



FOSTER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Student Engagement & Well-Being Policy

**Produced in consultation
with the school community**

To be read in conjunction with
*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools –
Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures 2014
Victoria as a Learning Community*

October 2014

**Principal: Lorraine Gurnett
School Council President: Gill Nicoll**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT	3
2 WHOLE-SCHOOL PREVENTION STATEMENT	3
3 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	5
4. SHARED EXPECTATIONS	10
5. SCHOOL ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES	11
6. REFERENCES	11

1. SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT

Foster Primary School is located in South Gippsland, 150 km from Melbourne. There is a steady enrolment of approximately 200 from Grade Prep- 6, spread over 9 classes. The majority of our students have attended Foster Kindergarten and move on to South Gippsland Secondary College in Year 7.

Half of our students come to school by one of nine buses. They come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

Despite a drop in absenteeism in some grades, absences and late arrivals are of ongoing concern and have a negative impact on student engagement, well being and learning.

At Foster Primary School we aim to challenge, encourage and inspire every child to reach their academic, social, emotional and physical potential in a safe, caring and attractive environment.

Staff plan and work in teams to develop well resourced, whole school programs which cater for students' individual needs and which reflect their interests and abilities. They participate in high quality professional development which enhance teaching and learning throughout the school and beyond.

Every student accesses a comprehensive curriculum, with Maths and English at the core, which is based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Information and Communication Technology is integrated into all curriculum areas, supported by up to date resources which enable "learning anytime, anywhere". The school offers a range of specialist classes which appeal to different learning styles. Specialist classes such as Art, Music & PE are provided, with senior classes (Grades 3-6) timetabled for weekly 1 hour garden class, and 1½ hours kitchen class as part of our Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Programme. Students are encouraged and supported to participate in a wide variety of extracurricular activities at school, regional and state levels. These include a variety of Sport, Chess, Gippspell, Tournament of Minds, ICAS, National Young Leaders Conference.

Our school has a high community profile and values its strong links with School Council and the many parent helpers and volunteers who support us. We encourage our students to take on leadership roles and play an active role in their school and community.

2. WHOLE -SCHOOL PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Our focus is on providing a teaching and learning atmosphere based on community happiness and excellence, which improves student learning across all curriculum strands. A decrease in student behaviour issues in classrooms and the playground reflects a strong commitment to creating a happy and safe environment for our students.

We nurture our students, empowering them to deal positively with life's challenges. They experience a sense of connectedness with the school and others, and are well placed to develop into well-balanced and successful adults.

- Developing the wellbeing of our students is central to our role as a school, and is reflected in our whole school philosophy.
- Our school values and encourages student individuality, differences and diversity.
- A culture of positive reinforcement and encouragement permeates all facets of our school.
- Strategies detailed in the '*Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools*' are implemented across the school.
- Programs that provide for the emotional health of students, such as 'KidsMatter' or 'You Can Do It' underpin our curriculum.
- Programs that support a safe environment that encourage open discussion, such as '*Protective Behaviours*', are implemented across the school.
- The curriculum is broad, providing for the needs of individual students, and is developed to cater for multiple intelligences.
- The school accesses Department of Education and Early Childhood Development regional and network staff with wellbeing and/or welfare expertise as required.

- Programs dealing with issues such as Drug Education form part of the school's Student Wellbeing program.
- An active Student Representative Council forms part of the schools' decision-making team.
- Staff are provided with professional development regarding student wellbeing, the implementation of wellbeing programs, and the resolution of wellbeing issues.
- Student work and achievements are regularly showcased and publicly recognised.

Student Engagement can be defined as three interrelated components

- ❖ **Behavioural engagement** refers to students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school
- ❖ **Emotional engagement** encompasses students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school. It can be defined as students' sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.
- ❖ **Cognitive engagement** relates to students' investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self regulation

We aim to

- Provide an educational environment which recognises, values and develops student wellbeing .
- Create a positive school culture that is fair and respectful
- Build a safe and supportive school environment
- Expect positive, supportive and respectful relationships that value diversity
- Promote pro-social values and behaviours
- Encourage student participation and student voice
- Proactively engage with parents/carers
- Implement preventative and early intervention approaches
- Respond to individual students
- Identify and support students who are ,or may be, at risk
- Link to the local community
- Have clear expectations of individual responsibility and foster positive relationships among students
- Encourage active and meaningful student participation and provide all students with opportunities to contribute and provide feedback to the school and the classroom
- Include pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement
- Minimise anxiety, increase resilience and ensure that students develop a readiness to enter their new environment and make successful transitions between year levels.
- Provide a welcoming school culture which openly engages all families as equal partners in the education of their children.

3. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Foster Primary School Community is committed to providing a safe, happy, positive and purposeful learning environment.

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

All members of our school community are expected to comply with the following Acts of Parliament and the Charter of Human Rights.

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

Under the act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of the following attributes:

- age
- breastfeeding
- gender identity
- impairment
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status or status as carer
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association (with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes).

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- Freedom
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural Rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights.

All DEECD employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:

- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights

Part of the monitoring of Human Rights will be to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist on the School Compliance web site.

3.4 Students with disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

According to the Standards, schools must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a

student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, we take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, a parent/carer, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

We ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. We also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

We consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the school, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

To support students with a disability or impairment at Foster Primary School we will:

- ❖ Communicate with parents / carers
- ❖ Identify a student's needs as early as possible
- ❖ Assess the student's needs
- ❖ Refer the student for formal assessment if required such as Speech, Intellectual, Social-Emotional, Behavioural
- ❖ Where appropriate ,apply for funding through the DEECD Programmes for Students With Disabilities and Impairments
- ❖ Implement Individual Learning Plans where necessary
- ❖ Convene Student Support Group meetings which will include the parent/carer and school staff and support staff as necessary
- ❖ Modify the curriculum as necessary
- ❖ Make other modifications as required and where it is practical and reasonable to do so

Additional Support and/or Intervention Procedures at Foster Primary School

A variety of student data will inform the need for intervention. This may include records of poor attendance or punctuality, academic achievement (changes in academic performance

and/or poor academic performance) or observations of the student in terms of conflict with others, general appearance, emotional withdrawal or outbursts.

Teachers will use the data to inform their teaching and direct student learning. If additional support is considered necessary, then the teacher may involve the student in intervention programs beyond the classroom such as Literacy Support or Learning Assistance Program (LAP)

Additional support for behaviour and/or social-emotional needs will be discussed with the Principal . A range of strategies may be considered such as an Individual Learning Plan, regular support meetings

The next level of support may necessitate a referral to DEECD support staff (Social Workers, Speech Pathologists and Psychologists) or other agencies .

3.5 Bullying and harassment – Please refer to our Bullying and Harassment Policy

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition • participate fully in the school's educational program 	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community. • Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. • As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals. • Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents/carers have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged. 	<p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modeling positive behaviours. • Ensure their child's regular attendance • Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning. • support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Teachers have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment • be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student 	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy. • Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively. • Know the content they teach. • Know their students. • Plan and assess for effective learning. • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments. • use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.

Volunteers and Visitors have the same rights as other members of our school community and in turn have a responsibility to:

- Respect the rights of all members of the school community
- Sign the Visitors Book at the Office on arrival and departure
- Wear their Visitors Badge at all times when in school
- Treat all information about students with confidentiality, discussing concerns with class teacher or school leaders
- Report any student welfare concerns to the principal
- Refrain from commenting about school, students, staff and parents in a negative way

4. SHARED EXPECTATIONS

Schools – principals, teachers and school staff

Schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

The school's values are based on the Australian Government's nine values, for Australian schools, which are:

- **Care and Compassion**
Care for self and others
 - **Integrity**
Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
 - **Doing Your Best**
Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
 - **Respect** Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view
 - **Fair Go**
Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
 - **Responsibility**
Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
 - **Freedom**
Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
 - **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion**
Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others
- Honesty and Trustworthiness**
Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

School expectations include:

- inclusive teaching practices
- accessible educational provision for all students
- parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success
- provision of appropriate student services
- development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.

Restorative Practices

The school is committed to the use of restorative practices with students. Restorative Practices:

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

Diversity in the school community

- .The school aims to address diversity by:
 - maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community□
 - attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer□
 - increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce□
 - enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs
 - creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems.

5. SCHOOL ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Primary Prevention

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations through the use of a school wide contract – See APPENDIX A
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- Foster Primary School will adopt a four-phase approach to addressing bullying behaviour. The term “bullying behaviour “ will be used rather than “bully”.
- Provide staff with PD opportunities which relate to bullying behaviour, harassment and behaviour modification strategies.
- Inform the whole school community of this policy at the beginning of each year ; make it available on our web page ; discuss it with students and staff

Early Intervention

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a consistent response, including:

- understanding the student’s background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments

Broader support strategies will include:

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important
- classroom meetings ; circle time
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- involving community support agencies.

Follow up

- Consequences will be individually based and may involve loss of privileges, withdrawal from class, exclusion from yard, ongoing counselling from appropriate agencies for all parties, school detention, school suspension.
- Review and act upon bullying behaviour survey data
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours
- Classroom meetings
- Individual Behaviour plans
- Maintain contact with parents

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures of the DEECD guidelines published in **Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines** which provide flowcharts and proformas for use in suspension and expulsion procedures.

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time.
Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.
- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.
Where students are required to undertake school work after school, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes.

The principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship (for example, where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.

- Convening of a support group (See Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for process required)
 - NO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS USED AT OUR SCHOOL

REFERENCES

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf
School Accountability and Improvement Framework	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/saf.aspx
Calmer Classrooms	
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/legislation.aspx
Safe Schools Bully Stoppers	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/wholeschoolengage.aspx
Whole school engagement strategies and supports	
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/legalobligations.aspx http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/

Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/humanrights.aspx
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/legislation/Pages/act2006.aspx
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/lolsocialmediacodes.aspx

The following policies/documents support student engagement and well being in our school:

- Student Engagement & Well Being Policy 2014
- Bullying Behaviour and Harassment Policy 2014
- Attendance Policy 2013

- Transition Policy 2014
- Equal Opportunity Policy 2008

*Appendix A**School Council Request for Junior SRC to have input:***Foster PS is a Learning Environment where there are Rights & Responsibilities.****The school is a learning environment.**

As soon as you enter our school you must demonstrate appropriate behaviours:

- At the beginning of the day all students may enter the school at 8:50 am when the bag bell rings and there is a teacher present in their classroom.
- At the end of recess and lunchtimes Grades Prep -4 must line up quietly and wait for their teachers, while Grades 5-6 may walk in quietly and meet their teachers in their classroom.
- Only ever walk through the school and around the buildings.
- You only enter other classrooms or teaching places with a teacher's permission.
- Personal iPods and mobile phones must be left at the school office during school time.
- Keep noise to a minimum in the buildings and where others are learning.
- Respect self, others and school property when in the playground.

In the Classroom:

1. You and the teacher have the right to do your best learning, therefore:
 - Punctuality-you need to be on time.
 - Be organized in your own learning space.
 - Attention-you need to listen when others speak.
 - Effort-make an effort not an excuse when learning.
 - Absorb yourself in your learning and manage distractions.

2. You and the teacher have the right to feel comfortable and safe in the classroom, therefore:
 - You should pass all objects by hand
 - You need to speak with respect and use manners
 - You should keep your hands to yourself
 - You should not help yourself to other's belongings.
 - Teacher supervision helps students feel safe
 - Monitor those who have allergies
 - Promote the habit of washing hands
 - When directions are given, stop means stop and no means no