

# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Bulleen Heights School general office on 9850 7122

## 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.

Bulleen Heights 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
4. Identifying students in need of support
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Bulleen Heights School specialises in the provision of education for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and a severe language impairment. In 2024 the school enrolment was 260 students, between five and eighteen years of age. The school is located in the eastern suburbs of

Melbourne and is approximately fourteen kilometres from the city. It is situated across two closely located campuses at Bulleen (primary) and Lower Templestowe (secondary). Both campuses are in residential areas close to public transport and local facilities.

In 2024 the total staff numbered 41 teachers and 83 education support staff. This is a significant resource for the school, enabling student learning to be enhanced in classroom, specialist, therapy and extra-curricular areas. The school has operated in 2024 with the primary aged students at Pleasant Road, Bulleen, serviced by 22 classrooms and the secondary aged students at Manningham Road, Lower Templestowe, serviced by 15 classrooms. Principal class officers include one principal and two assistant principals. Each campus was supported by two leading teachers, one leading teacher supports both campuses in curriculum and assessment. Our philosophy, to provide small class sizes, balancing learning with life skills, catering for individual need, specialist teaching and multi-disciplinary staff are critical factors to the school's successful evidence-based practice. The school ensured effective teaching and learning and the provision of a safe learning environment where motivated and engaged staff instruct and assess students along a continuum of learning to achieve individual goals.

The school continues the implementation of the Strategic Plan (2023 - 2026) This plan provides the goals, targets and strategies to achieve successful school and student outcomes over the four year period.

## 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Bulleen Heights School values are integrity, respect, high professional standards, care and support and consistency. The values underpin the delivery of a vision, which aims to achieve excellence both nationally and globally in educational service provision for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The values and vision of the school support our mission - to prepare students with Autism Spectrum Disorder to achieve the best outcomes from life's opportunities.

### **Vision**

Achieving excellence both globally and nationally in educational services for students with special needs.

### **Mission**

Preparing students with autism spectrum disorders to achieve the best outcomes from life's opportunities.

Engaging in professional research of exemplary education programs.

### **Values**

Bulleen Heights School supports the principles of the Australian democracy.

Bulleen Heights School is committed to:

the elected government

the rule of law

equal rights for all before the law

freedom of religion

freedom of speech and association

the values of openness and tolerance

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Bulleen Heights 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

Bulleen Heights School has a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program. Since 2020, all students became part of the program as remote learning was implemented. Students without a device were able to access one of the school's devices. The school uses a wide selection of apps to engage students and support personalised learning including Choiceworks, Mathletics, Book Creator, Explain Everything, Brain Pop, iMovie and Seesaw. While there was some disruption to the digital learning program due to the pandemic, the need for remote learning also enabled the creation of new and innovative teaching and learning with associated skill and knowledge development for staff, students and parents.

The Information Communication Technology (ICT) team worked in collaboration with the School Wide - Positive Behaviour Support team to include ICT elements into the matrix of key teaching expectations across campuses. Photos and videos of student interactions were shared with parents and the community by posting on the See Saw app, Sharepoint, the school website and in the newsletter on COMPASS. The use of digital technology plays a significant part in engaging students in stimulating learning.

Professional learning is provided for staff to build knowledge, expertise and a consistent approach in Digital Technologies and School Wide - Positive Behaviour Support principles.

All students have an individualised learning plan, meeting the needs of each student to ensure that their Autism Spectrum Disorder learning needs are supported in a safe and secure learning environment. Future strategies to support the engagement of all students in their learning at school will include deepening teacher knowledge of the school's continuum of learning to ensure personalised learning for every student.

The school has developed strategies to improve communication with parents regarding the

connection between student engagement, diverse programs and academic standards.

- 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 VPC to ensure that students are able to engage with curriculum and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Bulleen Heights 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 PBS 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 via communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Leading Teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Psychologist, Teacher, Leading Teachers, 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.
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- 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 group has a leading teacher who is available to monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support

- all students in the secondary school will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- 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.

- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Bulleen Heights School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan and their placement for post school options
- 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
- 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
- Bulleen Heights School 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
- 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](#)
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Bulleen Heights School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan

### Individual

Strategies supporting individual students may be as follows:

- [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](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

Bulleen Heights 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.

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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 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.

#### 4. Identifying students in need of support

Bulleen Heights 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. Bulleen Heights 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. 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 Bulleen Heights School 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, Bulleen Heights 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 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 Bulleen Heights 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

Bulleen Heights 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.
- 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

Bulleen Heights 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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Bulleen Heights 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 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/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	2024
Consultation	School Council, Principal, Psychologist
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026