STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy last reviewed	June 2026
Consultation	Consultation is mandatory - School council approved June 2026
Approved by	Acting Principal - Christine Forrest
Next schedule review date	June 2028

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office and we can arrange an interpreter.

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.

Wodonga Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
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This Policy pertains to all programs run/organized by Wodonga Primary School, including Out of School Hours Care, unless a more specific policy applies whereby both policies should be read in conjunction.

POLICY

1. School profile

Wodonga Primary School is the largest primary education provider in the growth city of Wodonga. Our school's vision is to provide education that engages learning and expands minds. We aim to do this by providing a stimulating and engaging culture, which fosters inquisitive learning, that actively generates motivation and a strong desire to learn within our students. There are five vision principles that the school community believes are important for all students during their primary learning; CHALLENGE, CURIOSITY COLLABORATE, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE. Our classrooms work towards these principles and vision through focused learning.

Wodonga Primary inclusively educates 840 students and is located adjacent to the Wodonga Middle Years College. Wodonga Primary School caters for a diverse population, including a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds, Koorie families, students with disabilities and a growing number of English as a Second Language students.

Classes are structured into year level groups with teachers working together to develop curriculum appropriate to the needs of the students and linked to the National Curriculum. Literacy and Numeracy are our core foundations. Year Level groups develop common Units of Inquiry and bring together the range of curriculum expectations. Specialist areas in Art, Music, Physical Education, Computer Studies, STEM, TEAMS and GEM provide a range of opportunities for students to both participate in and excel. These areas create strong links to our local community.

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

Engage Learning, Expand Minds

This policy strives to articulate our commitment to Wodonga PS as a place of learning. We aim for all stakeholders to engage in their learning and to have the mind-frame to look outside of their current understandings. At Wodonga PS, we believe that our Educational Purpose is relevant to all stakeholders: students, staff and community members. We promote learning across all aspects of our school.

Vision Principles:

Challenge - high expectations, an ambition to achieve
Curiosity - wondering about the world, seeking to discover
Community - a sense of belonging, commitment and shared responsibility
Culture - shared vision to achieve success

Collaborate – progressed learning by working together

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Wodonga 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 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, that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Wodonga Primary School use a whole school 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 Wodonga 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 activities, buddy classrooms, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinators, 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 behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Respectful Relationships, The Resilience Project, Safe Schools
    - programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (KIND program, Social Stencil)
    - opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, STAR program, recess and lunchtime activities, Hands on Learning, Kids CAFE)
    - buddy programs, peers 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

Wodonga Primary School believes deeply that positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour and celebrating learning milestones is a key ingredient to students' management and success. Our staff have a wide repertoire of skills in building student's confidence in themselves as a person and learner. These strategies vary from class-to-class, and are dependent on the students' personalities. Examples and supports can be found in our School Tiered behavior support documents and our Online staff wellbeing and engagement handbook document. A summary of some additional targeted supports includes:

- each year group has an Assistant Principal or Principal, responsible for a year level, 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. The year level Principal liaises and refers to the wellbeing team as necessary.
- 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. The school liaises with our KESO to ensure all learning and wellbeing supports are documented through Individual Education Plans. Our Reconciliation Action Plan additionally outlines the school strategies to support Koorie students
- our English as an Additional 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 through the provision of EAL teacher. The EAL teacher links with DET and external agencies to ensure students from refugee backgrounds have access to school provisions included school supplies and uniforms. Additional external counselling services can be linked in as required.
- 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
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff, each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

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

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning 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 Orange Door
    - 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 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Wodonga 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. Wodonga 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
- Wodonga Primary School's G Drive Wellbeing referral process

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 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, Wodonga 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 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:

- 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 (Classroom Behaviour Intervention – Leadership Behaviour Intervention)

- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to Wellbeing Leading Teacher team
- restorative practices
- yard games or yard timetable
- KIND program (removal from yard)
- behaviour plans developed and implemented
- 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 Wodonga 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

Wodonga 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 COMPASS
- 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 via School Council
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Wodonga 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
- Whole School Wellbeing Data
- Incidents data (COMPASS data)
- School Reports
- Parent Opinion Survey
- Case Management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Wodonga Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

Communication

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as a periodic reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- Suspension process
- Expulsions - Decision

Further Information and Resources

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- Attendance
- Student Engagement
- Child Safe Standards
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Students with Disability

- LGBTIQ Student Support
- Behaviour - Students
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Restraint and Seclusion

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

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

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed biannually.