

Southern Cross Primary School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Reviewed / Consultation

May 2024

Due for Review

2027

Approved By

Principal / SC



Help for non-English speakers - If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Main Office.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Southern Cross 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
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Policy

1. School profile

Southern Cross Primary School is situated in the South Eastern Suburb of Endeavour Hills, 30 kms from Melbourne. With 225 students, our school consists of 2.0 Principal Class, 1 Learning Specialist, 16 Teachers, and 18 Education Support Staff.

Southern Cross Primary School is a friendly, caring school community that aims to facilitate a high standard of academic learning, nurture individuality, challenge, and understand all of our students. We are a diverse community catering for approximately 25 nationalities. The school's learning community provides an inclusive and accepting environment for all students, staff and parents. Our SWPBS Program is embedded across the school and complements our high expectations of daily behaviour, focusing on interactions that show Respect, Responsibility and Resilience from all adults and children. This approach supports our expectation that our classrooms, playground and whole school environment are always welcoming and happy for all.

At Southern Cross Primary School, we continually strive for school improvement and improving student learning outcomes. Over the past three years, our school has undergone a remarkable transformation, guided by a commitment to evidence-based approaches in education. With a focus on literacy and mathematics, we have embraced scientifically-backed methodologies to enhance student learning and achievement. Through a rigorous focus on the Science of Reading and the implementation of the Concrete-Representational-Abstract model in mathematics instruction, we have cultivated an environment where every student has the opportunity to thrive academically and personally.

Although a smaller school in size, we are mighty in our commitment to student wellbeing. Led by our Assistant Principal, we have established a dedicated Wellbeing Team to provide comprehensive support and inclusive practices for all students. This team comprises a Learning Specialist, Mental Health Leader, Social Worker, and Speech Therapist, working collaboratively to address the diverse needs of our student body. Additionally, we foster strong partnerships with local allied health professionals, ensuring that we can effectively meet the individual needs of every student. We are a supportive and close community who work together to make a difference in the lives and overall outcomes of the students and families in our care.

Southern Cross Primary School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment which values the human rights of all students and staff. Southern Cross Primary School is committed to creating a school community where all members of our school community are welcomed, accepted, and treated equitably and with respect regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes such as race, language, religious beliefs, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve, and thrive at school.

Southern Cross Primary School acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community and we will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others. At Southern Cross Primary School we value the human rights of every student and we take our obligations under anti-discrimination laws and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities seriously.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Southern Cross 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. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values is available online at <https://www.sthcrossps.vic.edu.au/page/113/Strategic-Planning>

3. Wellbeing and Engagement strategies

Southern Cross 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, Tier 1 (whole of school), targeted, Tier 2 (year group specific) and individual, Tier 3 engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

TIER 1 - 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
- 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 Southern Cross Primary School use Instructional Models to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction, to ensure that evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Southern Cross 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 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, including into school, between year levels and out of the school
- 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

- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through Tribes and Buddies, athletics, and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Classroom Teacher, Year Group Leaders, 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
 - SWPBS
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. social skills programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

TIER 2 - Targeted

- each Classroom Teacher is responsible for monitoring the health and wellbeing of students in their class, 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
- our English as a second language students are supported through our whole school literacy model, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included, working closely with supports through Noble Park English Language School
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- 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, including Safe School posters on display in each classroom, Harmony Week celebrations and Together We Do Better Posters.
- 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 Education Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG).
- 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](#)
- Small groups of identified students are supported by the School’s Social Worker and Speech Therapist

TIER 3 - Individual

Southern Cross 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 i.e. changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports (including Speech Therapist and Social Worker)
 - 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

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
 - who identify as ATSI
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Southern Cross 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Southern Cross 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.

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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values / Student code of conduct.

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, Southern Cross Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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:

- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- explaining to a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student within the classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the school's Social Worker
- referral to our lunchtime wellbeing program

- referral to Leadership
- detentions
- suspension
- expulsion

Restrictive interventions, suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular 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 Southern Cross 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

Southern Cross 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
- 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

Southern Cross 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
- SOCS

Southern Cross 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 annual reference in school newsletter

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2024
Consultation	School Council Consultation 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2027