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
- 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 School Leadership Team (Principal, Assistant Principal and/or Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leader)
- mediation sessions
- 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 Pascoe Vale North 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

Pascoe Vale North 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 and shared when necessary, through our newsletter and Compass (school communications app)
- 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 (where necessary) with curriculum-related activities
- involving families (where necessary) in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families (where required and appropriate)
- including families in Student Support Groups when required and developing individual plans for students
- encouraging family participation in parent-teacher conferences
- sharing of parenting/education resources for families to utilise through our newsletters and Compass
- maintaining an environment where families are made to feel welcome and that their voice and opinions are valued and encouraged by our staff

8. Evaluation

Pascoe Vale North 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 Attitudes to School survey
- Staff opinion survey
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent opinion survey
- case management notes for students at risk
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data

Pascoe Vale North Primary School will also regularly monitor available data 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
- Shared via our newsletter or Compass school communications app
- 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September, 2023
Consultation	This policy was provided to School Council for consultation on 16th October
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before October 2025