



# Serpell Primary School

## Student Engagement and Wellbeing 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.

Serpell 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
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### Policy

#### 1. School profile

Serpell Primary School is a dynamic, thriving learning community made up of a diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Set in the picturesque landscape of Templestowe, 15 km east of Melbourne, the school provides for both the local and international community through extensive programs that stimulate learning, creativity and imagination. The school is experienced in assisting students to make the smooth transition from international and interstate school systems.

Parents, staff and students share a common goal: the commitment to educational excellence and personal growth.

In partnership, we have developed a distinctive philosophy based on the maximisation of individual potential and the recognition that we are a community of learners. We are committed to offering learning opportunities that promote a thinking culture, cater for individual learning styles, engage and extend our students, develop independence, resilience and collaborative learning. Our school has a strong tradition in the provision of excellence in educational standards and the development of students who strive and achieve success in academic, artistic and sporting arenas.

Serpell Primary has a strong tradition and reputation in the provision of excellence in educational outcomes and the development of students who strive and achieve success in academic, artistic and sporting arenas. Our school is formally accredited as an International School by the Council of International Schools, providing recognition that the school meets the 65 standards of best practice in philosophy, governance, curriculum, staffing, student

services, resources and community life. The school is committed to meeting the current and future needs of its students and in developing global citizenship and international networks. High emphasis is placed on academic achievement in the context of the development of programs for children of high potential and providing them with opportunities both within and outside the school.

Serpell Primary School is organised in traditional year level groupings with modern teaching facilities supported by an extensive information and communication technology infrastructure. The school has generous sporting and recreational facilities to support the health and well-being of its students and enjoys positive working relationships with parents and the wider community.

The ultra-modern design of the school facilities provides a quiet, secure learning environment and promotes a sense of belonging and identification with school culture. Interactive technology in each classroom enables students to communicate readily on-line through the internet and to develop sophisticated research and visual literacy skills. Extensive sporting facilities enable students to develop outstanding skills in a broad range of sports.

Students at our school are taught the skills to work co-operatively with others, behave respectfully and to value their cultural heritage.

## **2. School values, philosophy and vision**

Serpell Primary School is committed to the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- elected government; and
- the rule of law; and
- equal rights for all before the law; and
- freedom of religion; and
- freedom of speech and association; and
- the values of openness and tolerance.

Founded in 1978, Serpell Primary School continues to display academic excellence within a thriving multicultural and linguistically diverse community. This dynamic, international environment enhances the Serpell school community and exposes our students to a global experience. Our vision, 'empowering learners in a global community through educational excellence and personal growth' is a common goal shared between our students, staff and parents. United, we have developed a distinctive philosophy of:

- Recognising that we are a community of lifelong global learners,
- Maximizing individual potential through engagement and enrichment, offering learning opportunities that promote a thinking culture,
- Catering for individual learning styles,
- Fostering the development of independence, resilience and collaborative learning.

The School is committed to meeting the needs of its students and in catering for the large range of student interests and capabilities. We have developed a distinctive ethos, encapsulated by its motto 'Learning, Caring and Sharing'. High emphasis is placed on academic achievement in the context of the development of programs of excellence and the extension of all students to maximize individual learning potential. We have increasingly developed an International frame of reference, in response to an increasingly global school community.

A shared understanding of our intercultural capabilities is demonstrated at every opportunity:

### *Digital Citizenship:*

Serpell students learn and communicate online safely, responsibly, ethically and critically with an awareness of digital etiquette and the potential impact of their digital footprint.

### *Intercultural Learning:*

Serpell students develop intercultural understandings as they learn to value identity through the experience of culture, language and beliefs. They learn to appreciate commonalities and differences in diverse cultural

perspectives and practices. Students develop dispositions such as empathy and respect towards other cultures by creating connections with others.

#### *Global Citizenship:*

Serpell students have a sense of how their own role as a world citizen can shape sustainable communities locally, nationally and internationally.

#### *Child Safe Expectations*

Serpell Primary School is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.
- We have a zero tolerance approach towards child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently within our robust policies and procedures.

### **3. Engagement strategies**

Serpell 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.

The school is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. As part of the Victorian Government commitment to child safe standards the school has developed and implemented policies and documents to support the Child Safe Standards. The Child Safe Standards are aimed at creating child safe cultures and environments.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

#### *Universal*

Whole of school strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and 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.
- 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 Serpell Primary School ensure best practice and incorporate High Impact Teaching Strategies into all lessons.
- Teachers at Serpell 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 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 support students moving into different stages of their schooling.
- Student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and in communication to parents.

- Students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums that promote student voice.
- Opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school concerts, athletics, music programs and peer support programs, such as 'Buddies' or the 'Peer Mediator' programs.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Year Group Leaders, 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.
- Opportunities are provided for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)

### *Targeted*

Targeted strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:

- Each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior 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.
- If the School has an enrolment of Koorie students, they will be connected with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer.
- Staff will undertake professional learning in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data.

### *Individual*

Implemented strategies that support and promote individual engagement include:

- Students with additional needs will be supported through Student Support Groups (SSG), see: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>, and:
  - Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan.
  - Program for Students with Disabilities.
  - Referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services.
  - Referral to ChildFirst, Headspace.
- 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.
- 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 Plans 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.

The School has an extensive range of ways in which student well-being is supported and is consistently reviewing the effectiveness of these programs with the view to making subsequent revision where necessary. Extensive links have been made with external organizations and agencies to promote and enhance student well-being.

#### **4. Identifying students in need of support**

The School has an Assistant Principal who manages the Program for Students with Disabilities. The school also provides a Student Wellbeing Officer / Chaplain two days a week whose role primarily focuses on the wellbeing of the students and community. As part of the welfare program at the school, a fully qualified school nurse is employed each day for 4 hours. The school currently has access to a Psychologist, two days a week and a Speech

Pathologist for one day a week. The school liaises with other government agencies on a regular basis. Each year, parents, teachers and students are given the opportunity to respond to surveys which included reference to Student Engagement and Wellbeing at the school.

The Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing) oversees the Program for Students with Disability and supports students, teachers, Student Support Services Officers (SSSO) and educational support personnel to create Individual Learning Plans with specific goals. Timelines for assessment against these goals and Student Support Groups (SSG) meetings are also coordinated. Student Support Service Officers (SSSO) include speech therapists and psychologists. These services are also overseen by our Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing) who clearly defines their roles and manages teacher referrals. Additional Community out-reach programs are also sourced, such as:

- Kid's Hope
- Visiting Teacher Service
- CYMHS
- Avenue Education
- Safe Futures Foundation
- Anglicare and Doncare
- Chaplaincy Program

These programs are all utilized to support students and build learning programs specific to student needs. All additional programs are linked into a student's Individual Learning Plan which is developed by the classroom teacher. The Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing) works with the classroom teacher as a facilitator and mentor, and coordinates specialist services and placement of learning support staff to collaboratively work toward the goals that have been set. Learning tasks are developed and assessed by the classroom teacher, with the support of educational support staff (Integration Aides).

Serpell 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. Serpell 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.

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.

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types or grounds of discrimination that are unlawful and aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments or their age.

Under the act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of the following attributes:

- Age
- Breastfeeding
- Gender identity
- Impairment
- Industrial activity
- Lawful sexual activity
- Marital status
- Parental status or status as carer
- Physical features
- Political belief or activity
- Pregnancy
- Race
- Religious belief or activity
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Personal association (with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes).

*The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, sets out a list of 20 rights that reflect the following four basic principles, Freedom, Respect, Equality, Dignity. The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services:

- The right not to be discriminated against
- The right to privacy and reputation
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Cultural Rights

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect other human rights.

Everyone should:

- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote human rights

### *Rights and Responsibilities of Students*

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Students have a right to:  Work in a safe and secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-	Students have a responsibility to:  Participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

<p>bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition</p> <p>Participate fully in the school's educational program</p>	<p>Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.</p> <p>As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.</p> <p>Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.</p>
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*Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers*

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<p>Parents/carers have a right to:</p> <p>Expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged</p>	<p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <p>Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress and by modelling positive behaviours.</p> <p>Ensure their child's regular attendance</p> <p>Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning.</p> <p>Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.</p>

*Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers*

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<p>Teachers have a right to:</p> <p>Expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment</p> <p>Be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student</p>	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to</p> <p>Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy.</p> <p>Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.</p> <p>Know the content they teach.</p> <p>Know their students.</p> <p>Plan and assess for effective learning.</p> <p>Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.</p> <p>Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.</p> <p>Participate in Professional Learning relating to the specific needs of the students in their class.</p>

**6. Student behavioural expectations**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Serpell Primary School's Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Serpell Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines.

Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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 and proportionate responses to misbehaviour .
- Referral to the Year Level Coordinator.
- Restorative practices.
- Behaviour reviews.

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

#### *A zero-tolerance approach to bullying*

Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching. Bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated at Serpell Primary School.

#### *Expectations*

We believe in:

- Ensuring that the growth and development of children is the primary focus of all decisions made by the school.
- Providing a respectful, inclusive learning environment where diversity in nationality, beliefs, knowledge and opinions is valued by all.
- Recognising and addressing the learning needs of individual students.
- Providing skilled and innovative teaching based on current educational research and ongoing professional learning.
- Developing students to be aware of and able to discuss their own thinking and learning.
- Developing students to be motivated, articulate, collaborative, emotionally intelligent, curious and socially responsible.
- Enhancing student learning by the inclusion of a global perspective.
- Fostering a love of learning that will empower students to thrive in a globally connected, changing world.
- Providing opportunities for students, staff and the broader school community to have a voice and be in dialogue around important issues.
- Being a community educational resource and building cooperative relationships with all members of the broader school community.
- Upholding the spirit and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- Establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments.
- Ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations.
- Providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students.
- Consistently acknowledging all students.
- Empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in

decision-making.

- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.
- Providing a Philosophy program which provides all students with the language to express their thoughts in a constructive, thoughtful manner.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

- Understanding the student's background and needs.
- Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- Providing consistent school and classroom environments
- Using the ZPG (Zone of Proximal Development) to build the concepts needed by the student to move to the next stage of learning and experience success.

## **7. Engaging with families**

Serpell 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 home learning 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**

Serpell 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
- SOCS
- Council of International Schools – Community Surveys

### **Further Information and Resources:**

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- eSmart (Cyber Safety) Policy

### **Review Cycle:**

This policy was last updated on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2018 and is scheduled for review in May 2020.