

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact school reception.

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.

Topirum 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
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POLICY

1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Topirum Primary School will open in 2024 as a new school serving the Clyde North community, in the outer-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The school will have an initial capacity to enrol 525 students from prep to grade 6.

Our school facility is contemporary and spacious and includes 2 learning community neighbourhoods; a library; full-size gym; hardcourts; large playground area and oval. There are specialist learning spaces including food technology, science, art, and music.

Our school is expected to be culturally diverse with a significant proportion of families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE groups being Indian and Sri Lankan. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

Topirum Primary School offers students a well-rounded educational experience that prepares them with the academic, social and emotional skills to succeed in life. The school vision is to teach our students to become confident and creative young people, who pursue their passions and strive for excellence. They will have an inquiring mind and be empowered to become engaged citizens who contribute positively to society. The teaching and learning approach is underpinned by the ABPS Teaching and Learning Model which incorporates the pedagogical approach, the school Instructional Teaching Model and the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) approach.

Curriculum planning and delivery is based on the Victorian Curriculum (Levels F-10 (inclusive of Levels A-D) and is differentiated by teachers to meet the learning needs of their students. Curriculum planning, delivery and assessment is done within the PLC framework. Curriculum areas are also taught and covered through the school's inquiry learning approach. This includes Discovery Learning prep-grade 2, which is a play-based approach, and Inquiry Learning grades 3-6, which is an inquiry project-based approach. Students are taught to inquire on significant issues and topics, be creative in their learning and ask probing questions. They are scaffolded to be independent learners as well as collaborate with others. Students are supported to 'take action' as a phase of the inquiry approach, which promotes real-life engagement with their community.

Digital learning is embedded in all curriculum areas, enabling students to learn how digital technologies can support and extend their learning. The specialist program provides further opportunities for students to identify their passions and excel at school. The school will offer a comprehensive wellbeing approach and support student social and emotional learning. It is expected the school will have a high proportion of students with English as an additional language (EAL). The school will provide specific support to these students through specialist EAL teaching, and supports for classroom instruction.

2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Topirum 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 curiosity, kindness, collaboration, excellence and perseverance.

Each value is supported by a 'way of thinking,' for students and staff to demonstrate as follows:

- We demonstrate curiosity by 'having a go,' and asking questions for challenges and new experiences. (Way of Thinking - Have a go)

- We demonstrate kindness by being kind, thoughtful and generous to others.
(Way of Thinking - Be kind)
- We demonstrate collaboration by thinking of others and working together.
(Way of Thinking - Think of others)
- We demonstrate excellence by trying your best and getting feedback.
(Way of Thinking - Try your best)
- We demonstrate perseverance by being a determined learner.
(Way of Thinking - Be a determined learner)

Topirum Primary School's vision is to teach our students to become confident and creative young people, who pursue their passions and strive for excellence. They will have an inquiring mind and be empowered to become engaged citizens who contribute positively to society.

Topirum Primary School's mission is to offer students a well-rounded educational experience that prepares them with the academic, social and emotional skills to succeed in life.

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available on the school website.

3. WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Topirum 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
- model and create a child safe culture.
- 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 Topirum Primary School use the Instructional Teaching 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 Topirum Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community

- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Wellbeing Teacher, 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 Wellbeing Teacher, 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
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Restorative Practices
 - Peer Mediation Program
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour, such as lunchtime Social Club
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- 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

- each year group has a designated Wellbeing Teacher responsible for their year, 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
- 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. The school will endeavour to have a multicultural aide.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through participation in the Refugees Education in Schools Program.
- 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 acknowledging the Wear It Purple school event in term 4 each year.
- 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. Staff training in the Berry Education support Model will occur for selected school leadership staff in 2024.

Individual

Topirum Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These 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
- Working with the Wellbeing Teacher on 1:1 support or targeted group support i.e. resilience skills, anger management etc.
- 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 ChildFirst/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 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

Topirum 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. Topirum 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 and School Philosophy 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, as guided by their teacher
- 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.
- Adopt the Student Ways of Thinking and demonstrate these:
 - Have a go
 - Try your best
 - Be kind
 - Think of others
 - Be a determined learner

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 and School Philosophy/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, Topirum 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:

- All teachers utilise the school-wide behaviour continuum, which outlines the steps of consequences for misbehaviour.
- 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 Wellbeing Teacher or Assistant Principal/Principal
- restorative practices
- time-out
- 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.

The principal of Topirum 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

Topirum 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.
- Support CALD students and families with tailored school enrolment and induction processes. The support of an EAL teacher to assess and support CALD students and families. Provision of information in translated or interpreted form for families.
- 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

Topirum 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.

Topirum 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

- available publicly on our school's website
- included in staff induction processes
- included in transition and enrolment packs
- included as annual reference in school newsletter
- made available in hard copy from the school office 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 Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):
 - [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](#)
- Related Policies:
 - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
 - Bullying Prevention Policy
 - Inclusion and Diversity Policy
 - Statement of Values and School Philosophy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Duty of Care Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Is this policy based on a DET template?	YES
Does this policy require school council approval?	No, Consultation required
Policy review cycle	1-2 years
Is the policy available on the school website?	YES
Policy Review Members	school council, staff, students, community members
This policy was last updated on	May 2023
This policy is scheduled for review	March, 2024

