

Yarrabah School

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT 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.

Yarrabah 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. That's why we have developed and use a systematic model for supporting the wellbeing and learning needs of our students called the 'Integrated Services Teams' model (IST).

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
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POLICY

1. School profile

Yarrabah School is a newly built school located in the beautiful bayside suburb of Aspendale only 500 meters from the sandy beaches of Aspendale and Mordialloc. Yarrabah School caters to students aged between 2.8 and 18 years (233) who have a diagnosed intellectual disability ranging from moderate to profound. Yarrabah School is a single campus Pre K - 12 school organised around four distinct stages of learning including Early Years (2.8 - 6), Primary Years (Ages 7 - 12), Lower Secondary Years (Ages 13 - 15) and Upper Secondary (16 - 18).

Facilities:

The students and staff enjoy first-class facilities which include: an indoor 10 meter warm water pool, perceptual motor room, cafe, canteen, art room, music room, science room, school hall with modified basketball court, manual activities room, fitness center, out of school care building, staff room and staff collaborative spaces, meeting rooms, library, staff resource room, therapy rooms, sensory spaces, nurture room, community hub space,

administration area, purpose-built early education building, well resourced outdoor areas, fitness oval, horticulture zones, and well-maintained grounds and outdoor areas next to the Mordialloc bike track, cricket oval and soon to be built Kingston aquatic facility.

Yarrabah Motto:

The small school with the big heart

Yarrabah Mission:

To provide a nurturing, educational environment that maximises each student potential.

Vision:

Yarrabah's vision is to provide an individualised and safe student-centred learning environment that promotes active learning, encourages adventure, independence and self-esteem maximising student potential. The school provides all students access to curriculum and support services in preparation for life after school as a valued member of the community.

School Philosophy:

- Relationships are critically important and strengthened through positive communication, a sense of connectedness, the integration of services and reinforced in our school values of which are welcoming in nature and team-oriented.
- An explicit instructional approach will be evidence-based, engaging, scaffolded and ensure the steps to success are differentiated and well understood
- Abilities of students should be profiled, evaluated, supported by therapy, assessed using developmental checklists and improved using individualised approaches
- Learning for life is reinforced in each section, during every lesson using relevant learning resources that encourage a hands on guided approach to developing communication skills, life skills, work skills, play skills, academic understandings, personal and social capabilities.

School Rules:

The school has four positive school rules reinforced and on display across each section of the school in each class environment.

- I will be kind
- I will be safe
- I will be responsible
- I am here to learn

Section Goals:

Every year sections will develop individual goals for their section. Depending on the students, their abilities and staff in each section, goals might change from year to year. The goals are based on factors that support transition throughout the school.

School Goals 2022-2026

- To improve the outcomes of students in literacy
- To improve the outcomes of students in numeracy
- To improve students' mental health and wellbeing

2. SCHOOL VALUES and EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS

Yarrabah 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.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy is available online at: www.yarrabah.sch.vic.edu.au

TOLERANCE

- Actively listen to others and don't judge
- Respect others, their ideas and opinions
- Make your actions consistent
- Be respectful of others, their culture, diversity and diversity

RESPECT

- Understanding that we are unique and valuable
- Speak and act with courtesy: being mindful of body language and voice tone
- Appreciate and be receptive to individual opinion and beliefs
- Listen to others
- Acknowledge the achievements of others with dignity

INTEGRITY

- To be true to yourself, i.e. act according to your true feelings and beliefs
- To be open, honest and fair with everyone
- To do the right thing
- Admit if you have made a mistake and be sincere with your apologies
- Avoid negative behaviour that is hurtful to others such as gossip

CARE & SUPPORT

- To be a compassionate member of the school community and regularly review own performance and commitment to the school.
- Be supportive, not judgemental
- Be flexible
- Listen – do not judge
- Be truthful
- Be aware / mindful of a person's feelings, self esteem and health

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3. WELLBEING and ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Yarrabah School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Yarrabah School use an REAL framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction that ensures that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Yarrabah 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, 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)
- buddy programs, peers support programs
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted

- each school section has a leader, and department head responsible for their section, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their section, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background by undertaking regular student support groups, liaising with cultural support groups and government agencies
- 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 health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Yarrabah School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

Individual

Yarrabah 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
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based therapy services (Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy)
 - school based Mental Health and Wellbeing services (Mental Health Practitioner and primary school Social Worker)
 - school based engagement services (Engagement learning Specialist, Inclusion Outreach Coach and Intensive Interaction Coordinator)
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst/Orange Door
 - Re-engagement programs such as, Avenues Education and Navigator

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

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student

- *monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family*
- *engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers*
- *running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:*
 - *with a disability*
 - *in Out of Home Care*
 - *with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

Many strategies that we use will be based on the following guidance material:

- [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](#) (only applicable to Secondary Schools)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

4. Identifying students in need of support

Yarrabah School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The schools Integrated Support Team (IST) supports the overall development of Student Mental Health and Wellbeing and plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Yarrabah School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- *personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled*
- *attendance records*
- *academic performance*
- *observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation documented in chronicle items using the school management system (Compass)*
- *attendance, detention and suspension data*
- *engagement with families*
- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*
- *referrals from staff to IST services*

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school

- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- 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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy/Student Code of Conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy.

Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Yarrabah School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- *warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate*
- *teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour*
- *withdrawal of privileges*
- *referral to the Year Level Coordinator*
- *restorative practices*
- *behaviour support and intervention meetings*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

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

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

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

The Principal of Yarrabah School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

7. Engaging with families

Yarrabah 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 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

Yarrabah 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
- referral data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS.

Yarrabah 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
- included in transition and enrolment packs
- included as annual reference in school newsletter
- made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

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

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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):
 - [Attendance](#)
 - [Student Engagement](#)
 - [Child Safe Standards](#)
 - [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
 - [Students with Disability](#)
 - [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)

- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)
- Related Policies:
 - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
 - Bullying Prevention Policy
 - Inclusion and Diversity Policy
 - Statement of Values and School Philosophy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Duty of Care Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2023
Consultation	School Council, May 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2025