STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact briar.hill.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.

Briar Hill 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

Briar Hill Primary School was established in 1927 and nestles in quiet, leafy surrounds of Briar Hill in the City of Banyule. We offer a Steiner influenced model of education which is unique and engaging.

The school offers a vibrant Prep - Year 6 setting, providing a nurturing learning environment in the tranquil surrounds of beautiful, bird-filled gardens and natural play spaces. We recognise that our greatest asset is our children, so we work hard to create engaging programs which reflect the qualities our school most values, and we actively foster opportunities and a community approach for every child to thrive. Our school has an enrolment of 208 students and their families, all of whom contribute to a wonderful, close knit community which reflects the key values of its stakeholders.

Our school's maxim, 'Head, Heart and Hands', reflects the varied and valued engaging approaches we take to teaching and learning. We pride ourselves on multi-sensory learning that engages the senses and caters to the variety of ways children learn. Our innovative Steiner influenced programs enhance children's opportunities for authentic learning, ensure high quality curriculum delivery and support all students to be their best through multiple and varied learning mediums.

2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Our school's vision is "Learning with Head, Heart and Hands". The Briar Hill School Community believes that education entwines the gifts brought by the head, heart and hands. We aspire to create an environment that supports children and the school community in their lifelong journey of self-development, discovery and growth.

Briar Hill Primary School's Kindness Framework 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 kindness at every opportunity. The values of our school community are reflected in our behaviours and our decisions and shape our interactions.

Be KIND to yourself
Be KIND to others
Be KIND to the environment
Be the learning KIND
Be the achieving KIND
Be the community KIND

3. WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Briar Hill 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 Strategies

- A Steiner influence through a whole school approach to inquiry learning
- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- Priority given to positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing

- Extra-curricular programs, such as, camps, cultural performances, whole school event days, eg Class Plays, Winter Festival
- The school provides multiple opportunities for proactively engaging parents/carers and the wider community to be involved in the school's programs such as through the Classroom Helpers Program, Kitchen helpers, open days and school events, eg, Athletics Day, Welcome Ceremony, the Spring Fair, school camps, and Cultural and Environment Studies Incursions.
- 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
- Student-led conferences to engage parents as part of the student learning process
- 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 Steiner inspired curriculum including areas that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- Teachers at Briar Hill Primary School use the models of teaching 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 Briar Hill 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 Kindness Framework 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
- Development of intensive literacy and numeracy improvement strategies implemented as part of the
- School improvement agenda in response to school, state and national data collection
- Professional learning is given high priority to ensure strategies and approaches are understood, adopted and implemented
- Carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling. This includes a prep transition program, a year 6/7 transition program along with transition across the whole school in our meet the teacher days.
- Positive behaviour and student achievement are acknowledged in the classroom and in communication to parents
- Monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level. Communicate importance of attendance regularly to our community.
- Students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council and other forums including classroom discussions. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through prep/six buddy program, inter-school sport, athletics carnivals, cross country carnivals, swimming carnivals, music programs and lunchtime clubs.

- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Wellbeing Coordinator/Assistant Principal, Year Level Leaders, 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
- Social and emotional learning curriculum including Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships – is taught across the school
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (Body safe in senior school, Drama Toolbox Emotions junior school).
- 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 Strategies

- Welfare Coordinator/ Assistant Principal is a central point of contact for parents and teachers and has a role around targeted support for student wellbeing and engagement.
- Team Leaders in Junior and Senior 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
- Team meeting minutes have a standing item for student wellbeing
- Whole school social and emotional learning scope and sequence
- 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 which is detailed in their Individual Education Plan.
- All cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through our Kindness Framework, social and emotional classroom programs, cultural and environment studies.
- 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 Wellbeing Leader, 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
- Family wellbeing support groups
- 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 Strategies

- Student Support Groups (SSGs)- Student Support Group meetings occur each term to review term goals and progress. These meetings include input from teacher, education support staff member/s, wellbeing co-ordinator and parents. It may also include outside services when requested such as occupational therapist or psychologist.
- Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plan – Any student with additional needs has an IEP.
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Referral to Student Support Services
- Referral to external agencies such as ChildFirst, Orange Door, Austin CAMHS,
- Student wellbeing check ins

Briar Hill 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 such as social skills groups or individual therapy with a psychologist or counsellor.
    - Student Support Services (SSS)
    - Appropriate external supports such as other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First

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
- keeping families updated on unexplained student absence via compass emails and then meeting with families to discuss strategies to improve attendance.
- engaging with our regional Koorie Education 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

Briar Hill 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Example 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 Kindness Framework 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 Kindness Framework and Briar Hill Primary School Behaviour Expectations Management Plan.

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, BHPS 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.

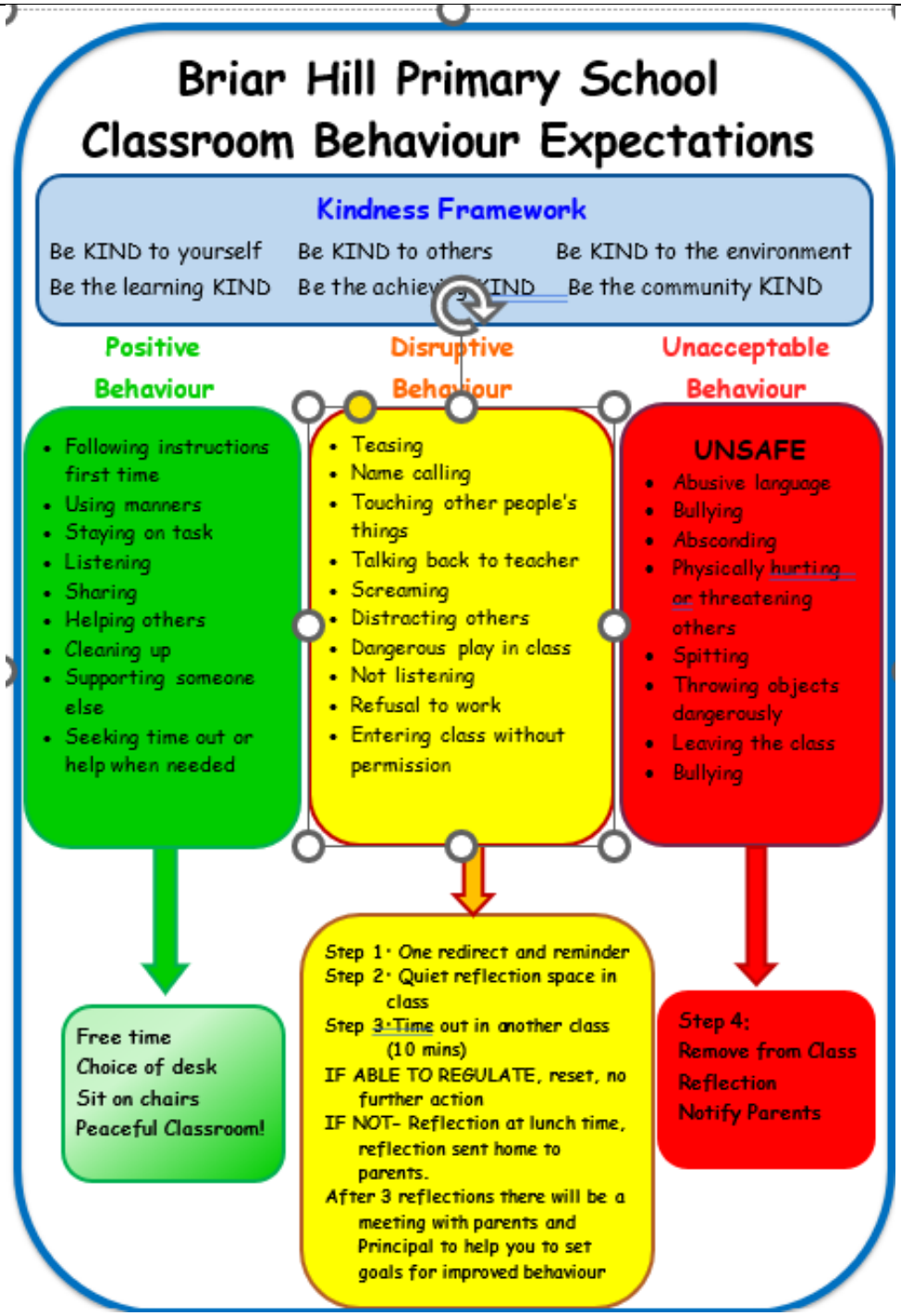
Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

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 Welfare Coordinator
- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

The Briar Hill Primary Behaviour Expectations as a staged response to behaviour is listed below. This is outlined in more detailed in our Behaviour Management Policy.



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 Briar Hill 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

Briar Hill 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 such as cooking, craft, literacy blocks
- 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.
- Involving parents in student-led conferences

8. EVALUATION

Briar Hill 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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Briar Hill Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards (including Compass) 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
- 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:

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
- Student Behaviour

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2024
Consultation	School Council – 7th May 2024
Approved by	Principal March 2024
Next scheduled review date	May 2025