



ARARAT PRIMARY SCHOOL

70 – 78 MOORE ST / PO BOX 225 ARARAT VIC 3377

PH: 03 5352 1253

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY



Help for non-English speakers - If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Administration at Ph. 53 52 12 53

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- . our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- . expectations for positive student behaviour
- . support available to students and families
- . our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

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

POLICY

1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Ararat is located between the Grampians and Pyrenees ranges in the central highlands of Western Victoria, 200 kilometres from Melbourne, on the Melbourne-Adelaide Highway and 100 km west of Ballarat.

Today, the Ararat area has a population of approximately 12,000 people. The closest regional town is Stawell, 30 kilometres to the north-west. Our school is in the South West Victoria Region and is part of the Ararat-Pyrenees Network.



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The school community recognises the important and rich heritage the school has, and there

are active measures in place to develop respect and understanding of the past and proactive planning for the future.

Ararat Primary School has a blend of experienced and young staff members and offers a comprehensive curriculum, including visual and performing arts, music, circus program and physical education. The scope of the school's Performing Arts program includes music, choral singing, band, circus skills and dramatic performance. There is currently an enrollment of approximately 233 students with 11 classrooms.

Staff members participate in regular professional development, both internally and externally to the school. All staff take on active individual and team based roles within our school community and across many professional fields. Staff take pride in the ongoing development, implementation and evaluation of programs that assist students to achieve their full potential.

SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Ararat Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of Respect, Integrity, Courage and Honesty at every opportunity.

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

WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Ararat 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, 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*



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- *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 Ararat 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 the Student Representative Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through yard duty support, buddy program (Year 5s with preps).*
- *all students are welcome to self-refer to the Wellbeing Coordinator, 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 whole school positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs and frameworks such as:*
 - *Respectful Relationships*
 - *School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (including Class Dojo)*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. police visits, Kids Helpline Sessions)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs*
- *measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.*

Targeted

- *Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Goals related to understanding and engagement with culture are included in their Individual Education Plan, which is reviewed quarterly.*
- *our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including.*
- *we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through EAL program*
- *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](#)*



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- 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) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as

through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans

- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- 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](#)
- we use the Response to Intervention model which enables staff to identify and cater to the needs of students with diverse needs
- we use Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Maths Online Interviews (MOI) as diagnostic tools and as assessments for learning for all students, identifying students who require additional support or intervention (support and extension)
- through the use of diagnostic tools and triangulation of data, students who are identified as requiring additional support are enrolled in our Intervention Program (TLI).

Individual

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

As well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)
- [SASP](#)

Ararat 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



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- *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, ELMHS, Orange Door, 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*
- *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.*

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Ararat Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team (Youth Workers), Wellbeing Leadership Team, Classroom Teacher & Education Support Staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Ararat 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*

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.



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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 on the school website.

STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

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

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy on the school website.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Ararat 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. The staged response has been developed using the principles of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework and is attached as Appendix A.

Our school considers, explores and implements 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 Assistant Principal or Principal*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*
- *behaviour support and intervention meetings*
- *behaviour support plan*
- *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 Ararat 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.

ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Ararat 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 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.

EVALUATION

Ararat 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:

- Attitudes to School Survey
- CENTRAL incident data
- Semester reports
- Parent Opinion Survey
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Ararat 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

- Available publicly on our school's website



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- Included in staff induction processes
- 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](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

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

- 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	24/02/2025
Consultation	Staff & Families
Approved by	Principal
Approved date	24/02/2025
Next scheduled review date	24/02/2028