
Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact South Melbourne Park Primary School on 03 9498 3396 or south.melbourne.park.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.

South Melbourne Park 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 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. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
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POLICY

1. School profile

South Melbourne Park Primary School has Kids at the Heart. Our vision is to 'inspire a new generation of curious minds'. We strive to develop highly literate and numerate learners who are critical and creative thinkers, risk takers and innovators. Located in Albert Park Reserve, South Melbourne Park Primary School offers students modern learning facilities in a unique heritage setting, surrounded by parkland and one of Melbourne's leading sports precincts. The historic Albert Park Signal Depot and Drill Hall buildings have been re-purposed as administration and learning spaces for the Arts, Music, Library, and classrooms. Alongside this, is a new state-of-the-art discovery learning block, with flexible learning spaces designed for 21st century teaching methods. Connecting the two buildings are spectacular native trees, which provide beautiful spaces in which to play and gather as a community. Students also enjoy a brand-new playground and a gymnasium with a competition-grade netball and basketball court.

In 2022, enrolments increased to 317 students, including a small percentage of international students. There were 15 classes with an average class size is 21.8. The structure of the school included three Prep classes, four Year 1s, three Year 2s, four Year 3/4s and one Year 5/6 class. The staff profile consisted of two Principal Class Officers, two Learning Specialists, 16.5 generalist and specialist teachers, (equating to 27.5 equivalent full-time teachers) and eight Education Support Staff (equating to 6.5 full time staff). Teachers worked in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) designing and planning curriculum and using cycles of inquiry to share best practice and improve student outcomes.

At South Melbourne Park Primary School, wellbeing and learning are valued in equal measure. Our educational philosophy is grounded in social and emotional wellbeing, and we equip children with the tools to become problem-solvers, to build and restore relationships, to be resilient, self-motivated, and engaged participants in their learning. We nurture children to develop self-belief, and a growth mindset that empowers them to live an abundant and successful life. Our cultural values underpin our work:

- Kids at the heart (Kids are kept at the centre of our decision making)
- Where children love to be (We nurture joy and engagement in learning)
- A step ahead (We raise the bar, to inspire each other)
- Play, as a team (We collaborate and thrive together)
- Learning doesn't just happen at school (We connect with our community and beyond)

Specialist programs at South Melbourne Park Primary School include Spanish, STEM, Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Physical Education. We also provide tutoring in Literacy and Mathematics. Further opportunities for students are provided through a range of extra curricula programs, including, choir, instrumental music, young engineers-robotics, taekwondo and various lunch time clubs.

The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education Index (SFOE) which considers parents' occupation and education. South Melbourne Park Primary School's Index is 0.138 placing the school in the low band level when compared to the state median index of 0.4043. Specifically, 78.9% of our families are in the A or B Student Family Occupation category and 30% of students are funded for English Additional Language. We had a small number of students identify as Koorie or Torres Strait Islander background in 2022.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our vision, at South Melbourne Park Primary School, is to inspire a new generation of curious minds.

South Melbourne Park Primary School's Cultural values are:

- Kids at the heart – every decision comes back to the question 'What is best for our kids?'
- Where children love to be - We nurture joy in learning and nurture passions and curiosity
- A step ahead – We strive to provide up-to-date and evidence-based best practice
- Play as a team – We collaborate in professional learning communities and thrive together
- Learning doesn't *just* happen at school – We build partnerships with parents and carers and connect with our community and beyond

South Melbourne Park Primary School's student values are:

- Be curious
- Be involved
- Be leaders
- Be a team
- Be connected

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

South Melbourne Park 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

- South Melbourne Park Primary School Re-Engagement Process implemented in 2022
- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- consistent expectations for safe and Orderly Learning Environments via our AIP focus
- prioritise positive relationships of trust between staff and students via unconditional positive regard; 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 South Melbourne Park Primary School use a shared 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 South Melbourne Park 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 Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Student Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school performances, athletics, music programs and break time programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to teachers, the Wellbeing Leading Teacher, 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, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issues or specific needs such as Blue Earth
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, library, retreat, recess and lunchtime activities)
- Prep 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

- each subschool (P-2 & 3-6) has a senior staff member (Leading Teacher or Assistant Principal) responsible for these cohorts, 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
- 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 through differentiated learning and EAL coordinator, 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 background through standard school wellbeing and engagement processes

- 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](#) including Gender Affirmation Plans as required
- 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](#)
- All staff undertake Protective Intervention training
- All staff undertake Restraint and Seclusion training
- targeted wellbeing and engagement support for small groups based on needs including modelling and developing shared expectations for safe play, e.g. Social Stencil program for developing social skills

Individual

South Melbourne Park 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 - prioritising trauma-informed approaches and unconditional positive regard
- 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 and/or Behaviour Response 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 (for age 10+)

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

South Melbourne Park 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. South Melbourne Park 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 such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, Compass Chronicle and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers
- referrals from external services such as Orange Door, City of Port Phillip support workers, DFFH

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'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 our Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, South Melbourne Park 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 implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as withdrawal of privileges or break times 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:

- reminding students of the expected behaviours
- 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 sub-school Wellbeing leader
- restorative practices
- missed breaks or time spent in another space
- 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 South Melbourne Park 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

Example 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.

7. Evaluation

South Melbourne Park 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
- Compass Chronicle incident data
- school reports
- parent surveys
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

South Melbourne Park 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 via staff shared drive

- 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 and can be found on our website:

- 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	Term 3 2024 - via compass to community
Approved by	Principal - Nicole Arnold
Next scheduled review date	June 2026