



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.

Little Bendigo 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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POLICY

1. School Profile

Little Bendigo Primary School has an idyllic setting surrounded by gum trees and has a multi-level site. The original school building is over 130 years old, is admired by the community and creates a feeling of inspiration. The school has an enrolment of 85 and attracts local enrolments from all areas of Ballarat.

Little Bendigo Primary School has for many years focused on strategies that have been created to further engage students in their learning and enable them to love to learn. Teaching is focused on embedding learning in a variety of contexts and collaboration.

Technology is well integrated into classroom programs as part of individualised learning programs and major projects.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, academically, emotionally and socially.

2. School Values, Philosophy and Vision

At Little Bendigo we have three core values: optimism, compassion and integrity.

Every member of the school community (students, staff and parents) has a right to participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Students, staff and parents all have a responsibility, to ensure members of our school community treat each other safely and with respect.

Our philosophy is to develop children to their fullest potential by providing opportunities to share knowledge, skills abilities and experiences in a happy and supportive environment.

Effective teaching, an inclusive and engaging curriculum and respectful relationships between staff and students are promoted through the School.

We have implemented positive practices which include; positive reinforcement, the Respectful Relationships Curriculum and Restorative Discussions.

The school is committed to the use of a restorative approach with students. This Restorative Approach:

- promotes awareness of others, responsibility and empathy
- involves direct participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution
- promotes relationship management rather than behaviour management
- is concerned with establishing or re-establishing relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied

Little Bendigo Primary School is committed to providing a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in the school environment. Our school programs are designed to empower students to positively deal with and resolve bullying issues. Our programs will assist students to develop life-long skills.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, academically, socially and emotionally and fully equip them to contribute positively to society.

3. Engagement Strategies

Little Bendigo Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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

Universal (whole of school) strategies are proactive and are focused on education and building a positive and respectful school culture.

- 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, underpinned by the Respectful Relationships Program
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- recognising parents/carers as partners in student learning
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council
- 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

Targeted Strategies

Targeted strategies are designed to address particular concerns in certain friendship groups or age groups, including:

- participation in restorative discussions facilitated by a teacher
- group and individual social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff

Individual

Little Bendigo Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These include:

- opportunities to engage in learning and develop a sense of belonging with the classroom and across the school
- 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 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

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 Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Note: Behaviour Support Plans are developed by the school in conjunction with a student, parents and DET wellbeing staff where appropriate. These plans are developed to assess behaviours, their functions, influences and triggers.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Little Bendigo Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Little Bendigo 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, 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, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns at the appropriate time

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

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Little Bendigo Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines and Behaviour policy. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the consequence (action) put in place by teaching staff.

Consequences at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Consequences 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. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard. A staged response will be used in accordance with Department of Education & Training Policy.

The staged response used at Little Bendigo Primary School is:

Minor and/or initial incidents is:

Minor incidents can include:

- not demonstrating respect for others or their property
- interrupting the learning of others
- not following teacher instructions

The staged response to minor and/or initial incidents is:

Step 1: A verbal acknowledgment of the behaviour

Step 2: A reminder that the behaviour is inappropriate and is infringing on the rights of others

Step 3: A teacher controlled consequence such as directing the student to relocate in the classroom or to shadow a teacher during recess or lunch (if the behaviour occurred outside)

Step 4: A teacher controlled consequence such as directing the student to move to another classroom or being sent inside during recess or lunch break

At this stage (or prior) a Restorative Discussion must also take place between students involved in an incident, or between a student and teacher for behaviours that disrupt teaching and learning. The most appropriate time for this discussion could be during recess or lunch break

Step 5: The student will not receive a tick on their Rewards Day Chart for that week. Parents will receive a written notification or phone call from the teacher.

Major and/or repeated incidents:

The behaviour of a student constitutes a major incident, when they;

- leave the school grounds without permission from staff
- behave in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person

- cause significant damage to or destruction of property
- commit or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
- possess, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons
- fail to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- consistently engage in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes
- consistently behave in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student

Responses to major and repeated incidents could include:

- Referral to the Principal
- Contact made by the Principal to parents
- Withdrawal of a privilege, including:
 - participation in Rewards Day
 - attending excursions or events in which students represent the school
 - attending school camp
- Development of a Behaviour Management Plan, where necessary, in accordance with DET policy
- Withdrawal from the classroom and working in an alternative location
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Note: *Withdrawal of privileges can only be applied by the Principal of the school, after consideration of the behaviour, educational needs of the student and individual student circumstances.*

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 Little Bendigo Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

Rewards Days

Rewards Days are a celebration for students who have consistently demonstrated their responsibilities to others during each term. Rewards Days may be an incursion, excursion or other special event and input on the day is sought from the Junior School Council. They take place at the end of each term.

To participate in Rewards Day, students must have demonstrated during the term that they have consistently:

- participated fully in their educational program
- displayed positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respected the right of others to learn

Teachers monitor and track positive behaviours on a weekly basis. Parents will be notified by the class teacher if their child has not received a tick for the week and the reason why. Students who do not receive a tick for 4 weeks in one term are not eligible to participate in Rewards Day and will be provided with the standard curriculum at school on that day. Parents will be notified by the Principal if their child is not eligible to participate in Rewards Day.

7. Attendance

Student attendance is monitored twice on a daily basis by the school. Teachers are required to monitor daily attendance and the school business manager, principal or delegate will follow up on unexplained absences on the day of a student's absence. The follow up will be a text message from the Compass system at 10am every morning. . Student attendance is recorded in CASES21.

8. Engaging with families

Little Bendigo 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 Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy, 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 school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

9. Evaluation

Little Bendigo 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

Example 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. v

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following:

- 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

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Attendance Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 23/06/2021 and is scheduled for review in June 2022.