

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING 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.

Newport Lakes 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

Newport Lakes Primary School was officially opened on 1st April 1856 and celebrates its 166th year of the provision of education to the students of Newport in 2022. Part of the Hobson's Bay network of schools, it is the oldest continually operating government school in the Western Metropolitan Region. The school acknowledges the custodians of the land on which it sits, the Yalukit-Willam people of the Bunurong in the Kulin Nation.

Newport Lakes Primary School is a dynamic teaching and learning environment with a strong connection to the local community. The school has developed close ties to the local community and enjoys support from our local shops and community services. With strong community support, together with the growth in the number of young families in the Newport area, enrolments have significantly increased in recent times. The school has increased significantly in size from 140 children in 2008, to 398 in 2015. A total of 540 students are enrolled at this school in 2022. 10 percent or 52 students are EAL (English as an Additional Language) students and 3 students ATSI (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) students. 42% of our EAL students speak Arabic at home, 11% speak Polish and 7% speak Vietnamese. Of the 540 students at NLPS, 501 were born in Australia and 39 born

overseas. There are at least 13 other languages spoken by our families such as German, Gujarati, Hindi, Persian, Hebrew, Greek, Chinese, Telugu, Hebrew, Tigrinya, Mandarin, Korean and Auslan.

We have 46 staff members, including a school nurse. We pride ourselves on the harmonious environment we are able to provide with such a vast range of diversity in our school community. Most of our students live in the immediate residential area and many walk and ride to school daily.

With 23 classrooms, planned specialist programs in PE, Art, LOTE (AUSLAN), Drama and Music, the staff share a strong commitment to individual and whole school shared professional learning. A before and after school care program operates at the school which is independently managed by a not-for-profit organisation. The program also offers full day care during school holiday periods. In 2018/2019 the school had a major \$3.04 million upgrade. The new facilities include four new classrooms, teaching and learning spaces, student toilets, and a music and multi-purpose hall. The new classrooms provide modern learning spaces, and the multi-purpose hall offers a dedicated music learning space and gym, allowing greater opportunity for the students to develop new skills. The multipurpose building space in the front of the school continues to accommodate the whole school community for shared events. The school vision and five values support our code of conduct and form the basis for our approach to student wellbeing. We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy, and vision

Newport Lakes 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. The school values are explicitly taught and actively promoted in a whole school student wellbeing positive behaviour program. Students, staff, and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of:

RESPECT: We think about and act in a positive way towards ourselves and others.

RESILIENCE: We keep on trying.

CRITICAL THINKING: We solve problems and use our minds well.

RESPONSIBILITY: We take care of ourselves, our community, and our world.

COMPASSION: We always treat each other well.

Our school's vision is to develop students that are resilient, responsible, respectful, and compassionate, within a safe and nurturing learning environment. We provide a rigorous educational program that empowers students to excel, take action and become lifelong learners. We believe all students can learn and as members of diverse communities we can make a difference to the world around us.

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive, and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. A comprehensive education program in relation to bullying will continue to be implemented at Newport Lakes Primary School. The school's approach to preventing/addressing bullying, cyberbullying and harassment will be supported through a range of whole school preventative programs including our school-wide Health program, our Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) Curriculum and School Wide Positive Behaviour Strategy (SWPBS). We value the positive contributions of students, and we work hard to create a sense of belonging and connectedness; we believe these are conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning. The physical environment at Newport Lakes Primary School has been designed to cater for positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning. For example, we encourage outdoor lessons and multi-age opportunities where possible.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Newport Lakes Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, 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 strategies:

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging, and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Newport Lakes Primary School use an instructional model 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 Newport Lakes 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 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 and student achievement are 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
- learner agency is promoted and encouraged - students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Education Support staff, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections and inclusive and responsible play amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- teachers 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
 - Child Wise Personal Safety program
 - Safe Schools
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities), buddy programs, peers support programs
- celebrate diversity and promote inclusion
- positive reinforcement e.g., verbal praise, stickers, stamps, postcards sent home
- student leadership roles - School Captain, Arts Captain, House Captain, Respectful Relationships Leader, Pod Squad Leader, or Junior School Council representative
- ongoing community-building activities in classrooms (starting with 'Learning to Learn' inquiry in first 20 days of each school year)
- 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 strategies:

- each year level has a Team Leader responsible for the cohort, who monitor 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, with a staff member designated to ensure that the school is implementing the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan
- 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 targeted support to develop their English – both in class and in small group intervention - and our school's focus on inclusive education and celebrating diversity. Where possible, we allow for a transition session prior to finishing at WELS
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through linking with external agencies if required
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBT Student Support](#)
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual 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
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- 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](#)

Individual strategies

Newport Lakes Primary School monitors our students closely to determine whether there is a need for any school-based or Department-based intervention, or the involvement of external services, including vulnerable and at-risk students. Newport Lakes 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 Education 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
 - [Student Support Services](#)
 - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, OnPsych/Counselling Services, [Headspace](#), child mental health services or Child First (DHHS)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- Speech therapy
- Literacy and/or Numeracy Support Program
- GRIN program (Getting Ready in Numeracy)
- being responsive and sensitive to changes to a 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

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 Education 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Newport Lakes 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. Newport Lakes 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.

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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 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.

Students have the responsibility to:

- be cooperative, considerate, and courteous
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers, and members of the school community
- act as an upstander
- alert a teacher if they or another student is feeling unsafe
- use respectful language
- use playground equipment and grounds safely
- take care of school and other peoples' property
- keep our playground clean
- remember the role that everyone must play in creating a sustainable community
- behave on camps and excursions in a way that demonstrates our values
- always wear a hat during terms one and four when outside.

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 via the [school's website](#).

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. 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, Newport Lakes Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement.

Restorative Practices

The school is committed to the use of Restorative Practices. We believe that this is our 'way of being' as developing and maintaining positive relationships with those around us, is integral in our daily lives. When a relationship has been damaged because of negative behaviour, we use a consistent dialogue between all members of our school community to repair the harm that has been done.

Restorative Practices:

- are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness (Bond et al. 2001, Fuller 1999)
- promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy (Hopkins 2002)
- involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution (Braithwaite 2001b)
- promote the management of relationships rather than behaviour management (Cameron & Thorsborne 2001)
- separate the behaviour from the person (Marshall et al. 2002)
- are systematic, not situational (Armstrong 2004)
- are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied (Morrison 2002).

Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the negative behaviour and the steps taken to repair the relationship(s) that are harmed.

In certain cases, disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- 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>

Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. 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 Newport Lakes 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

Newport Lakes 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.

8. Evaluation

Newport Lakes 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

Newport Lakes 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 in transition and enrolment packs
- 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, and can all be found on our school's [website](#):

- Child Safety Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Digital Technologies Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2024



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school so that we can organise an interpreter.