

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Buxton Primary School on 03 5774 7341 or buxton.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.

Buxton 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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POLICY

1. School profile

Buxton Primary School was established in 1875 and continues to be an integral and important part of the Buxton community. It is situated at the foot of the Cathedral Range in the Acheron Valley within the Shire of Murrindindi. At Buxton Primary School our mission is to provide a positive learning environment that places a high value on lifelong learning, through believing in and supporting students to achieve their full potential in all areas of the curriculum. This mission is firmly based on our core values of Belonging, Respect and Learning. Buxton Primary School is committed to continuous improvement and dedicated to ensuring that all students achieve at their highest capacity. We are proud of our focus on identifying and meeting the educational, wellbeing and interpersonal needs of each student.

Our school implements the Victorian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 6 and provides a range of specialist programs including PE, Library, Art, Music, Drama and LOTE. We are one of only 14 schools in Victoria to offer an Indigenous Language and Culture Program, taught by a respected local elder and linguist of the Taungurung people. Our Inquiry program makes strong links with the local environment and community.

The school is set in a uniquely beautiful physical environment with extensive grounds which includes a Land for Wildlife area. We undertake excursions and camps throughout the year, including a swimming program, cross country skiing at Lake Mountain, Kids Teaching Kids, Cathedral Cluster sporting events, school sleepover and a combined small schools camp. Buxton Primary School is committed to continuous improvement and excellence in all aspects of learning and teaching. Our school provides our students with a nurturing, safe and high-quality learning environment within excellent facilities.

Buxton Primary School successfully runs a School Council managed Out of School Hours Care Program, including before and after school care and a holiday program. 44 students are enrolled in 2026, with more than 50% having diverse learning needs that are supported by a strong culture of inclusive practice.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Buxton 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 belonging, respect and learning at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to provide a positive learning environment that places a high value on lifelong learning, through believing in and supporting students to achieve their full potential in all areas of the curriculum.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: buxtonps.vic.edu.au

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Buxton 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
- Prioritising 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 Buxton Primary School use an instructional framework based on the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0 to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction that is evidenced-based, and incorporates engaging teaching and learning strategies.
- 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 via our School-wide Positive Behaviour Framework

- Carefully planned transition programs support students moving into Foundation from Kindergarten and from Year 6 into secondary schooling
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- Monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school and individual level
- Creating 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
 - Bullying. No Way!
 - Safe Schools
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- Buddy program
- 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

- The Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader collaborates with class teachers, education support officers and the principal to monitor 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 – refer to our Aboriginal Learnline Wellbeing and Safety Policy and Marrung Action Plan for further information
- 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 provision of translated copies of school information, engaging families in school activities and celebrating diversity through school values, SWBPS and social and emotional learning.
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+, incorporating visible and tangible allyship and following the Department's policy on [LGBTIQA+ 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

Buxton 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
- 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
 - 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

Buxton Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team, consisting of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Principal and Education Support Officers, plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Buxton 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
- student notes and observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- engagement with families
- wellbeing referral forms from staff or students
- engagement with allied health and medical professionals, both at school and externally, including paediatricians, social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists and speech therapists.

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 valued 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, school-wide positive behaviour matrix and behaviour flowchart.

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, Buxton Primary School will institute a staged response, as per the behaviour matrix and flow chart, 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
- Reteaching the behaviour expectation or skill
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student to another learning space with supervision
- withdrawal of privileges
- restorative practices
- 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.

The Principal of Buxton 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

Buxton 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

Buxton 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
- Wellbeing referrals

Buxton 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/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 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](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ 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
- SWPBS Behaviour Matrix
- SWPBS Behaviour Flow Chart

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2026
Consultation	Parents/carers 17/7/26
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before July 2028