STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & WELLBEING POLICY

PURPOSE

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

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

Foster 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 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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POLICY

1. School profile

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.

Our student population is an even mix of students who live locally in Foster; and from the surrounding small townships and rural communities who use the school services to attend our school. Our students have a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds representative of our wider community.

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.

English and Mathematics remain central to the curriculum, underpinned by an emphasis on Thinking Skills. Our school offers a range of specialist classes which appeal to different learning styles and includes an incursion each term addressing areas such as drama, science, writing, music or performance skills. Sport, Music, Art, Dance and Drama are popular in the wider school community and students are encouraged to participate both in and out of school hours. Participation in government initiatives such as "Achievement Program," "Sporting School's" and "Resource Smart Schools" has raised the profile of student health and wellbeing; and sustainability of the environment. The school is in the tenth year of being a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden School. This program is a timetabled part of the curriculum accessed by all students from Grades 3-6. Foster Primary School values its strong links with the wider community with volunteers supporting school programs in areas such as LAP, classroom helpers, Camps & Excursions and the Kitchen Garden.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Foster Primary School is a warm, caring and welcoming school with students at the centre of every decision we make. We aim to develop students who are confident, creative lifelog learners. We believe everyone can learn to learn. Resilience, reciprocity, resourcefulness and reflectiveness (Guy Claxton) are promoted and we always try our best! Our school is a 'Be You' school. We build positive relationships and social responsibility in a safe caring environment, using School Wide Positive Behaviours to support our students in making good choices. We have strong pastoral care. We foster independence, promote inclusivity and embrace individuality.

Our school values, based upon, "Our Best Always' were developed in consultation with staff, students and families and are:

- ➢ Be Respectful
- ➢ Be Caring
- ➢ Be Safe
- ➢ Be a Learner

Our philosophy, vision and school values are fully outlined in the Foster School website fosterps.vic.edu.au (See School Philosophy under the Home page entry).

3. Engagement strategies

Foster Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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.

We recognize that absences and late arrivals have a negative impact on student engagement, wellbeing and learning; we are therefore actively working to address these issues and are pleased to have seen a fall in absenteeism in some grades.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

<u>Universal (Whole -School Prevention Strategies)</u>

We are committed to promoting gender equality and respectful relationships through our participation in Victoria's Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships initiative. RRRR supports school leaders, educators and our school community to promote and model respect and equality and to teach our children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence.

Our focus is on providing a teaching and learning atmosphere based on community happiness and excellence, which improves student learning across all curriculum strands, decreases student behavioural issues in classrooms and the playground and 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 'Be You' or 'Social & Emotional Learning' underpin our curriculum
- Programs that support a safe environment to encourage open discussions, 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 and diverse cognitive styles
- Programs dealing with issues such as Drug Education form part of the school's Student Wellbeing program

The school accesses Department of Education and Training regional and network staff with wellbeing and/or welfare expertise as required.

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.

Foster Primary School is committed to a social and learning environment that:

- Provides an educational environment which recognises values and develops student wellbeing
- Emphasises high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- Prioritises positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- Creates a positive school culture that is engaging, fair, respectful and inclusive
- Builds a safe and supportive school environment
- Expects positive, supportive and respectful relationships that value diversity and gender equality
- Promotes pro-social values and behaviours
- Encourages student participation and student voice
- Proactively engages with parents/carers being responsive to them as partners in learning
- Implements preventative and early intervention approaches
- Responds to individual students
- Identifies and supports students who are, or may be, at risk
- Links with the local community
- Has clear expectations of individual responsibility and fosters positive relationships among students
- Encourages active and meaningful student participation and provide all students with opportunities to contribute and provide feedback to the school and the classroom.
- Includes pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement
- Minimises anxiety, increases resilience and ensures that students develop a readiness to enter their new environment and make successful transitions between year levels
- Provides a welcoming school culture which openly engages all families as equal partners in the education of their children
- Analyses and is 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
- Uses a Growth Mindset (Carol Dweck) and Gradual Release instructional framework (Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher) to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction that is evidenced-based, and incorporates high yield teaching practices into all lessons
- Includes a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follows the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- Our school's values 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

- Acknowledges positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- Monitors student attendance and implements attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- Ensures 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, Welfare Officer and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- Creates opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- Welcomes students to self-refer to the Welfare Officer 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
- Engages in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
    - Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships
    - School Wide Positive Behaviour
- Includes programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- Provides opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- Uses buddy programs and peer support programs

Targeted (Additional Support and/or Intervention Procedures for individual students)

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 wellbeing, 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, Numeracy Support or Learning Assistance Program (LAP).

Additional support for behavioural and/or social-emotional needs will be discussed with the Principal and/or via Student Support Group meetings. A range of strategies may be considered including Individual Learning Plans and regular care team meetings.

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

4. Identifying students in need of support

Foster 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. Our 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
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- 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 and appropriate community groups
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

Our school implements a range of strategies to 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 students and their parent/caregiver to talk about how best to help the student engage with the school
➢ considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
➢ running regular SSG meetings to create individual educational support plans and individual behavioural support plans for all students requiring additional support
➢ referring the student to school-based wellbeing supports, Student Support Services, appropriate external supports such as ChildFirst and DHHS

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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
➢ running regular Care Team meetings for all students with a disability, in Out of Home Care and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

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, 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.

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)

The Charter of Human Right and Responsibilities Act 2006 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 DET 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.

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 DET 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

6. Student behavioural expectations

Three policies developed and implemented at Foster Primary School determine the management of student behaviour.

One The Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
Students have the right to: • to 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	Students have a responsibility to demonstrate appropriate behaviours that help them, other students, teachers, volunteers and visitors to create a safe, comfortable and effective learning environment. Examples of these behaviours are stated in the *Student Code of Conduct Policy*: • listen when others speak • speak with respect and use manners • make an effort not an excuse when learning • manage distractions and remain focused on learning

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Rights	Responsibilities
Parents/Carers have the 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	Parents/Carers have the responsibility to: • promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling 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
Teachers have a right to: • 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	Teachers have a responsibility to • 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

Two Bullying Prevention Policy

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with our Bullying Prevention Policy. (See under Policies: fosterps.vic.edu.au)

Three Behaviour Management (See under Polices: fosterps.vic.edu.au)

School Wide Positive Behaviours

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).

When a student is in breach of the behavioural standards of our school community Foster 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:

- 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
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

7. Engaging with families

Foster Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students

8. Evaluation

Foster 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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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	http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/childsafetycommissioner/downloads/calmer_classrooms.pdf

Ratified by School Council October 2020. Due for review 2023.

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
Whole school engagement strategies and supports	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/wholeschoolengage.aspx
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

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