



# 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.

Magpie PS 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

Magpie PS is a small rural school on the edge of Ballarat, Magpie continues to offer a rich alternative for families moving away from the larger city schools. The school continues to grow steadily with the school now having 94 enrolments in 2020 compared to 42 in 2012. The school has 5 classrooms with a multipurpose building, art and science room. Focused and informed teaching delivers a personalized learning approach for all students by a staff team that demonstrates the school values of positive relationships through caring, respect and practical organization. Children are persistent in their approach to learning and they are supported by people they trust and respond to with enthusiasm. Classroom and modern teaching spaces continued to allow staff to deliver school programs in recognition of the latest pedagogical approaches that capitalize on the important personal learning needs of individual students. Magpie PS values smaller classrooms as we know

students learn better in this environment. Currently we have a Principal, 7 teachers and 6 ES staff and 2.5 Office staff.

The School Council focus and direction statement still places clear emphasis on core skills in literacy and numeracy with other programs to be specifically supported in areas of creativity, health, fitness and environmental studies. Art, social education, science & PE specialist programs deliver a varied curriculum program with direct intervention support for all children at risk in literacy and numeracy. The school sport program is comprehensive and covers athletics, camping, swimming, major games and a cultural activity program and Magpie Primary school has again provided sharing and leadership for other small local schools. The staff team is working to increase the quality of teaching with a focus on student centered learning that helps the school to develop a reputation as being a great school. Lisa Lorenzen heads up our Wellbeing program. The school also has strong representation from the Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Magpie PS'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 Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along & Resilience at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to encourage all students to develop academic and social skills that promote successful attitudes and relationships that inspire them to create their own pathways to the future

Our Statement of Values is available online at our website.

## 3. Engagement strategies

Magpie PS 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.

***A summary of our whole school approach is as follows:***

### **Whole School Approach**

- 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
- 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 subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations

- teachers at Magpie PS an 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 Magpie PS 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 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 our Student Leadership Body and other forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, other staff or the 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 and encouraged to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, or any other teacher 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
  - ESmart
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs

### **Individual**

**Magpie PS also incorporates the following into our Wellbeing Curriculum to assist students:**

- Student Support Groups, see: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroup.s.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator

- Lookout

Magpie PS has implemented a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement.

**These are:**

- 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
- Offering alternative school programs
- referring the student to:
  - school-based wellbeing supports
  - 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
  - Re-engagement programs such as 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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

#### **4. Identifying students in need of support**

Magpie PS 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. Magpie PS 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
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families

- self-referrals or referrals from peers

## 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.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations

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 Magpie PS Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Magpie PS 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
- referral to senior management
- 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>

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

## 7. Engaging with families

Magpie PS 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 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

Magpie PS 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**

Additional information can be located from the following related policies: Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards, etc.

## **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and is scheduled for review in 3 years (2022), unless prior amendments occur to this policy prior to 2022.