



**Brunswick South-West**  
Primary School

## **STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

**Brunswick South West Primary School's vision is for our children to become curious life-long learners, inclusive of everyone and respectful of themselves, others and the environment. We are committed to nurturing the individual strengths of all children in our care, at the same time as fostering a rich, warm and welcoming community, where we look out for each other in a spirit of care and kindness. The behaviours of each of us are important: the multi-age educational philosophies in place at Brunswick South West Primary School emphasise that older children are role models for younger ones, just as teachers and other adult members of our community aspire to embody core values of respect, inclusion and curiosity as we learn and work together. We derive strength and resilience from the support and care of those around us. A school culture that allows everyone to find their place of belonging provides a solid foundation for building knowledge, skills, friendships and personal wellbeing.**

### **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.

Brunswick South West Primary School (BSWPS) 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

At BSWPS, we nurture the individual strengths of all children in our care, at the same time as fostering a warm and welcoming community. We strive to develop stimulating, inspiring and developmentally-appropriate educational programs that enable each child to reach their potential physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and creatively. We are deeply committed to state education and believe firmly in a state school's capacity to deliver first-rate educational outcomes. Further reflecting our inclusive values, Waratah Special Development School has a Satellite Unit within the school and Waratah's students are integrated in a variety of activities across all year levels.

BSWPS has approximately 450 students. Students come from diverse cultures and backgrounds; the overall socio-economic profile is high and the proportion of students with English as a second language is also high. Our school's atmosphere is typically happy, calm and friendly.

Our facilities include: the original 1927 three-storey building, recently refurbished; an astutely designed and recently refurbished 1970's grey brick complex; a large assembly/recreation hall with stage; a state-of-the-art library; designated art room; and networked computers with projection screens throughout the school. A 1-to-1 Digital Device Program operates for students in years 3 to 6. The school's extensive, award-winning grounds include passive and active play areas, a vegetable garden and orchard, a large playing field, basketball and netball courts, a new adventure playground and recent landscaping works.

Strong literacy and numeracy curricula underpin all our programs. Information technologies are embedded in the curriculum. Our openness to new ideas and educational research initiatives ensures that our curriculum stays rigorous and lively and that our students are challenged and encouraged to extend themselves.

We offer high quality specialist programs in Chinese, Library, Physical Education, Visual and Performing Arts and Gardening. Complementary programs include Student Representative Council, Interschool Sport, Bike Ed, Intensive Swimming Program, Talking the Talk, chess,

gardening and camps. An After School Performing Arts Program delivers music lessons on a range of instruments and circus/drama classes. Out of School Hours Care and holiday programs operate on site.

Our staff is a cohesive team, particularly in the areas of curriculum planning and development, with opportunities throughout the week to team-teach. We develop distinctive educational programs based on student learning needs; these promote diversity, inclusiveness and cooperation, and have a positive influence on the school's character.

Parents and carers are valued contributors to the school and play a significant role in making BSWPS a vibrant and welcoming place to be. They assist in classroom activities, organise fundraising, initiate enjoyable social and cultural events, and play important roles in supporting the school's governance and decision-making. The school's Art Show and Fete reflect the rich working partnership of the school and its community. Our School Council meets monthly and its subcommittees - open to all members of the parent community - coordinate efforts towards fundraising, community engagement, building and grounds planning and policy development.

We value our positive relationship with the local community and encourage the responsible use of our facilities outside school hours. We in turn are regular visitors to local libraries, galleries, sporting facilities, parklands and other schools. We have forged strong links with nearby Denzil Don Kindergarten, where we run a Kindergarten to Foundation transition program, and for whose classes we allow regular use of our school grounds during Discovery Kinder sessions.

Throughout our rich and diverse activities at BSWPS, we maintain focus on our mission to engage, challenge and empower our students so that they become curious, inclusive and respectful individuals.

## **2. School values, philosophy and vision**

Our vision at BSWPS is for our children to become curious life-long learners, inclusive of everyone and respectful of themselves, others and the environment.

We are committed to offering excellence in education within a diverse and nurturing community.

Educating the whole child—physically, socially, aesthetically, emotionally and intellectually—is fundamental to everything we do at BSWPS. Children learn in different ways, and at different rates. As we work to ensure a happy and successful school experience for each child, some important features of our school culture include:

- A welcoming community and strong sense of belonging for all
- Warm and positive relationships with teachers and other children
- A calm and friendly atmosphere
- A neighbouring-class buddy and a buddy from the senior school for all junior school students
- A Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program to develop confident and resilient human beings
- A multi-age setting with learning at an appropriate level: children are stretched in some areas, supported in others and given leadership opportunities

- A strong inquiry program, fostering curiosity and creativity
- Emphasis on respect for ourselves, each other and our environment
- Focus on sustainability, including through our kitchen garden learning program
- Individual Learning Plans
- Strong family and community involvement
- School traditions and regular celebrations, including the annual Twilight Fete, biennial Art Show, Book Week, Hundred Days of Learning and Ride to School Day.
- Recognition of, and respect for, our diverse community and its many cultures
- Recognition that we meet on the land of the Wurrundjeri people and pay our respects to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this Nation.

The following values underpin the life of our school and how all members of the school community should conduct themselves:

*We **respect** ourselves, each other, our school and the wider community and our natural environment, understanding that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on those around us.*

*We are **inclusive** of everyone, accepting and caring for people in our community with kindness and empathy, embracing diversity, and valuing the uniqueness of each individual.*

*We demonstrate and model **curiosity** by asking questions, exploring and discovering more about ourselves, each other and the world, and thereby building our skills, knowledge, positive relationships and personal wellbeing.*

### **3. Engagement strategies**

BSWPS 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.

BSWPS has a dedicated Engagement and Wellbeing team whose role it is to support staff in implementing strategies that promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships. All staff are involved in professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills in relation to student engagement, behaviour management and approaching wellbeing, developmental and mental health issues in children, while also providing guidance on how to implement whole school approaches.

We acknowledge that teaching behavioural expectations and rewarding or recognising students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehaviour to occur before responding.

A summary of the whole-school and individual engagement strategies used by our school is given below:

### Whole school

- setting high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritising 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
- teaching explicitly our school's values, referring to them regularly, and integrating these into our student matrix of expected behaviours
- ensuring that all students have a dedicated hour each week to learn social and emotional skills
- adopting a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to respond effectively to diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students, consistent with standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- planning transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- providing a within-PLC buddy and a buddy from the senior school
- providing students with opportunities to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school life through the Student Representative Council
- engaging in school-wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, including programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports
  - Prevent, Teach, Reinforce

### Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities

BSWPS 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 an individual 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, using the Prevent, Teach, Reinforce model to address specific behaviours
- engaging with the Student Support Services Officer.

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

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing

- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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

BSWPS is committed to supporting our students intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Principal and Assistant Principal play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support. The 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
- engagement with families
- access to an on-site school counsellor
- referrals from external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student.

#### **5. Student rights and responsibilities**

All members of our school community have the 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, respected and included at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns, and pursue their curiosity.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect and care for themselves, their peers, their teachers, members of the school community, and their environment
- respect the right of others to learn
- include others in activities.

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 values of respect, inclusion and curiosity. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with BSWPS's Bullying Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, BSWPS 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:

- following the Brunswick South West Primary School Behaviour Management Flowchart
- teacher-controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- mediation
- referral to Assistant Principal or Principal
- reteaching of expected behaviours
- support to develop social skills

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**

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

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

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

## **8. Evaluation**

BSWPS 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
- CASES21
- Student Online Case System (SOCS)

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- SWPBS Matrix
- Behaviour Management System
- Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships

## **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated in August 2021 and is scheduled for review in August 2023.

## APPENDIX: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING DURING LOCKDOWNS

Repeated periods of lockdown requiring home learning programs during the Covid-19 pandemic have prompted reflection by BSWPS staff as to how to best support the engagement and wellbeing of our children and their families. During lockdowns, our Vision and Values remain paramount. Our primary focus is the wellbeing of every child in our care. We appreciate that lockdowns present a multitude of different challenges for BSWPS families. We respect every family's efforts to negotiate their particular challenges, and we endeavour to provide inclusive school programs and support which allow every child to engage, participate and progress, regardless of their family circumstances. This means that during lockdowns, we:

- Check in with children and their families on a daily basis, monitoring children's attendance at online learning sessions, observing their participation and noting their efforts with learning tasks
- Reach out to families facing particularly acute challenges
- Support families to assimilate home learning into their days, recognising the challenges to parents as they juggle work, caring and other demands
- Ensure that every child is equipped with the learning materials they need, as circumstances allow
- Strive to ensure that every child feels recognised and included every day. This begins with zoom sessions with their class teacher each morning, and extends to actions such as a birthday phone call from the Principal.
- Continue to attend to the academic, creative, social, emotional and physical flourishing of every child, as far as lockdown circumstances allow
- Provide an academic program that is flexible enough to allow participation of every child while ensuring sufficient progress is made through the curriculum
- Continue to promote the importance of reading as a daily activity
- Provide differentiated learning activities so that struggling students are supported and able students are extended
- Provide a well-rounded specialist program to ensure that progress continues in Chinese, Physical Education, Visual Arts, Library and Performing Arts
- Provide activities and programs that support student wellbeing and health, by promoting healthy eating, daily physical exercise (e.g. a morning dance session) mindfulness and self-reflection
- Provide activities that allow students to have fun, pursue friendships, experience a sense of belonging and connect with each other
- Provide activities which promote curiosity and encourage children to make the most of their home and local environment as learning spaces
- Continue to mark and celebrate special events and occasions that occur within the school community, such as 100 Days of Learning and Book Week
- Address the needs of vulnerable and at-risk students, maintaining as much continuity as possible in programs for students with disabilities and special needs, continuing the Tutoring program, and supporting children and families to use in-school (e.g. counselling) services or services outside the school where appropriate
- Continue to use all channels of communication with parents and the community - including the weekly BSWPS Newsletter, Compass messaging, regular classroom teacher updates and

emails to parents - recognising their heightened importance during lockdowns in combatting families' feelings of isolation

- Provide on-site supervision of, and support to, vulnerable children and children of essential workers, offering suitable activities and promoting an inclusive, respectful and happy environment
- Continue to meet regularly as staff (including teaching teams, PLC teams and leadership teams) and School Council to ensure that the school's planning, development and decision-making in relation to student engagement and wellbeing remains on track.