



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING 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.

Altona 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.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) and Altona Primary School are committed to providing safe, secure and stimulating environments for all students. Student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked. Altona' primary School's Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy articulates our school community's shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, attendance and behaviour.

The policy supports the rights and articulates the expectations of every member of the Altona Primary School community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment where the diverse learning and wellbeing needs of students are recognised.

The Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy has a focus on the prevention and early intervention for students who are experiencing behavioural or attendance related issues as this is the most effective means of enhancing the resilience of young people.

At Altona Primary School, the emphasis is on encouraging and rewarding positive behaviours, while at the same time realigning students who exhibit inappropriate behaviours. Processes and procedures will be reviewed regularly to evaluate their effectiveness in meeting our goals. Comprehensive collection and evaluation of behaviour data will form the basis upon which any change and modification to processes and procedures will take place.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. School profile

Altona Primary School is located in the Hobson's Bay Municipality in the South-Western Region and has proudly been providing public education since 1915. The school has a proven history of learning growth, a positive school culture and strong community connections. The vision at Altona Primary School is to provide a positive, challenging, innovative, caring and safe environment for our children, enabling them to learn academically, creatively, socially and emotionally in all aspects of life. We aim to achieve the best possible outcomes for all students within a vibrant, dynamic and nurturing learning environment. In 2024, Altona Primary School accommodated 21 classes for approximately 510 students. Enrolment was drawn from the local neighbourhood with the school having an SFOE (Student Family Occupation Index) of 0.1582 representing a low level of socio-educational disadvantage.

Students at Altona Primary School engage in a literacy and numeracy curriculum that is differentiated based on needs and ensures a level of challenge for all learners. In 2023, students participated in a specialist program which consisted of Physical Education, Music, Visual Art, STEM and Auslan as an additional language. The staffing profile in 2024 consisted of 2.7 Principal class, 3 Learning Specialists, the equivalent of 26.6 full time teaching staff, 5 Education Support staff, 1 Business Manager, 3 administration staff and 1 technical support staff. Staff work collaboratively in Professional Learning Communities and reflect upon and develop their practice with the support of the School Improvement Team. The support and engagement of the parent body continued to reflect the strong community spirit and the strong partnerships between School Council, the Friends and Families Committee and the wider school community.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our values are Resilience, Respect, Responsibility, Collaboration, Aspiration and Gratitude. These values are clearly communicated with students through learning opportunities in our start up programs held at the beginning of the year and re-visited periodically throughout the remainder of the year as part of School Wide Positive Behaviours, and Respectful Relationships. We teach our values through having staff and community members model best practice. Learning our values is based on acquiring the knowledge, developing the skills and adopting the attitude to allow each value to flourish in the person. It is important for students to be familiar with the classroom expectations and consequences students are more likely to respect a classroom plan if they have been involved in its creation. The implementation of Altona Primary School's School Values across the school supports the provision of a safe and supportive learning environment. A learning environment that is characterised by high expectations for student learning of which the school community is fully aware of through the establishment of open communication.

RESPECT - We treat others the way we would like to be treated by accepting differences, caring for each other and being fair, open minded and honest.

RESPONSIBILITY - We are positive role models. We take care of our personal belongings, others' belongings, school resources and the environment. We are accountable for our own actions and learning by being safe and organised.

RESILIENCE - We have a growth mindset and never give up. We learn from our mistakes and move forward by putting setbacks into perspective, remaining positive and focusing on the solution, not the problem.



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ASPIRATION - We set challenging but achievable goals and apply effort to improve ourselves. We have high expectations of ourselves and others, apply feedback and take risks.

COLLABORATION - We work together on common goals and are effective and active team members. We are inclusive, encouraging and give and accept feedback.

GRATITUDE - We are proud to be a part of the APS community and recognise and demonstrate an attitude of gratefulness.

Our Vision - Altona Primary School provides a positive, challenging, innovative, caring and safe environment for our children, enabling them to learn academically, creatively, socially and emotionally in all aspects of life. We aim to achieve the best possible outcomes for all students within a vibrant, dynamic and nurturing learning environment.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

The whole school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- 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
- teachers at Altona Primary School use the Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional framework 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 Altona 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 a variety of platforms. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Team Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.



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- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
- 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
- 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

Some of the targeted strategies Altona Primary School use include:

- We have a Wellbeing and Inclusion Learning Specialist who monitors the health and wellbeing of students, 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
- our English as a second language students are supported, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds
- 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
- 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](#)

Individual

The follow specific strategies may be considered and applied on a case-by-case basis:

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



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- [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](#)

Altona 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
 - 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

Altona Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Wellbeing team (Assistant Principal and Learning Specialist) plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Altona Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:



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- 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 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, Altona 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.



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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 Team Leaders and Principal Class
- 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 Altona 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

Altona 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



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- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Altona 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

Altona 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
- 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:



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- 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	June 2024
Consultation	June 2024 School Council Members and Staff
Approved by	Principal - Sarah Afiouni
Next scheduled review date	June 2026
<i>School Profile will be updated as required in line with organisational and/or circumstantial changes at Altona Primary School. This will not result in the policy needing to be reviewed.</i>	