



Foster Primary School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Foster Primary School on 03 5682 2370 or foster.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

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, 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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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
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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.

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.

Foster Primary School values its strong links with the wider community with volunteers supporting school programs in areas such classroom helpers, camps and excursions and the Kitchen Garden.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Foster 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.

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 lifelong learners. We believe everyone can learn to learn. Resilience, reciprocity, resourcefulness and reflectiveness is promoted, and we always try our best!

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 full Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available on our school's website.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Foster 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

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

- 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 sustg
- 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
- teachers at Foster Primary School use a [NAME] instructional framework 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 Foster Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, 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
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools

- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities, leadership opportunities) special day (eg. IDAHOBIT Day)
- 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

- The school has a teacher responsible to monitor the health and wellbeing of students in our care. Another teacher (Disability and Inclusion Coordinator) acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Aboriginal 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 – refer to our Aboriginal Learning Wellbeing and Safety action plan (on our website) for further information
- Our English as a second language students are supported through EAL educator, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- 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](#)
- 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 appropriate responses to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

[This section should include student specific strategies that may be considered and applied on a case by case basis. Where possible, we encourage schools to explain the strategies, which can include links to information on the Department’s Policy and Advisory Library such as:

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

[The text below is included as a sample only:]

Foster 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 this maybe informally or in a formal SSG structure.
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- Providing an onsite Occupational Therapist to support families and students.
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports
 - Learning Adjustments
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst / Orange Door
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator
 - Berry Street Programs

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.
- Liaising with Courts, DFFH and Victoria Police.
- Providing food through the breakfast program where necessary.

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. Foster 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, mental health, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- Recommendations by allied health and medical professionals.

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, wellbeing staff 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 and our Whole School Positive Behaviour Expectations.

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

1. The Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>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 <i>Student Code of Conduct Policy</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<p>Parents/Carers have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the 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 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
<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 environmentbe 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 policyknow how students learn and how to teach them effectivelyknow the content they teachknow their studentsplan and assess for effective learningcreate 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 Edupass tablet at the Office on arrival and departure
- Carry their Edupass slip while on site and sign out upon leaving.
- 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

2. 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)

3. Behaviour Management (See under Policies: 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

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 and 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, Foster 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.

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Foster 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.

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- 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
- Compass Chronicle data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- Compass, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS (Student Online Case System)
- School developed surveys
- Teacher Feedback Survey.

Foster 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
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

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

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	9 November 2022
Consultation	School Council – November 9 2022 School community via website – ongoing Reference in the school newsletter – monthly
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before term 4, 2024