



Bethanga Primary School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement 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.

Bethanga 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

Bethanga Primary is a small rural school of 35 students (established in 1877) set in a beautiful valley half an hour from Albury Wodonga. We provide all students from Bethanga, Bellbridge and beyond with an inspiring and responsive education to promote thinking and encourage curiosity. We nurture individual talents and needs in our setting underpinned by high expectations, quality opportunities and caring personalised attention in order for our children to reach their full academic and social potential.

Rapport is a close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well. At Bethanga Primary School, we use the acronym 'RAPPORT' to remind us of our values: Respect, Acceptance, Persistence, Pride, Optimism, Resilience and Truth. These values underpin our safe and caring school community.

We provide a welcoming atmosphere characterised by well-managed systems and processes focused on student achievement and wellbeing. Small classes allow us to focus on the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy as well as develop diverse skills through the exploration of rich

tasks across F-6. Our curriculum program includes art (fortnightly) and Auslan (weekly) delivered by specialised teachers as well as sport and STEM sessions.

At Bethanga Primary School, we value Emotional Intelligence as an explicitly taught aspect of the curriculum. Having a deep understanding of EQ concepts ensures that students have the skills to build a safe school environment and embrace the ups and downs of life and learning. Being emotionally intelligent has the greatest impact on academic outcomes.

A wide range of ICT equipment is utilised to support our students in their learning by embedding the equipment into programs across all curriculum areas. The strong teaching capacity of our staff enables us to provide excellent teaching and learning experiences across the Victorian Curriculum.

Through environmentally conscious programs our school is reducing its environmental impact by collection of rainwater for all water usage; use of solar panels for electricity production and a strong commitment to the values of reduce, reuse and recycle.

Our school is part of the Upper Murray Small School Cluster and the wider Tallangatta/Corryong Cluster. As part of this, our students join together throughout the year for excursions, camps and cultural experiences to further enhance learning. Professional Development of staff is enhanced through this cluster model as well.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Rapport is a close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well. At Bethanga Primary School, we use the acronym 'RAPPORT' to remind us of our values.

Respect for ourselves, others, property and the environment

Acceptance to treat others the way we wish to be treated

Persistence we "hang in," when challenged

Pride in our self, school and community

Optimism being hopeful and having a "glass half full" perspective

Resilience positive self-talk and actions assist us to bounce back from setbacks

Truth we self-umpire, we do the right thing because it is the right thing to do

Being a part of the community extending beyond Bethanga Primary School is important to us. We are part of a small, rural community. Our school ensures that it has a positive physical presence in the community and engagement in community events to promote our school and build connections with families and locals.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

At Bethanga Primary School we believe that student success is a result of a strong, open and supportive relationship between the students, teachers and families. It is this 'learning triangle' that provides the support for individual students and recognises individual achievements and efforts. As a learning community we are committed to the implementation of school wide positive behaviour management strategies for student engagement, learning and wellbeing that align with our school values and recognise the positive contributions we all make to our school environment.

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, 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 data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent opinion survey, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Bethanga Primary School use a school developed Curriculum Framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidence based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Bethanga 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 Leadership Program. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, or Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships

Targeted

- each year group teacher responsible for their year, 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
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- 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](#)
- 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

Bethanga 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 Behaviour Strategy Plan to understand not only behaviours but also what may be contributing or triggering these behaviours
- developing Individual Support Plans (ISP) addressing academic, behavioural and attendance issues
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - Student Support Services
 - School-based wellbeing supports
- referring the student and their parent/carer to appropriate external supports such as North East Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (NECAMHS), Child First, Upper Murray Family Care

Where necessary, the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstance, health and wellbeing
- collaborating where appropriate with the support of the student and their family with any external services, agencies, health professionals
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group (SSG) meetings for all students with a disability, in out of home care and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.
- 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 our EAL program, 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 regular SSG meetings, liaising with relevant SSSO support, interpreters and local Refugee organisations.
- 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
- 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 Support 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 Support Plans
- Wellbeing 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

4. Identifying students in need of support

Bethanga 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 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, Example 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 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 Year Level Coordinator
- 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 Bethanga 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

Bethanga 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

Bethanga 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

Bethanga 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
- 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

This policy was reviewed and approved by School Council and the Principal on the 6th May 2024.

This Policy has a mandatory review cycle of 2 years. It is due for review in May 2026.