

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELFARE POLICY

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## **1. Policy Statement:**

Our school is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are mutually linked.

It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher is a vital source of support and a determinant in the success of their students. The teachers at this school will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. This school recognises the need to be engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Our school strives to be a learning community where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are valued and respected. Excellence in learning requires strong home-school partnerships. We provide clear and continuous communication and encourage parent participation in the learning process.

## **2. Guidelines**

**2.1** The school will focus on establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers and students, and establishing a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.

**2.2** The school will collaboratively develop and implement a fair and respectful whole-school behaviour management approach.

**2.3** The school will encourage and provide multiple opportunities for parents/carers to play an active part in the life of the school and the education of their children.

**2.4** The school's curriculum will include daily circles and wellbeing programs to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.

**2.5** The school will promote active student participation and provide students with a sense of ownership of their environment.

**2.6** The school will support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners.

**2.7** The school will have processes in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. The school will establish individual learning improvement plans for students at risk or for extension to monitor and evaluate progress.

**2.8** The school will build strong links with the local community to gain access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of our school and our teachers to respond to the needs of the students.

### 3. Program

**3.1.1** The curriculum programs of the school will recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the school's students by:

- accommodating different learning styles and rates of learning
- intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs

**3.1.2** The school is committed to the delivery of an inclusive curriculum that ensures all our students have access to a quality education to meet their diverse needs.

To improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities, the following key strategies are in place:

- providing parents/carers with a learning program that best suits their child's needs
- involving students and parents in programming and planning decisions
- supporting students access to programs that let them pursue achievable pathways
- ensuring the expertise of teachers working in our school is maintained and developed

**3.2** Our school will implement a whole-school behaviour management approach and promotes building relationships.

The key focus will be on prevention and early intervention strategies that:

- establish consistent school-wide and classroom expectations
- establish school-wide and classroom processes for early identification of students experiencing academic and/ or behaviour difficulty
- provide school-wide and classroom processes for ongoing collection and use of data for decision-making
- empower students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- provide a physical environment conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

*Calmer Classrooms: A Guide to Working with Traumatized Children*, developed by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, provides teachers and schools with effective relationship based classroom and school-wide strategies.

**3.3** Involvement in our school by parents and carers helps children achieve the best possible learning outcomes. Parents and carers will be provided with the opportunity to participate in school life formally through School Council and the School Council sub-committees (Education, Buildings and Grounds, Fundraising- The Parent Group). Informal participation includes volunteering in school events such as the Fete committee, classroom sessions, excursions, as well as staying up to date with news about what is happening in education via our newsletter.

**3.4** The school's strategies to promote building relationships will be whole-school in focus and include close links with curriculum. The Australian Curriculum Standards (AusVELS) includes the learning domain of Physical, Personal and Social Learning, which encourages students to work with others, and to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school.

**3.5** Student voice and participation is about valuing people and valuing the learning that results when we engage the capacities and multiple voices in the school. The school promotes active 'student participation' as an avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating school change. Student participation ranges from The Student Voice group, School Captains, Vice Captains, House Captains, Year 4 Buddy Program, Year 5/6 Playground Buddies program, Music, Art, Sport and Library Captains.

**3.6** The school will support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. It provides an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning. The school will ensure that the unique experiences and skills of our students' families enrich the learning environment and the school community.

The school will facilitate successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:

- ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's Student Welfare Policy
- conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers and students to contribute
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families as participants in school decision-making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school
- providing opportunities to enhance parenting knowledge and skills

**3.7.2** The school will promote and maintain high levels of student attendance and participation through:

- articulating high expectations to all members of the school community
- adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absences
- following up student absences promptly and consistently
- the implementation of eCases to accurately track student attendance
- The Student Voice implementing, 'It's not Okay to be away'
- creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- providing early identification of, and supportive intervention for, students at risk of non-attendance
- linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support

**3.8** The school will use coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. The school will provide the following support structures:

- monitoring of and responding to, protracted student absences
- protocol for mandatory reporting
- Student Support Groups for children in need

**3.9** The school will utilise relevant external student wellbeing support services in order to identify and address the barriers to learning that individual students may be facing. Such services to provide support for students and staff include:

- psychologist for psychological and academic assessment
- Department of Human Services case managers and support workers
- social workers to provide services such as counselling, social skills and anger management programs
- local parent support groups
- relevant DET support staff
- C.A.S.A. [Centre Against Sexual Assault]
- School Focused Youth Service (SFYS)

#### **4. LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)**

Appendix A: Student Management Policy and Processes

Key Link connected with this policy is: DET - Child Health and Wellbeing

#### **5. EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

**This policy was ratified by O.S.P.S School Council on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2015.**

## APPENDIX A:

### SCHOOL

#### STUDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCESSES

##### 1. Whole-School Prevention Statement

Implementing preventative and early intervention strategies to support positive behaviours is a key part of the Student Engagement Policy.

This school aims to foster a positive attitude to school, build regular attendance, and enhance student engagement by:

- developing the individual's capacity to build and sustain relationships
- promoting school attendance
- encouraging participation in a wide variety of school activities
- understanding and implementing our school values
- engendering a sense of belonging to a caring, inclusive community
- providing a wide range of learning experiences to cater for individual student abilities, learning styles and interests

The school has a comprehensive range of programs and strategies in place for the development of behaviours and attitudes that enhance student engagement, attendance and positive behaviours. These programs and strategies complement the following school values:

##### **\*EXCELLENCE**

- **Strive to achieve your personal best.**
- **Be persistent in everything you do-never give up.**

##### **As a student:**

Try hard at school, it doesn't matter if you make a mistake just try your best at all times. Make sure your work is always neat.

##### **\*RESPECT**

- **Treat people with tolerance, acceptance, understanding and respect.**
- **Show appreciation of, and care for the school and the environment.**

##### **As a student:**

Use your manners, and speak to all people in a nice way. Keep your classroom and the school grounds clean and tidy.

##### **\*INTEGRITY**

- **Be trustworthy and honest with each other**
- **Take and accept responsibility for your own actions.**

##### **As a student:**

Tell the truth. Make sensible choices about your behaviour and what you are doing. Follow the school rules.

## **\*WORKING TOGETHER**

- **Actively contribute to your school.**
- **Learn from each other.**

### **As a student:**

Listen to your teacher and classmates.

Work together with others

Care for your school by looking after it inside and outside.

By promoting these values at whole school assemblies, through the school newsletter and website, during discussions with students to reinforce positive behaviours and class meetings, all members of the school community are made aware of the behaviour expectations with regard to consideration of the diverse needs (cultural, physical, religious) of its members.

Some of the programs and experiences offered to students to promote student engagement and demonstration of the school values are:

- Prep Transition Program
- Year 5 Transition program with South Oakleigh Secondary College
- Cooperative sporting, cultural and social activities with network schools
- Immersion Sustainability program in Year 3
- Productions in Years 2, 4 and 6
- Buddy Program linking Preps with Year 4 students
- Playground Buddy program
- Provision of counselling through the Student Support Services
- Out of School Hours Care program offering a wide variety of sports, art and craft activities, celebrations and cooking.
- Transition programs across the school to ensure a smooth, happy start to each year
- Age appropriate drug and sex education program
- Healthy lifestyles promoted through fitness programs and good nutrition
- Student Leadership Program – School Captains, House Captains, The Student Voice group
- House System – students work as a team to gain success in house activities such as weekly House Points, Cross Country, House Swimming and House Athletics
- Positive behaviours linked to the Student Code of Conduct and school values
- Promoting school attendance through “It’s Not OK to be Away” program through the Student Voice group
- Student Recognition through weekly ‘Valued Student’ awards at assembly
- Individual Learning Plans for students where appropriate

All members of the school community are encouraged to participate in formal or informal discussions about issues that are related to school improvement. Consultation takes the following forms:

### **Students:**

Student Attitudes to School Survey

Student Leadership

Student Focus Groups

Class meetings

**Staff:**

Staff Opinion Survey  
Leadership Team meetings  
Performance & Development Plan individual meetings  
Staff/Consultative meetings  
Staff Learning/Sharing sessions  
School Council and associated committees

**Parents:**

Parent Opinion Survey  
Parent/Teacher interviews  
Parent Focus groups  
Surveys to collect opinion about specific issues, e.g. Home/school Communication, school policies etc.  
School Council and associated committees  
Working parties for specific purposes

**2. Rights and Responsibilities:**

At Oakleigh South Primary School every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.

**2.1 - Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)**

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity in a manner that is consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006). This charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equity for all it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires that public authorities, including government schools and their employees act compatibly with human rights and consider them when making decisions and delivering services. The four basic principles are Freedom, Respect, Equity and Dignity.

**2.2 - Equal Opportunity**

The Equal Opportunity Act 1995 and the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 clearly specify ways in which it is unlawful to discriminate against a person and this is supported by the school's Equal Opportunity policy.

**2.3 - The Disability Discrimination Act 1992**

This legislation informs the Disability Standards for Education 2005 and makes explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students. This means that Oakleigh South Primary School must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. These 'reasonable adjustments' must take into account the interests of all parties affected, including staff and other students and preclude the imposition of 'unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation'.

**2.4 - Bullying**

At Oakleigh South Primary School our aim is to provide a positive school culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach and the right to feel safe and secure in the school environment. Definitions of bullying are stated in the Anti-Bullying policy and we strive to promote a secure and happy environment by taking positive action to minimise bullying. Parents and carers are informed of the school's expectations through various forms of communication such as at school assemblies, through the school newsletter and website, class meetings and parent forums. It is important that this

information is communicated in order that they may take equal responsibility for the promotion of their rights and responsibility.

## 2.5 - Cyber Bullying

Students need to be familiar with the possibilities offered by the internet and associated technologies to extend the way they communicate and collaborate with others and research information. At Oakleigh South Primary School we strive to ensure that all students develop skills in appropriate internet usage as stated in the Information & Communications (ICT) Policy. All students acknowledge their understanding of appropriate internet usage behaviours by countersigning a Student Code of Conduct relating to the use of information and communication technologies at the beginning of each year. With the proliferation of communication tools and social networking opportunities, this Code of Conduct is updated annually and the school's associated policies are likewise reviewed to ensure up-to-date shared understandings about appropriate use.

At Oakleigh South Primary School we agree that the following rights and responsibilities relate to all members of the school community:

1. All members of the school community have a right to fully participate in an environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.
2. Our students, their parents/carers and staff will treat each other with dignity and respect at all times.
3. All members of the school community have the right to equal opportunity.
4. Diversity and individuality will be encouraged and valued.
5. All school policies, operations and programs will be developed in the spirit of fairness and equity and encourage participation in the decision making process.
6. All members of the community are responsible for contributing to the maintenance of a safe and purposeful school environment.
7. Students and staff have to right to use information and communications technology in a safe and inclusive environment free of cyber-bullying.

### Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p><b>Students have a right to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Participate fully in the school's educational program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students have a responsibility to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.</li> <li>• As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take</li> </ul>

	<p>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.</p>
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### Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p><b>Parents/carers have a right to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child’s educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours</li> <li>• Ensure their child’s punctuality and regular attendance at school</li> <li>• Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child’s learning.</li> <li>• Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students</li> <li>• Encourage their child to follow school behavioural expectations as contained in the Student Code of Conduct</li> </ul>

### Rights and Responsibilities of Staff

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

### 3. Shared Expectations:

At Oakleigh South Primary School, in consultation with the school community a set of school values have been developed to guide the manner in which each person behaves and interacts with others.

#### STUDENTS

<b>EXCELLENCE</b>  *Strive to achieve your personal best.  *Be persistent in everything you do-never give up.	<b><u>As a student:</u></b>  *Try hard at school, it doesn't matter if you make a mistake just try your best at all times.  *Make sure your work is always neat.
<b>RESPECT</b>  *Treat people with tolerance, acceptance, understanding and respect.  *Show appreciation of, and care for the school and the environment.	<b><u>As a student:</u></b>  *Use your manners, and speak to all people in a nice way.  *Keep your classroom and the school grounds clean and tidy.
<b>INTEGRITY</b>  *Be trustworthy and honest with each other  *Take and accept responsibility for your own actions.	<b><u>As a student:</u></b>  *Tell the truth.  *Make sensible choices about your behaviour and what you are doing.  *Follow the school rules.
<b>WORKING TOGETHER</b>  *Actively contribute to your school.  *Learn from each other.	<b><u>As a student:</u></b>  *Listen to your teacher and classmates.  *Work together with others  *Care for your school by looking after it inside and outside

### Shared Expectations:

At Oakleigh South Primary School, in consultation with the school community a set of school values have been developed to guide the manner in which each person behaves and interacts with others.

### PARENTS / CARERS

<b>EXCELLENCE</b>  *Strive to achieve your personal best.  *Be persistent in everything you do-never give up.	<b><u>As a parent/carer:</u></b>  *Support your child in their learning by sending them to school on a regular basis.  *Assist your child with any homework they may have
<b>RESPECT</b>  *Treat people with tolerance, acceptance, understanding and respect.  *Show appreciation of, and care for the school and the environment.	<b><u>As a parent/carer:</u></b>  Model good manners and speak to others in a nice way.  *Support your child to look after school property e.g. Library books.
<b>INTEGRITY</b>  *Be trustworthy and honest with each other  *Take and accept responsibility for your own actions.	<b><u>As a parent/carer:</u></b>  *Communicate with the teacher and let them know of anything that could affect your child at school.  *Let the school deal with any issues that may arise in the playground. Don't take matters into your own hands
<b>WORKING TOGETHER</b>  *Actively contribute to your school.  *Learn from each other.	<b><u>As a parent/carer:</u></b>  *Support the school by helping out wherever you can.  *Respect our rules and do not drive into the school grounds.

## Shared Expectations:

At Oakleigh South Primary School, in consultation with the school community a set of school values have been developed to guide the manner in which each person behaves and interacts with others.

### Staff: Principals, Teachers, Education Support Staff

<p><b>EXCELLENCE</b></p> <p>*Strive to achieve your personal best.</p> <p>*Be persistent in everything you do-never give up.</p>	<p><b><u>As Staff:</u></b></p> <p>*Provide supportive environment where students take risks in their learning and persist in completing tasks</p> <p>*Encourage and support students to set realistic goals and strive to achieve these goals</p> <p>*Encourage and support students to achieve their best</p> <p>*Learn together and model life-long learning</p> <p>*Foster the skills of problem solving by encouraging students to seek alternative approaches to their learning</p> <p>*Take ownership of behaviour choices and consequences</p>
<p><b>RESPECT</b></p> <p>*Treat people with tolerance, acceptance, understanding and respect.</p> <p>*Show appreciation of, and care for the school and the environment.</p>	<p><b><u>As Staff:</u></b></p> <p>*Respect the rights and ideas of others in our school community</p> <p>*Value others, themselves and understand and tolerate differences</p> <p>*Demonstrate positive acceptance of others rights, opinions and choices.</p> <p>*Display courtesy and manners at all times</p> <p>*Accept individual differences and be tolerant of others</p> <p>*Show concern and regard for the wellbeing of others</p> <p>*Care for property, equipment and the environment</p>
<p><b>INTEGRITY</b></p> <p>*Be trustworthy and honest with each other</p> <p>*Take and accept responsibility for your own actions.</p>	<p><b><u>As Staff:</u></b></p> <p>*Display the qualities of openness, honesty and fair play</p> <p>*Make fair and honest judgements in their decision-making</p> <p>*Have equal opportunity where everyone is valued and heard</p> <p>*Take responsibility for their own professional learning and the learning of all students</p> <p>*Provide the students with clear expectations and behaviour choices and consequences</p>

<p><b>WORKING TOGETHER</b></p> <p>*Actively contribute to your school.</p> <p>*Learn from each other.</p>	<p><b><u>As Staff:</u></b></p> <p>* Ensuring that planning, the sharing of resources and knowledge and a commitment to consistency across each year level, so every student is receiving the best quality teaching practice.</p> <p>*The learning environment is one that is engaging, safe, caring and positive for every child.</p> <p>*Take extra responsibilities within the school, individually or in groups.</p>
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#### 4. School Action and Consequences

Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the School under any circumstances.

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices. Each year will begin with a two week unit of work with emphasis on building relationships with ongoing activities throughout the year.

Teachers will plan for age specific activities such as:

- Values education introduced for new students and reinforced for other students
- Establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- Ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole-school expectations
- Providing personalised learning programs (ILPs) 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 (Student Leadership program)
- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.
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Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- Understanding the student's background and needs
- Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students, parents/carers and teachers
- Implementing broader strategies which will include:
  - Involving and supporting the parents/carers,
  - Involving the student wellbeing coordinator
  - Tutoring/peer tutoring
  - Mentoring and/or counselling
  - Convening student support group meetings
  - Developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour and attendance plans
  - Involving DET (Department of Education and Training) and/or community support agencies.

## Discipline procedures – Suspension and Expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx>

This Guidance operationalises Ministerial Order 625 - Suspensions and Expulsions, which takes effect from 1 March, 2014. It provides guidance as to how you fulfill your obligations under Ministerial Order 625.

See: Ministerial Order 625 - Suspensions and Expulsions (pdf - 3.94mb)

Only a Principal has the authority to suspend a student from the school.

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.

When appropriate, parents/carers will 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 the family (for example where car travel is involved), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.
- Convening of a support group.

## Key Reference

Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participationengagementguidance.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participationengagementguidance.aspx</a>
Charter of Human Rights	<a href="http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/">http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/</a>