

St Arnaud Primary School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement

POLICY

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.

St Arnaud 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

The current location of St Arnaud Primary School was established in 1932 and is located approximately 200 kilometres north of Melbourne. We have 105 students enrolled from Prep to Year 6 and 20 school staff members including an Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Counsellor, and the Student Wellbeing Coordinator.

Our school grounds back onto native bushland, and we are adjacent to Lord Nelson Park - the home of football, netball and hockey in St Arnaud. The school is surrounded by a supportive community. Students that attend our school live locally and tend to walk or ride their bike to school. St Arnaud Primary School actively fosters close ties to the local community, and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

St Arnaud 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 and kindness at every opportunity.

Our School Vision is:

Our philosophy is centred on supporting and nurturing children's wellbeing within an emotionally safe learning environment. Children are met at their point of need and diversity is acknowledged and embraced. Family involvement and connection to the wider community is integral to our school identity.

Our aim is to foster children's love of learning and to develop key life skills such as emotional intelligence, self-expression, and a growth mindset within an inclusive school community that celebrates individual achievement.

This Statement of Values sets out our behavioural expectations of all members in this school community, including the Principal, all school staff, parents, students and visitors. It respects the diversity of all and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members in building a safe and respectful learning environment.

Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence, aggression and threatening behaviour are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in this school.

Our Statement of Values acknowledges that parents and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child.

Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as we do this whilst respectfully working together.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

St Arnaud 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
- 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including student voice and curriculum co-design to ensure that students have input into topics and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations

- teachers at St Arnaud Primary School use our own instructional model 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 St Arnaud 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 such as from Preschool into Prep and from each year level and class into the next, as an annual practice to support smooth transition and adjustment.
- 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, including letters to parents when students fall below acceptable absence thresholds.
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council, Student Leadership Group, Green Team and other forums including year group meetings and Student Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, our Student Wellbeing Coordinator, and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through special days such as Tabloid Sports, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Chaplain, Classroom Teacher 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:
 - o Respectful Relationships
 - o Be You
 - o The Resilience Project
 - o Safe Schools
 - o School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs such as Year 6 Buddies for Prep students through transition and throughout their first year.*
- *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 Classroom Teacher is responsible for their class through monitoring the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- 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 [insert name of any other school documentation you have in place outlining the school strategies to support Koorie students] for further information

- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all culturally 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.
- 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 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
- 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

Individual

Department's Policy and Advisory Library:

- [Student Support Groups](#)

St Arnaud Primary School establishes an SSG for students supported by the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD); Students in out of home care; Students with diverse learning needs and students at risk due to attendance or behaviour related issues.

- [Individual Education Plans](#)

St Arnaud Primary School develops an IEP for students in out of home care; Koorie Students; students supported under individualised disability funding programs; students in youth justice; students in re-engagement programs

- [Behaviour - Students](#)

St Arnaud Primary School considers, explores and implements positive and non-punative interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures

- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)

St Arnaud Primary School develops targeted plans for students who; have been diagnosed with severe behaviour disorders; have bullied others; have been bullied; require additional assistance because they display difficult, challenging or disruptive behaviours; can benefit from additional wellbeing support.

- [Student Support Services](#)

St Arnaud Primary School seeks support from the Student Support Services team to assist children facing barriers to learning, to achieve their education and developmental potential.

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

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

St Arnaud Primary School applies to the PSD to gain support for eligible students with disability and high needs.

- [Mental health toolkit](#)

St Arnaud Primary School uses the Mental Health Toolkit for expert guidance and resources on mental health promotion and support appropriate for our school community.

- [Navigator](#)

St Arnaud Primary School refers eligible students to Navigator to support young people to return to education and learning

- [LOOKOUT](#)

St Arnaud Primary School works with the LOOKOUT Centre to boost the capability of students in out of home care, to improve their educational outcomes.

St Arnaud 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 students 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
- working closely with and communicating openly (with parental consent) with additional experts working with the young person such as counsellors, paediatricians, psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Art Therapists etc
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- providing a calming space in the classroom, including sensory tools and activities designed for the young person.
- referring the student to:
 - o school-based wellbeing supports
 - o Student Support Services
 - o Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
 - o 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
- arranging access to the school based Allied Health Team (Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist and Psychologist) as appropriate
- arranging referral to the Paediatrician and support Co-consults with GPs as appropriate
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - o with a disability
 - o in Out of Home Care
 - o with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

St Arnaud 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. St Arnaud 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*
- *conversations with parents regarding concerns and observations of students at risk*
- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*
- *Staff meetings include an agenda item for Student Wellbeing for staff to raise observations and concerns they may have for students at our school.*

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 and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

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. [If your school has a stand-alone bullying prevention 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, St Arnaud 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 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 Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

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 St Arnaud 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

St Arnaud 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 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 through School Council and Parents Club
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

St Arnaud 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 Student Survey data
- COMPASS incidents data

- school reports
- Parent Opinion Survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

St Arnaud 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 in transition and enrolment packs
- 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2025
Consultation	School Newsletter School Council Student Leadership School staff Website
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2027