

Student Engagement and Wellbeing (& Inclusion) Policy



**Produced in consultation
with the school community**

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.

Ringwood Heights Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture 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.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. SCHOOL PROFILE

*Established in 1965, **Ringwood Heights Primary School** is nestled in a wooded area in the Maroondah district of the Eastern Metropolitan Region. The school is set in extensive grounds that provide a wide variety of active and passive play areas including an oval, hard court areas covered by shade, new playgrounds and extensive native bushland. The school takes great pride in being a strong community school with consistent and constructive involvement of parents in all aspects of our school life.*

Our students, "Little Kids Thinking Big", are grouped in four learning teams. Learning Team 1 - Prep; Learning Team 2 - Years 1 and 2; Learning Team 3 - Years 3 and 4; Learning Team - Years 5 and 6. All class groupings with the exception of Prep are multi-age. The school places emphasis on inquiry and this is interpreted through different programs at each level, including play based learning in the Prep level through to negotiated integrated inquiry learning in the senior classes. Learning and Wellbeing are supported by many pastoral care programs including buddies, peer support, transitions and student leadership. Specialist instruction is provided in LOTE (Indonesian), Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Physical Education.

***Ringwood Heights** offers a comprehensive developmental curriculum implemented by a team of dedicated, caring professionals. We are a leading school in the development of integrated units of work, inquiry learning and professional action learning teams. Student learning experiences occur within a whole school planning framework called "RHPS*

Throughlines" incorporating the Victorian Curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on student voice and action within our units which are delivered over a two year cycle. Our biennial Artist in Schools program is a celebrated community event with opportunities for 100% participation from all our students.

***Ringwood Heights Primary School** has developed a strong partnership with Melbourne University which plays a key role in placing candidates from the Masters of Teaching (Primary Stream) in local schools.*

***Ringwood Heights** offers Learning Spaces which provide flexibility for learning and collaboration. Information and Communication Technologies are utilized as learning tools to support 21st century learning opportunities. Students have access to a range of resources which includes; Interactive whiteboards, desktops, laptops, chrome books and mobile devices (iPads) throughout the school including 1:1 iPads for all students in Learning Team 4.*

2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Values:

The school's motto "**Little Kids Thinking Big**" reflects our core values of **Creativity, Respect, Friendship, Responsibility** and **Teamwork**

	<i>As a learner...</i>	<i>As a friend...</i>	<i>Around the school yard...</i>	<i>Online...</i>
Creativity	<i>Combine and connect our ideas. Take responsible risks in your learning. Think in different ways.</i>	<i>Encourage others to think differently. Treat each other fairly but differently.</i>	<i>Create new games. Find solutions to problems together. Use our environment to imagine.</i>	<i>Use your own ideas. Try new things. Use technology to show learning and express creativity.</i>
Respect	<i>Listen to other people's ideas. Encourage others. Use a quiet voice.</i>	<i>Show tolerance. Respect personal space. Take turns. Use manners.</i>	<i>Move safely around the school. Look after our natural environment. Respect the belongings of others.</i>	<i>Use appropriate language. Be careful with our equipment. Respect other people's privacy.</i>
Friendship	<i>Give positive feedback. Help and mentor others. Encourage the achievements of others.</i>	<i>Show compassion and consideration. Accept outcomes and move on. Be honest and trustworthy.</i>	<i>Use the friendship tree. Include others. Explain rules before you start to play. Be helpful to others in need.</i>	<i>Look out for your friends online.</i>
Responsibility	<i>Look after your belongings and be organised. Show initiative. Know and follow your class agreement.</i>	<i>Stand up for others. Remind your friends of appropriate behaviour.</i>	<i>Listen for the bell music and go straight to line. Tell a yard duty teacher if something is disrespectful or unsafe.</i>	<i>Follow the ICT agreement. Report anything that does not feel right to an adult. Only do things online that you would show everyone.</i>
Teamwork	<i>Share ideas and resources. Learn together. Offer to help others.</i>	<i>Encourage others to get involved. Look out for others in your group.</i>	<i>Show sportsmanship. Work together to keep our school tidy.</i>	<i>Work collaboratively online. Make positive connections with others online. Use devices collaboratively.</i>

3. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Ringwood Heights Primary School 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 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*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning*
- *analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data*
- *teachers at **Ringwood Heights Primary School** use an Inquiry 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 **Ringwood Heights Primary School** adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching*
- *our school's Statement of Values 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*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, 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*
 -
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs*

BELIEF STATEMENT:

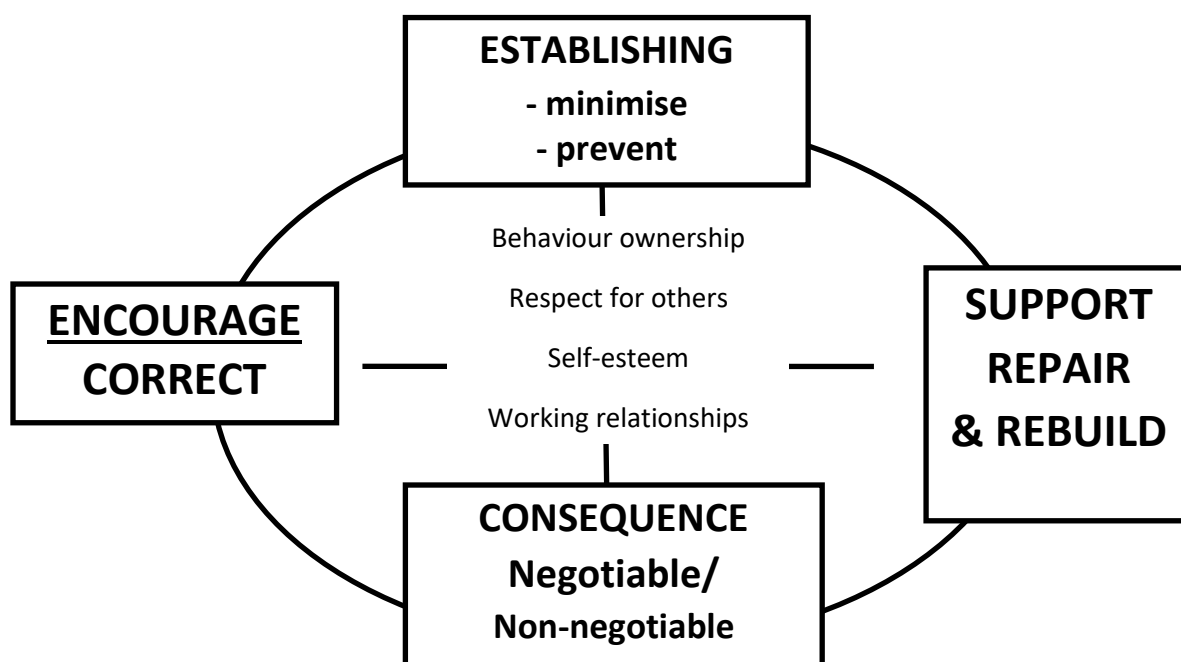
The school's well being policy/student code of conduct reflects a carefully planned whole school approach to student management combined with sound teaching and learning practices in which:

- Positive student behaviours are promoted and recognised.
- All individuals are to be valued and treated with respect.
- All forms of discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and harassment are discouraged.
- Students have a right to work and play in a secure environment where they are able to develop self-esteem, interests, talents and ambitions.
- The school community can expect that the students will be encouraged to show courtesy, care and respect for the rights and property of others.

- Teachers, supported by parents, can expect to be able to teach in an atmosphere of order and co-operation in a positive teaching and learning environment.
- The Principal and staff have the obligation to implement the student code of conduct fairly, reasonably and consistently.

Targeted

Our approach to behaviour management is outlined below:



- Management of students is essentially leading or guiding them to be responsible for their own behaviour. The ultimate aim is to develop self-discipline, self-awareness, self-direction and respect for other's rights within students. Teachers' ongoing encouragement, reward of good attitudes and actions coupled with the selective use of preventative strategies lessens the frequency, severity and escalation of inappropriate behaviours.
- The management of student behaviour is outlined in our classroom and out of classroom rules which are designed involving students, to ensure the safety of everyone and not compromise the teaching and learning environment.
- A planned intervention program developed around choices and logical consequences is implemented at classroom and whole-school level. When appropriate, students will be allowed to experience the natural or logical consequences to their actions in order to teach the power of responsibility and choice to assist the behaviour education of students.
- In the case of repeated disruptive or dangerous behaviour, our intervention and follow-up plans will be implemented. With the involvement of the parents, we will support the student through appropriate counselling and referral.

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

- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services
 - referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Ringwood Heights Primary School** implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:
- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
 - meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
 - 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 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

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

Ringwood Heights Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. **Ringwood Heights Primary School** will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

5. STUDENTS 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.

Guiding principles to Rights and Responsibilities.

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

Under the act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of the following attributes:

- age
- breastfeeding
- gender identity
- impairment
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status or status as carer
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association (with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes).

THE CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

The Charter sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles:

- Freedom
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural Rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect the human rights of others.

All DET employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. Everyone should:

- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

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 ***Ringwood Heights Primary School's*** Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, ***Ringwood Heights Primary School*** will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Ringwood Heights PS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

The school's Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of ***Ringwood Heights PS*** will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of ***Ringwood Heights PS*** will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by: The school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy. Students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.

- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

- As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:
 - ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
 - develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
 - exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
 - ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
 - discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
 - treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
 - communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
 - 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.a.spx>
- Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

6. ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Ringwood Heights Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community. We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

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

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Definitions

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group. (See Anti-Bullying Policy)

Cyberbullying is when someone is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another child, pre-teen, or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to be a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor. –

www.stopcyberbullying.org

(See Anti Cyber Bullying Policy)

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment, bullying or cyberbullying include:

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is

unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle: (The most common)

They include:

- Offensive staring and leering.
- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
- Questions about another's sexual activity.
- Persistent comments about a person's private life or family.
- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body.
- Offensive name calling.

Explicit: (obvious)

They include:

- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
- Displays of sexually graphic material– pornography.
- Requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

Bullying can involve such things as:

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching, kicking, pushing and shoving.
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person's property
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyberbullying

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (eg copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (sharing personal information or images only with permission)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- Discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with.

EVALUATION

Ringwood Heights Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 9th of August 2018 and is scheduled for review in [August/2021].