



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the school office on 9870 3050
ringwood.heights.ps@education.vic.gov.au

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, 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.

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, school values, philosophy and vision
2. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
3. Identifying students in need of support
4. Student rights and responsibilities
5. Student behavioural expectations and management
6. Engaging with families
7. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile, school values, philosophy and vision

Ringwood Heights is a student-centred school, which intentionally aligns practice with three key purposes:

- To continue to promote an ethos where parents, students and teachers collaborate to provide a dynamic learning environment, which challenges and engages all learners in an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and creativity.



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- To focus on student learning opportunities in an environment that is rapidly changing in response to complex local and global conditions.
- To develop learners with knowledge, skills, values, self-esteem and attributes that ensures personal fulfilment, lifelong learning and active citizenship.

We believe that a successful, lifelong learner can problem solve, is creative, shows initiative and takes risks, is flexible, adaptable and open minded, can work effectively in a team, is resilient, can communicate effectively in a variety of ways, thinks reflectively and metacognitively, can think critically, understands the diversity in the way they learn, accepts some responsibility for learning, is systematic and organised, is intelligent in a range of ways, is digitally literate, is able to research : locate, gather, critique and communicate information, thinks ethically, has understanding of self, others and the physical world, is emotionally literate and responsive.

The educational opportunities offered at Ringwood Heights Primary School are stimulating and challenging. The individual needs and talents of students are identified and nurtured to support their learning as they move through different stages of development. We commit to understanding each students' needs and provide learning programs that support and enhance their academic and personal needs.

Our students 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 4 - 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 Learning Team 1 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 Library, LOTE (AUSLAN), Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Physical Education.

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.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning as the school has a shared belief that education is a partnership between all members of the community. Parents feel strong ownership of the school and are very involved in supporting school initiatives.

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.



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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 to support learning, wellbeing and collaboration. Information and Communication Technologies are utilized as learning tools to support future focussed learning opportunities.

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

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

2. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Ringwood Heights Primary 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,



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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
- teachers at Ringwood Heights Primary School use an Integrated Inquiry instructional model to present a shared approach 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 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 embedded feedback cycles. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Learning Team Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities for meaningful cross—age connections amongst students through whole school learning activities.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Maroondah Positive Education Network (MPEN)
 - UR Strong
 - Peer Support
 - Safe Schools



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- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams and clubs)
- 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 year group has a Learning Team leader, a teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie and Aboriginal 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
- our English as a second language students are supported with appropriate interventions when needed, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background with appropriate interventions when needed
- 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 Education Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG)/Care Team meetings 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
- staff are trauma-informed and supported to use this approach when working with students who have experienced trauma
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)

Individual

Adjustments are made for students identified as requiring intensive tailored support. Some or all of the following interventions may be utilised;

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)



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- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Health Care Plan](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)
- [Sensory Room](#)

The school accesses, where appropriate, Department programs and services such as:

- [Disability Inclusion](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

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 Education 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*
 - *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*
- *engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement 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.*



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3. 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. Developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Ringwood Heights Primary School 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 and communication with families*
- *Self-referrals and referrals from peers when appropriate*

4. 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, 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.

5. Student behavioural expectations and management



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STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

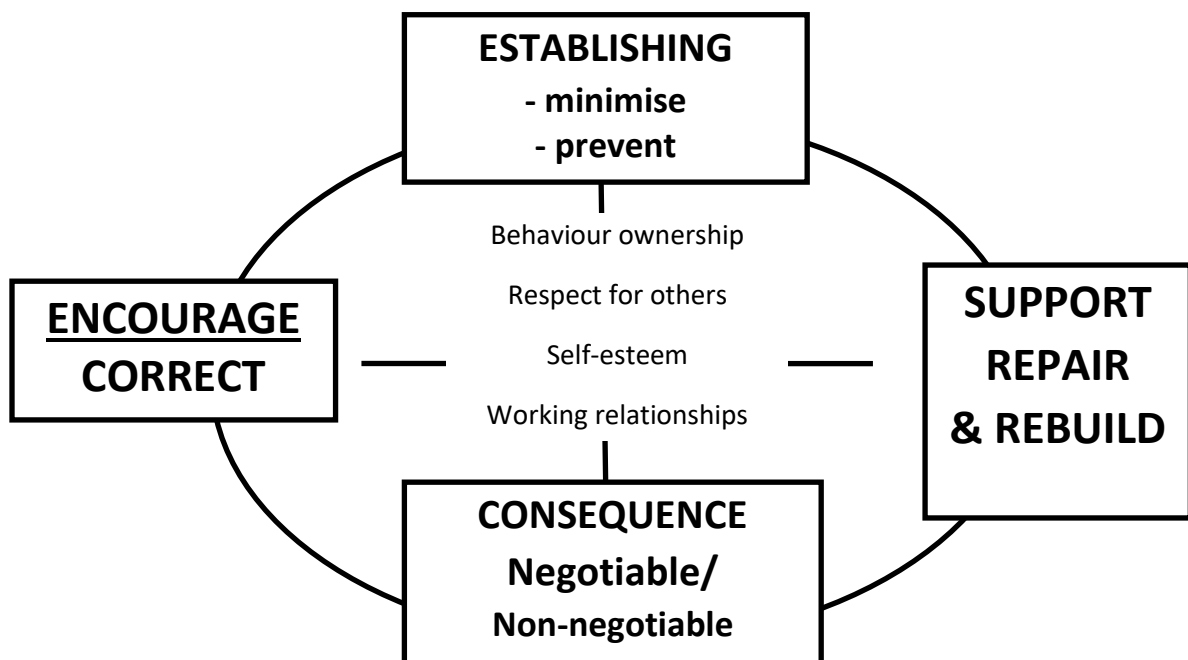
Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Ringwood Heights Primary School's Bullying Prevention policy.

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 Primary School 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.

Our approach to behaviour management is outlined below:



The school's behavioural expectations along with the Parent Code of Conduct (see appendix) aim 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.



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The Principal and school leaders of Ringwood Heights Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the school's behavioural expectations and Parent Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments **including physical and virtual**. The Principal and school leaders of Ringwood Heights Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the guidelines 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 DET guidelines and policies by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. These expectations apply to all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

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, Ringwood Heights Primary 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 school leadership team e.g. Learning Team Leader, Assistant Principal or Principal*
- *restorative practices*
- *behaviour support and intervention meetings*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*



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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 and Training.

The Principal of Ringwood Heights Primary 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.

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
- providing a range of 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.

7. Evaluation

Ringwood Heights Primary School collects 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, including attendance and absence data



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- SOCS

Ringwood Heights Primary 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 as an annual reference in Learning Team information nights and newsletters
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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

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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [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](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2023
Consultation	Education Committee – March 2023 School Council – March/May 2023



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Approved by	Principal – Kim Bride
Next scheduled review date	February 2025