Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Administration.

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, 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.

Contents

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy, and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

Policy

1. *School profile*

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 has an enrolment of approximately 1100 students and 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 wellbeing of its students and enjoys positive working relationships with parents and the wider community.

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. 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.

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. *Wellbeing and engagement strategies*

Serpell 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
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 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 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 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 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).
- 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

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.
- 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.
- 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
- 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
- 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 (*Student Support Groups)*,
  - Individual Education Plans (*Individual Education Plans*)
  - Individual Learning Plans
  - Behaviour Support Plans (*Behaviour - Students* and *Behaviour Support Plans*)
  - Student Support Services (*Student Support Services*)

  as well as to other Department programs and services such as:
  - Program for Students with Disabilities (Program for Students with Disabilities
  - Mental Health (*Mental health toolkit*, *headspace*,
  - Navigator
  - LOOKOUT
- 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.
- Engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers.
- Running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    o with a disability
    o in Out of Home Care
    o with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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 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 (SSS) 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 (SSS) 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.

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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy and 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, 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 support and intervention meetings.

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 Serpell 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*

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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS
- Council of International Schools – Community Surveys

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 the 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:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	This policy was last updated on the 20th of May 2022.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	This policy is scheduled for review in May 2024.