



Newtown Primary School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Newtown Primary School on 03 5229 9730 or newtown.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.

Newtown 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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
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POLICY

1. School profile

At Newtown Primary School we believe "every individual will learn and flourish with the support of a committed team".

As a school that prides itself on its academic performance and inclusive practices, we recognise the importance of the partnership between schools and parents to support student learning, engagement, and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and responsibility for, ensuring inclusive, safe and orderly environments for children and young people. At Newtown Primary School we have one core value of RESPECT with particular emphasis on the four pillars that underpins this. These are, "respect for self, respect for others, respect for learning and respect for the environment". Our school values set out our expectations for all members of the school community, including the

principal, school staff, parents, students, and visitors. Our value of respect heavily supports the diversity of individuals within our wider school and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members towards building a safe, supportive, and respectful school community.

Newtown Primary School is in the heart of Newtown, 2.1 kilometres west of the Geelong City Centre. The school is located on an extensive block with ample external space including a large, natural grassed oval that is fully irrigated, a large playground, a nature play space, a basketball and netball court, 15 external shade sails to provide shade and sun cover, and 2 outdoor classroom spaces for external learning opportunities. Most of our learning spaces are open plan allowing for flexible yet collaborative approaches to teaching and learning. Flexible seating and furniture arrangements allow for learning areas to be co-designed with students with inclusive educational practices at the forefront. All learning areas have access to digital LED displays which complement our integrated use of technology, including our year 3-6 BYOD iPad Program.

In 2023 we had 4 core learning areas of Foundation, Junior, Middle and Senior that made up our year level PLC (Professional Learning Communities). This consisted of 2 Prep classes, 2-year 1/2 classes within our Junior Learning Area, 3 year 3/4s in our Middle Learning Area, and 3-year 5/6 classes within our senior Learning Area. As in previous years, specialist teaching subjects were offered in the areas of Physical Education, Visual Arts, and Indonesian as our LOTE. In 2023 we added a fourth specialist class to our school focusing on music and performing arts.

The school demographics in 2023 were as follows.

School enrolments from Foundation through to Year six sat at 206 students. This figure was down for the 7th consecutive year.

The student family occupation index was 0.1798, the second lowest it had been in the past 6 years.

There were 12 students identified as EAL and 7 who identified as ATSI. - There are 2 gender diverse students at NPS, and this has had a positive impact on our inclusivity and the practices that underpin it.

There were 7 students aligned with the PSD program and or the Disability Inclusion reforms.

37 students were identified on the NCCD register, all of whom require extensive adjustments made in a variety of ways to support their individual needs.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Newtown 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 value of respect and the 4 pillars that underpin this – self, learning, others, environment. Our school's vision is; At Newtown Primary School we believe every individual will learn and flourish with the support of a committed team.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: www.newtownps.vic.gov.au

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Newtown 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, parents and carers
- Promoting a culture of RESPECT, GEM (Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness), having a Growth Mindset
- Teachers prioritise positive relationships with all students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- The use of a school-wide Positive Behaviour Support Matrix (Appendix 1)
- A broad assessment schedule that guides the collection and monitoring data on all students (e.g. NAPLAN, Essential Assessment, Learning Tasks, Fountas and Pinnell, etc.)
- Explicit teaching of understandings and skills through the Victorian Curriculum
- F-10 in conjunction with the 'Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships' curriculum

- An evidence-based Instructional model that incorporates High-Impact Teaching Strategies
- Monitoring attendance data for all students.
- Staff provide appropriate feedback, praise and encouragement of all students
- Staff understand and implement strategies to support students with additional needs in a whole-class approach (e.g. the use of visual timetables, sensory breaks, pragmatics instruction, social stories, etc.)
- Recognising Respect Awards that promote effort and exemplary achievement in living our school values
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Programs including the BYOD Program for years 3-6
- 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 share their concerns or questions with staff.
- Transition Programs - School Camps, Little Night In and Big Night Out
- Ready to Learn/Focus plans - promoting self-awareness and regulation
- Zones of Regulation
- Staff are trained in behaviour, wellbeing and engagement strategies (including identifying students in need of additional support)

Targeted

- Buddies programs that promote cross-age supportive relationships
- Leadership (Impact Teams and mentors)
- KESO (Koorie Education Support Officer) are engaged to support Koorie students
- Age appropriate transition programs occur across the school and are designed to target student needs
- Student, Staff and Parent Surveys
- Geelong English Language Centre GELC
- *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 – refer to our Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan*
- *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 through connections to the GELS.*
- *we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through being supported by the IED as well as GELS.*
- *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 \[insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students\]](#)*
- *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 Learning 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*

Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- Individual Learning Plans
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)
- Response and Safety Plans
- Student Support Profiles
- Regulation Plans
- Gender Support Plans

- Referral to Child First

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

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

Newtown 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 Child First
 - 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.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Newtown Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Newtown 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
- Consideration of risk factors (e.g. ATSI, OHC, gender, sexuality, culture, disability, religion, health conditions, etc.)
- Communication and shared responsibility between staff (including Chaplain)
- Transition handover between staff
- Referrals from parents/carers based on observations, assessments and/or personal circumstances
- Information from previous school/therapists
- Referrals from outside agencies - DHHS, BCYF, NDIS, external therapists

- Chronicle entries/patterns
- Observations by staff such as changes in behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations

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

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.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Newtown 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 and or not meeting our PBS Matrix expectations
- 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 Principal class team
- conversations with parents/caregivers
- individual behaviour support plans
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion. This is managed at regional level in consultation with the Regional Director.

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 Newtown 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.

7. Engaging with families

Newtown 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.

8. Evaluation

Newtown 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 – ((Computerised Administrative Systems Environment in Schools) including attendance and absence data
- SOCS - (Student Online Case System) - a system for recording, managing and reporting cases for student support services.

Newtown 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
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers 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
- Digital Learning Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2025
Consultation	August 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2027