



Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Eppallock Primary School on 03 5439 6366 or eppallock.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.

Eppallock 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

Eppallock Primary School Our school is set in attractive, well maintained, spacious grounds in the rural community of Axe Creek, just 7 kms east of Strathfieldsaye.

The area caters for families who look upon the unique features of a rural school as part of their lifestyle choice. Students are in three small multi-age groups supported by dedicated teachers and strong family involvement. Mandarin/AUSLAN is taught from Prep to Grade 6 and children benefit from specialist areas of Drama/Music, Physical Education, MARC library Van as well as our Living Green Sustainability Program and STEM Program. We also take part in cluster athletics sports with other neighbouring schools, the regional cross country as well as many other sporting days. We also participate in the annual Energy Breakthrough event at Maryborough each year, entering teams in the pushcart and Innovation events.



Eppalock's [school values](#) include Be Resilient, Be Kind, Be Responsible, Be Respectful. These values were chosen by our school community in 2019 as what we see to be most important to us. We use the restorative approach across the school to resolve conflict and the school community is currently in the process of implementing SWPB (School Wide Positive Behaviour). As part of the SWPBS framework our school has a matrix of expectations across the school and in each classroom which has been made with input from students, families and staff. Our school community works hard to live by these values and expectations, at school, home and in the community.

The encouragement of academic rigor is a high priority with the implementation and embedding of a curriculum that supports the development of a differentiated program. Students have Individual Learning Plans when needed and staff and parents work together in a cooperative and supportive environment. Classroom differentiation and point of need learning is supported by the school tutoring program and extension of students into other class levels where needed.

Our school has two School Captains and three House Captains which form an enthusiastic and positive student leadership group. Students from all grades are elected as Junior School Councillors and take a leading role in the organisation of community service activities. Classrooms are well resourced and each classroom has a television screen used for displaying digital learning content. All students across the school have access to two class sets of netbooks and a class set of ipads.

The school has an organised camps program along with incursions and excursions throughout the year. We have strong links with the local community groups such as Land Care, DSE, Axe Creek Fire Brigade and the City of Greater Bendigo. The school runs a social community night each term and many local community members and past school families attend. For example, our ever popular Crazy Bingo night and annual Trivia Night.

The school has a strong environmental focus through our involvement in water saving initiatives, National Tree Planting Day and sustainable energy projects. Our school has recently won an award from the Bendigo Sustainability Group in the Early Education/Primary category for showing commitment to sustainable learning through our Living Green Program. We just won a Bendigo Sustainability Award. The involvement in these activities provides many opportunities for authentic learning to take place. Eppalock PS is also a 5 star resource smart school.

Eppalock Primary School is an open, friendly and caring school that strives to provide quality education that maximises all student abilities and produces well-adjusted, responsible and self-reliant students.

School values, philosophy and vision

Eppalock Primary School's values are Resilience, Responsibility, Respect and Kindness,

- *We strive to be resilient in our daily lives by working hard, giving our best effort and overcoming challenges with a positive mindset.*
- *We take responsibility for our own actions and work hard to make positive choices.*
- *We respect ourselves, our school and each other, and understand that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on the people and environment around us.*
- *We model and demonstrate kindness, and take every opportunity to help others that may be in need.*

Eppalock Primary School's vision is to prepare young people to become active, engaged and responsible citizens of the local and global community.

- We will provide a safe, calm and welcoming learning environment where every child is treated as an individual. Staff and children will be supported to be creative and innovative and we will encourage hands-on experiential learning opportunities.
- We will develop children who have a strong relationship to school and their community. The children will have a sense of self, understand how they learn, know their likes and strengths and appreciate that they have the talent and skills to play a constructive and positive role in the community around them.



- We will build and support an open, healthy and welcoming community that is visible in its practical support for the learning and wellbeing of each child. Children will be encouraged to embrace and celebrate difference and they will experience positive interactions with adults.
- We aim to foster a love of and for our natural environment and nurture a strong sense of stewardship within our students. Caring for our environment is a life long journey and we do it in our school as well as inspiring our students to reach further to effect global change for sustainability. We know that it's vital for a child to experience and playfully enjoy the natural environment and aim to involve them in authentic activities which enable them to touch, smell, see and hear it. Eppalock PS prioritises environmental sustainability.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: www.eppalockps.vic.edu.au/page/72/Policies

2. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Eppalock 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

Eppalock Primary school utilises the School Wide Positive Behaviours Framework as a basis for all our work with student well-being and engagement.

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data (uEducateUs) and school level assessment data*
- *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*
- *teachers at Eppalock Primary School use a 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 Eppalock 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 the Junior School Council and other forums including Green Team. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Well Being Leader and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and buddy programs.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Leader or 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:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Smiling Minds
 - Be You resources
- 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

- The school has a Wellbeing Leader who monitors the health and wellbeing of students across the school, 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.
- 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

Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#) - families with students needing additional support are given the opportunity to attend student support group meetings throughout the year (1 per term and as required). These meetings provide a platform for open communication between home and school and an opportunity to celebrate success, set goals and include student voice.
- [Individual Education Plans](#) – students requiring additional support with teaching and learning or social development may have an individual education plan developed for them by classroom teachers with support from leadership. These plans outline student strengths, interests, areas for development, goal setting and a space for student voice about their own development.
- [Behaviour - Students](#) – At Eppalock Primary School this is guided by our School Wide Positive Behaviour matrix and expectations. Staff use a restorative approach to solving problems and will always reteach student expectations when an issue arises.



- [Behaviour Support Plans](#) - are created for students requiring additional support with social and behavioural expectations. These are developed by the school and communicated with families and students usually through the student support group platform.
- [Student Support Services](#) - are an additional support service for the school. Usually allied health service trained staff from DET who are available to support the school and provide advice in a number of areas. Eppalock PS is assigned a key contact who we meet with twice a term to discuss students of concern.

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

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

Eppalock 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*
 - *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.*

3. Identifying students in need of support

Eppalock Primary School *is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies which help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Eppalock 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 through the student welfare observation tool which requires staff to record information 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*

4. 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.

5. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our School Wide Positive Behaviour Matrix which has been created by our whole school community.

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.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Eppalock 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
- Reteaching of a school expectation using the School Wide Positive Behaviour lessons.
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges



- restorative practices and restorative follow ups
- 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 Eppalock 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.

6. Engaging with families

Eppalock 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 relevant school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

7. Evaluation

Eppalock 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. This data is collected through ueducateus and analysed at our School Wide Positive Behaviours meetings twice a term.

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
- Ueducateus incident data
- Ueducateus case data.

Eppalock 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
- 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:

- 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	14 th October 2021
Consultation	School Council Policy group and school staff
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before October 2023