

# SOUTH YARRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

## 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.

South Yarra 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.

### 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
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

### POLICY

#### 1. School profile

Information about the school profile can be accessed on the South Yarra Primary School website. <http://www.southyarraps.vic.edu.au/>

#### 2. School values, philosophy and vision

In terms of student engagement and wellbeing, Teaching and Learning practices at South Yarra Primary School are underpinned by the following set of values:

- Respect for each other and the environment in an atmosphere that fosters honesty, trust and tolerance.
- Commitment to each other in an atmosphere that fosters honesty, trust and tolerance.
- Quality teaching and learning.
- Teamwork to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

- Celebration of the positive contributions made by individuals and groups in our school community.

School Staff at South Yarra Primary School work towards an educational vision in which they are encouraged and supported to provide a rich, connected learning community that is inclusive and maximises opportunities for all.

South Yarra Primary School recognises that this vision is more likely when School Staff are supported by the wider school community and therefore fosters positive connections to this wider community network. Such connections are also promoted with the knowledge that these links work towards fostering student engagement and wellbeing.

South Yarra Primary School recognises the role of effective individualised teaching and learning practices in improving student engagement, alongside the maintenance of a vibrant and positive school culture with a shared enthusiasm for learning. In addition, the following values are actively promoted to students as per South Yarra Primary School's Student Welfare and Behaviour Policy, with an understanding that they contribute significantly to student engagement and wellbeing:

- Respect
- Friendliness
- Responsibility
- Valuing differences
- Including others
- Caring for others

We foster the values promoted through the “better Buddies” program; Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

### **3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

South Yarra 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
- teachers at South Yarra 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 South Yarra 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 Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support 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 plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Leaders, Year Group 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
  - Better Buddies
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- 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

- 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 *SYPS Action Plan for Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety* for further information
- 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
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background, following DET guidelines on 'Supporting Students from Refugee Backgrounds'
- 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](#)
- 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

- 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
- 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

South Yarra 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, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
  - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

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**

South Yarra 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. South Yarra 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

- SYPS data wall
- yard behaviour tracking spreadsheet
- wellbeing meetings with Assistant Principal and wellbeing leader
- conversations with Allied Health Professionals
- NDIS documentation

## **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 South Yarra Primary School's Bullying 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, South Yarra 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.

Staff follow the South Yarra Approach to Behaviour Management – see Appendix.

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 team leader
- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings

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 South Yarra 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**

South Yarra 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**

South Yarra 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

South Yarra 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
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- 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:

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

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2024
Consultation	Education Subcommittee of School Council May 2024 JSC August Term 3
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026







## APPENDIX:

# South Yarra Primary School Approach to Behaviour Management

We operate under the child safe standards at all times and follow the respectful relationships program which incorporates our better buddy values.

### Purpose

- To establish a learning community which acknowledges, supports and enables students to feel safe and cared for.
- To enable the students to manage themselves and their behaviours; to develop in them mastery of their behaviour and the ability to anticipate consequence.
- Teachers will be proactive and aware - planning for behaviour and working with students with a positive mind set.
- All teachers will be responsible for every child in the school; if a teacher sees a student whose behaviour indicates there is a problem, that teacher will deal with the situation in a manner consistent with the strategies outlined in this document.

**Minor problem behaviours** are managed when and where they occur by the adult present at the time. Most commonly this will be a teacher in his or her classroom, but it could also be, for example, a staff member working in the office or on yard duty.

**Major problem behaviours** are managed beyond the context in which they occur, often by a school leader. A major misbehaviour may require the student to be removed from the setting. Depending on the school and the severity of the behaviour, it might then be managed by the principal, another school leader, a senior teacher, a buddy teacher, or the teacher concerned (outside of the classroom). Three minor misbehaviours by the same student can trigger a major misbehaviour response, depending on the timespan in which the behaviours occur and their intensity. All major incidents should be recorded.

## SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING MINOR MISBEHAVIOUR

Not all student problem behaviours require an explicit response. Certain behaviours occur spontaneously during a lesson or activity that are minor yet contrary to your school-wide expectations or rules. They are generally brief and not a threat to the student's learning or that of others.

A brief response is all that is needed to remind the student of expected behaviour. Often students will respond quickly to a teacher's action to minimise such behaviour before it escalates. For such situations, educators have a number of strategies that have been proven effective over time. The advantage of these strategies is that they are unobtrusive – they do not embarrass or identify the student – and they can be carried out quickly during an instruction or activity.

These strategies work best when, after pausing for the student to demonstrate the expected behaviour, you provide brief feedback or a signal that you have noticed the appropriate behaviour. By following their behaviour change with positive feedback, you strengthen the likelihood of appropriate behaviour in the future.

## Indirect strategies

STRATEGY	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
Proximity control (While adhering to physical distancing requirements)	Every teacher knows how effective it is to stand near a student who is behaving inappropriately. Your strategic movement or placement can encourage expected behaviour.	When Alan is off task and talking, the teacher continues to teach the group while moving to stand next to him for a moment. Once Alan returns to the task, the teacher gives brief positive feedback to help maintain the expected behaviour.
Signal or non-verbal cue	Teachers have various signals that communicate their expectations to students. They include eye contact, hand gestures, a handclap, clearing one's throat, and so on. A simple nonverbal cue like this suggests that you are aware of a student's inappropriate behaviour and prepared to intervene if it continues.	When Sarah begins to talk to her neighbour, the teacher glances in her direction and holds the look until she is quiet again and listening. The teacher then praises Sarah for her attention.
Ignore, attend, praise (proximity praise)	This strategy is based on the power of praise or positive feedback. The teacher praises an appropriately behaving student near a second student who is not. The praise indirectly reminds the misbehaving student of expectations (and reinforces the first student's behaviour). When the second student starts behaving appropriately, provide attention and praise.	Paul is off task during independent work time. The teacher briefly ignores Paul and specifically praises a nearby student: "Good work, Tania. You're making great progress on your assignment."  When Paul begins to get back to work, the teacher immediately praises him: "Thanks, Paul, for being on task."

## Direct Strategies

STRATEGY	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
Prompt	Anticipating that one or more students may not follow expectations; you prompt them about the expected behaviour. A prompt (or pre-correct) may also give you the opportunity to then acknowledge students for following an expectation.	"Remember to move back to your desks safely and quietly." (Soon after) "Well done on returning to your desks without disturbing others."
Redirect	This strategy is a very brief, clear restatement of the expected behaviour. A redirect often links to a behaviour from the expectations matrix and emphasises the 'what' of the behaviour instead of the 'why'.	"Jason, please begin your writing assignment." (Later) "Nice job, Jason, you've begun your assignment."
Reteach	A reteach builds on the redirect above by reviewing the expected behaviour or routine more thoroughly. It briefly capitalises on the teachable moment in a private way (that is, it doesn't 'make an example' of a student in front of others). Just as you do in instruction, you label the behaviour, unpack it, and give the student the immediate opportunity to practice by demonstrating it to you. Once the student behaves as expected, praise him or her.	"Leo, you need to stay on task. That means your desk is clear of everything but your book, you continue working until you're finished, and if you need help, raise your hand." (Soon after) "Excellent, Leo, it looks like you're ready to learn. Let me know if you need help."
Provide choice	Providing choice can be used when redirecting or reteaching have been unsuccessful. With this strategy, you direct the student to choose between the expected behaviour and a less preferred alternative. When options are paired in this way, students will often make the preferable choice. Pause after providing the choice, and when the student chooses wisely, give praise.	"John, you can get on task and work here with the group, or you can work by yourself in the quiet area." (Soon after) "Thanks, John, I'm glad to see you've chosen to stay working with your friends."
Conversation	This is a lengthier reteaching or problem-solving opportunity when misbehaviour is more frequent or intense. Discuss the problem, teach the expected behaviour and explore the reasons for it, and make a plan to ensure the behaviour is used in future. A conversation with a student can include helping the student to practice the behaviour.	"Lauren, several times today I've had to remind you about being on task. When you're given an assignment, you need to work on it until it's finished. That way you'll learn what you need to and help your friends to learn too. Tell me what you'll do next time ... OK, how can I help you to do that? ... Let's practice it."

If a child is continuing to display minor behavioural issues please follow the steps below:

- Discuss with your team/ team leader
- Discuss with wellbeing leaders (Laura and Mark)
- Contact parents, their previous teachers etc.

## MAJOR PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

It is important to remember that all behaviour has a meaning. Through observation, talking to the student at a time removed from the event, and discussion with others involved, it is possible to get a clearer picture about what the student is trying to gain or avoid through their behaviour. This information will help you to respond with empathy and care and in a way that is inclusive, fair, logical, educative, and supportive for the student and others. It can also prevent you from inadvertently reinforcing the problem behaviour – for some students, misbehaviour has worked well for them for many years and has allowed them to get their needs met.

For most students, major incidents are few and far between and do not indicate a chronic problem. The low-key approaches described below will be an adequate response and will discourage them from repeating the problem behaviour. However, for small numbers of students, universal supports and strategies are insufficient.

Generally, you should begin by applying the least severe, most inclusive strategy available. As much as possible, try to view your responses to behavioural incidents as ‘teachable moments’ through which everyone involved can reflect, learn, and further develop the attitudes and competencies valued by the school community.

STRATEGY	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
De-escalation	<p>This is a largely preventative strategy. It requires good knowledge of the student and the events that can trigger anxiety, anger, or other strong, hostile, emotional responses.</p> <p>Using this strategy relies on an understanding of the optimum time to intervene, how to do this safely, and how to debrief with the student after the event.</p>	<p>Eric sometimes responds aggressively because of challenges in relating to others and accepting disappointment or perceived unfairness. Teachers who know Eric well are able to recognise the signs of imminent distress, anxiety, and aggression and to intervene with prompts and reminders that help him to calm down. Eric is becoming better at using self-managing strategies, such as removing himself from the situation, taking deep breaths and counting to ten, and seeking help from a trusted adult or peer.</p>
Conference	<p>A conference takes place well after a behavioural incident, when the student is calm and more likely to respond positively.</p> <p>A conference aims to strengthen relationships, to support the student to make better future choices, and to plan strategies that will support ongoing positive behaviour. A collaborative, problem-solving approach is most helpful.</p> <p>The conference should take place with an adult who is liked and trusted by the student. Involve members to work in partnership to support the student.</p>	<p>Mandy has been involved in a major incident in the playground involving verbal and physical aggression. While other staff have supported the victim of the abuse, the Assistant Principal has arranged to meet with Mandy and her mother to discuss the incident.</p> <p>During the discussion, Mandy is reminded about playground behaviour expectations and the kinds of activities that are appropriate at lunchtime. The three participants also discuss other issues affecting Mandy’s engagement and success at school and develop a plan to check in each day with the Assistant Principal.</p>

## Conference and consequence

It may be decided that as well as a conference, a fair and logical consequence will be applied.

Ideally this should be task-rather than time oriented, with educative and, where possible, restorative goals.

Inappropriate behaviour during a school sports trip has resulted in a conference with the Assistant Principal and parent.

Concerns are shared, behaviour expectations reconfirmed, and plans for ongoing monitoring agreed. The student agrees to miss the next match, write a letter of apology to his team, and coaches.

**If major behavioural issues continue, a behaviour support plan will be put in place with consultation from wellbeing member, welfare and/or Assistant Principal.**

## Proactive Management in the yard

- Yard duty teachers will rove, observe and engage students and acknowledge great behaviour / play at appropriate opportunities.
- When teachers identify an issue on yard duty the follow strategies can be used.
  - A quiet spot in the quad for reflection
  - Walking with a teacher and discussing behaviour and school values
  - Record behaviour in the behaviour log/ wear book
  - Use restorative practices for conflict resolution

**If a student had been involved in an incident that requires follow up, please make sure that the student's teacher is aware or a member of staff from that cohort.**

# Our Values

**Friendliness**  
We are friendly,  
pleasant and  
considerate.



**Caring for Others**  
We are kind and  
show concern  
for others.



**Respect**  
We are considerate  
of others and  
care for each  
other's property.



**Valuing Difference**  
We recognise and appreciate  
differences of people, places  
and ways of being.



**Responsibility**  
We make sensible  
decisions and are  
accountable  
for our actions.



**Including Others**  
We are aware of  
others and think  
about how they  
might be feeling.

