



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & INCLUSION POLICY

## Basic Beliefs

At Berwick Lodge Primary School we are committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked, and we aim to promote an understanding of this link in both the school environment and in the classroom.

It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher is a vital source of support and a determinant in the success of their students. The teachers at this school will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. This school recognises the need to be engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Our school strives to be a learning community where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are valued and respected.

## Goals

- The school will focus on establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers and students, and establishing a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.
- The school will collaboratively develop and implement a fair and respectful whole-school behaviour management approach.
- The school will encourage and provide multiple opportunities for parents/carers and members of the broader community to play an active part in the life of the school and the education of their children.
- The school's curriculum will include pro-social values and behaviour to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.
- The school will promote active student participation and provide students with a sense of ownership of their environment.

- The school will support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners.
- The school will establish social/emotional and educational support for vulnerable students and monitor and evaluate progress.
- The school will have processes in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support.
- The school will build strong links with the local community to gain access to an extended network of community members, professionals and educators who can provide expertise and experience that can build the capacity of our school and our teachers to respond to the needs of the students.

## **Guidelines**

### **SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT**

Berwick Lodge Primary School, opened in 1990 in Berwick, a south-eastern residential suburb of Melbourne approximately 42 km from the central business district. In 2014 our current enrolment is approximately 554 with a significant number of these enrolments coming from outside our immediate neighbourhood area. We have 36.5 effective full time staff including specialists in Physical Education, Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Mandarin.

Whilst the majority of our student population are predominately English speaking, there are an increased number of students that have a EAL background.

The school's Student Family Occupation index (SFO), a measure of family socio-economic status, is 0.4276.

### **WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION STATEMENT**

Berwick Lodge Primary School is a community where we work together to help everyone become better lifelong learners. We care about each other, value our differences and treat each other with respect. Our whole school student wellbeing program is based on the You Can Do It! Program. We provide a child-centred, developmentally appropriate, learning environment that recognises, fosters and promotes the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of each child. We understand that many children have unique wellbeing and learning needs and we are committed to addressing these needs.

The school aims to provide a positive, stimulating, secure, safe, happy and caring environment conducive to optimal learning, where mutual cooperation and respect is evident.

Our Student Wellbeing focus aims to empower individuals and teams to enable a sense of connectedness and purpose for life. We seek to help build self- confidence, self -esteem and resilience in order for our students to approach future life experiences, opportunities and challenges with self-assurance and energy.

We emphasise that the discipline of students must be based on principles of procedural fairness and must not permit corporal punishment.

We have clear Anti-Bullying Guidelines and support the DEECD strategy 'Safe Schools are Effective Schools'. This highlights that every student has the right to feel safe from bullying at school. Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health

and safety - either psychologically or physically - or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Cyber bullying is bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chat room, discussion group or instant messaging. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS). Examples of cyber bullying include teasing, spreading rumours online, sending unwanted messages or defamation.

All forms of bullying, whether it be physical, verbal or cyber are not tolerated at any level at Berwick Lodge Primary School.

### **Primary Prevention**

Student Wellbeing Prevention provides a range of programs that specifically teach and foster:

- You Can Do It!
- Shared Community Values
- Social and Emotional Competencies
- Cooperative Learning Strategies and
- Alannah & Madeline Foundation Better Buddies

### **Early Intervention**

We believe that a successful behaviour management approach is far more than a single program or product. It is an ongoing process involving every member of the school community.

Berwick Lodge's Student Code of Conduct highlights the values of the school community and the behaviours it expects will be demonstrated. It links very closely to our preventative approach through empowering children to recognize and accept responsibility for how they choose to behave.

Our focus is on expectations rather than rules, consequences rather than punishments and problem solving rather than conflict. Our dialogue with children is characterised by expressions such as getting along, cooperation and respect.

At the beginning of the year, each class will establish their class values and expectations of each other within the context of the Student Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying Guidelines. While developing their class values, a class management plan will also be developed in which consequences will be discussed. There is a focus on identifying and acknowledging appropriate behaviour, rewarding it in a variety of ways including stickers, tickets, reward points and whole class rewards such as a special activity at the end of the term. The foundation of identifying and acknowledging appropriate behaviour is verbal praise and recognition. Awards are also given out at level and whole school assemblies which praise and acknowledge individual achievements and are a source of great pride and celebration.

While our focus is on promoting appropriate behaviour, consequences may be provided when children choose to behave in inappropriate ways. In most circumstances, this will usually involve the inappropriate behaviour being identified and the child given an opportunity to modify their behaviour. If a child chooses not to respond to this warning, further consequences will be imposed such as withdrawal to a quiet area within the classroom or into another nearby classroom. In more serious circumstances, a child will be required to participate in time out with the Assistant Principal or Yard Duty Teacher during half of lunchtime. Parents are advised when their child's behavior necessitates this time out.

Our approach to student management in the playground is similar to that in the classroom, with the same expectations and values being promoted. Teachers supervising in the playground acknowledge appropriate behaviour. If a child chooses to behave inappropriately in the playground, then a similar process to the classroom will be followed. The inappropriate behaviour will be identified and the child given the opportunity to modify the behaviour. If the child chooses not to respond to this warning, the child may be required to walk with the supervising teacher for a period of time.

Student Management is most effective when parents, children and teachers work together to establish the values and expectations of the school community and appropriate behaviour in the classroom and the playground. In some circumstances, parents will be invited to join with their child’s teacher to develop an Individual Learning Plan to assist their child develop appropriate behaviour patterns in the classroom or the playground. An Individual Learning Plan will identify the skills to be developed and will outline strategies to be used at school and, if appropriate, at home. We place great importance on this partnership and value the support of parents and children.

At Berwick Lodge, we have an active commitment to promoting children’s personal wellbeing and feeling of safety and security as vital precursors to successful learning.

The school promotes the philosophy of prompt and timely arrival at school and regular school attendance, eg. ‘Every Day Counts’. Going to school every day is important for a student’s education. Absence from school means that learning opportunities are reduced and this can ultimately lead to poor student achievement. Where this happens, the impact may be felt long after the student has left school.

We have encouraged the parents to notify the school if their child is going to be absent. Teachers or office staff contact the parents if a child is absent for more than 2 days. The importance of regular attendance at school is regularly promoted in the school newsletter.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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.

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
All students have the rights to a safe and secure work and play environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We play safely in the yard</li> <li>➤ We obey the school rules</li> <li>➤ We care for the equipment and facilities we use</li> <li>➤ We wear sun hats at the appropriate times</li> <li>➤ We help other children in the yard, especially those who are unhappy or by themselves</li> <li>➤ We play cooperatively in groups and teams</li> </ul>
It is mutually advantageous if students interact with their peers, the staff and the wider school community in a courteous, trustworthy and respectful manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We treat teachers, parents and other students with respect</li> <li>➤ We are courteous and polite by using our manners</li> <li>➤ We are friendly to all the visitors to the school</li> <li>➤ We make sure everyone has a say</li> <li>➤ We include others in our work and games</li> </ul>

<p>All students have the right to learn in an atmosphere of order and cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We negotiate the class rules with the teachers</li> <li>➤ We work within the class rules and encourage all classmates to work within the class rules</li> <li>➤ We help others achieve their goals as well as ours</li> <li>➤ We allow other people to work without interruption</li> <li>➤ We listen to the ideas of others</li> <li>➤ We work cooperatively in groups and teams</li> <li>➤ We give everybody a fair go</li> </ul>
<p>Students are empowered to assess their own behaviour and to develop strategies to act in a responsible manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We support the school's 'You Can Do It' program and the school's values</li> <li>➤ We are responsible for our own behaviour</li> <li>➤ We are good role models for other children</li> <li>➤ We think for ourselves and encourage others to do the same</li> <li>➤ We are proud of our achievements and our school</li> </ul>

### Students with Disabilities and Impairments

All students, including students with a disability, should be treated with dignity and enjoy the benefits of education in a supportive environment, which values and encourages participation by all students, including the students with a disability.

Berwick Lodge has a small number of students enrolled under the PSD program with a larger number of students with special needs. All these students have access to an engaging, age-appropriate curriculum supported by an Individual Learning Plan, regular Student Support Group meetings, Para-professionals (Speech / Guidance Officer) passionate and caring Education Support Officers and highly skilled and understanding teachers.

### Bullying and Cyberbullying

Berwick Lodge Primary School is working toward being an eSmart School. **eSmart** an initiative of the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, is a behaviour-change initiative designed to improve cybersafety and deal with cyberbullying and bullying. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DEECD materials eg: Radio Show Message, LEEP Blots and Student based posters. Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation's 'Better Buddies' Framework is another initiative designed to create friendly and caring primary school communities where bullying is reduced. By participating in the Better Buddies program, children in their first and last year of attendance at Berwick Lodge Primary School buddy up and learn the values: *caring for others, friendliness, respect, valuing difference, including others and responsibility*. All children in the school learn these values through formal and informal activities, including their interactions with the mascot Buddy Bear, our giant, fun-loving and caring purple bear. Our Buddy program extends beyond these two year levels and includes all children in Years 1-5. In addition, our Year 6 students are allocated a staff buddy with whom they can develop a positive and engaging relationship.

Staff supervise the yard duty areas, interacting with students, looking for “hot spots” and diffusing situations when they arise. This approach and Berwick Lodge Primary School’s commitment to the restorative practices process creates a supportive, responsive school community and reduces bullying opportunities

## **SHARED EXPECTATIONS**

Effective schools share high expectations for the whole-school community. Shared expectations are:

- jointly negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, including students
- clear and specific
- focused on positive and pro-social behaviours
- focused on prevention and early intervention
- supported by relevant procedures
- consistent, fair and reasonable
- linked to appropriate actions and consequences.

### **Schools – Principals, Teachers and School Staff**

We have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school, and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.

#### School expectations include:

- Promoting the School values of Excellence, Integrity, Respect, Co-operation and Empowerment
- Providing a safe and secure work and play environment;
- Treating one another in a courteous, trustworthy and respectful way
- Learning in an atmosphere of order and cooperation
- Accepting responsibility for personal behaviour and choosing to behave in a professional and appropriate manner.
- Inclusive teaching practices which acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of the wide range of cultural backgrounds, interests, talents and abilities of students and recognise, value and build on students’ backgrounds and experiences
- Staff to model culturally inclusive behaviour, and manage any behaviour that appears racist, discriminatory, prejudiced or culturally biased.
- Acknowledgment of, respect for and the celebration of culturally significant events
- Providing accessible educational provision for all students
- Encouraging positive Parent/carer partnerships and liaison
- Encouraging community partnerships
- The provision of appropriate student services
- The development and provision of appropriate, relevant and challenging curriculum that gives students the opportunity to experience success in their learning.
- The adherence to the School Community of Code of Conduct
- The development of shared expectations of teachers, (Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct)

*N.B. It is the responsibility of teachers to uphold the values and principles of the VIT Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics and Teachings Standards of Professional Practice. ([www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au))*

## **Students**

As students' progress through school we recognise that they need to 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.

Students should, with support, be expected by their parents/carers and their school 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.

Demonstration of respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. Students' engagement, attendance and behavioural expectations should be framed using positive language to support and encourage safe and inclusive behaviour.

Actively teaching students whole school engagement, attendance and behavioural expectations creates a highly predictable environment that allows students to understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from each other.

## **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers can be expected to promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child's educational progress. Parental cooperation with the school, including regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning and wellbeing, will actively support their child's engagement in the school environment. Parents/carers can also be expected to support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

## **SCHOOL ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

Student engagement, regular attendance and appropriate behaviours are encouraged through the implementation of whole-school strategies supported by targeted and individualised support when required. Actions and consequences are developed in consultation with and agreed on by representatives from the whole-school community, including students. This fosters a cohesive and consistent response to poor attendance and inappropriate behaviour.

These actions and consequences are incremental (a staged response) and are applied fairly and consistently. Applying fair and consistent discipline and attendance policies that are collectively agreed on and fairly enforced increases the likelihood that student connection to school is maintained. Equal emphasis is placed on issuing positive consequences for meeting high expectations as there is on negative consequences.

Actions and consequences have an educational role and aim to foster positive relationships and retain the dignity of the student. Actions and consequences that isolate a student from learning are avoided where possible.

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours are supported most effectively 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

- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities enabling them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- implementing school-wide positive and educative behaviour support strategies.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, are responded to through a staged response that has a prevention and early intervention, data based focus, including:

- understanding the student
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student’s learning program.

Broader support strategies include:

- involving and supporting the parents/ carers
- involving the Assistant Principal/student wellbeing coordinator and possibly the school nurse
- tutoring/peer tutoring
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening Student Support Group meetings – the Student Support Group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- providing broader educational programs
- involving community support agencies.

### **Discipline Procedures – Suspension and Expulsion**

Students are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy; therefore, student welfare is the responsibility of all staff working in a whole school context. Student learning cannot be separated from welfare.

At Berwick Lodge Primary School there is a focus on the dignity of the child with the building of relationships, a sense of belonging and connectedness to school, fostering student empowerment and building student resilience.

Student engagement and appropriate behaviours are encouraged through the implementation of whole school strategies supported by targeted and individualised support. Strategies and practices which reward and reinforce student achievement and positive behaviour are embedded across the school.

Our school policy recognises the four levels of activity described in the “Framework for Student Support Services” in Victorian Government Schools and will implement procedures to develop the resilient child through Primary Prevention, Early Intervention, Intervention and Postvention. The emphasis will be on primary prevention and early intervention as the most effective means of enhancing the resilience of young people.

Berwick Lodge Primary School acknowledges children who meet shared expectations through recognition and encouragement as listed under Consequences. When students do not meet our shared expectations, a staged response is implemented as described under Consequences below.

Corporal punishment is not permitted. The Berwick Lodge Primary School approach is used to address student behaviour to:

- Re-establish significant relationships
- Ensure consequences for misbehaviour are relevant and meaningful
- Foster and develop individual responsibility and empathy
- Students are encouraged to accept responsibility for their actions, and to participate fully and positively in their educational experience.

#### **Consequences for Appropriate Behaviour**

- Student of the Week award
- Celebration assemblies
- Recognition through newsletter
- Leadership opportunities
- Local newspaper coverage
- Classroom merit awards
- Verbal praise
- Stickers
- House Points

#### **Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviour**

A student should only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour or where the wellbeing or safety of another student or staff member is at risk.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response that has a prevention and early intervention, data based focus:

- Talking to the student and referring them to the shared expectations
- Discussing appropriate behaviours in the classroom through Circle Time or class meeting
- Monitoring and keeping anecdotal records of misbehaviour
- Contact with parents
- Implement restorative practices
- Developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- Action to make it right agreed to (may include community service)
- Counselling; referral to social worker; psychologist
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdraw student temporarily from class
- Formal in-school suspension
- Hold Student Support group meetings
- Referral to community agencies – ChildFirst; CAMHS
- Negotiate alternative pathways or settings for the student; or as a matter of last resort, suspension or expulsion (*Ministerial Order 184, Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion –has reduced the maximum length of suspension from 10 to 5 school days. In addition, the number of school days a student can be suspended in a school year has been reduced from 20 to 15 days*)
- **Corporal Punishment is not permitted.**

## **Attendance**

Student attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the community. At Berwick Lodge Primary School we monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance through:

- **Articulating high expectations to all members of the school community**
  - Clear written and verbal statements made regularly to parents/carers and students about school and community attendance expectations. Promotion of awareness that absence results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities – using It's Not Okay To Be Away materials
  - Whole-school modelling of punctuality
  
- **Adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence**
  - Following up student absences promptly and consistently
  
- **Providing early identification of and supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance**
  - Individual Student Learning Plans, including attendance and punctuality goals
  - Formal procedures for supporting the learning of a student absent for an extended period
  - Understanding of the causal factors of absence, and the need for targeted interventions
  - Positive and flexible support and follow-up with students on their return to school, including the use of Return to School Plans and modification of learning outcomes where required
  - Referring of individual students and parents/carers to community agencies for additional support
  
- **Creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning**
  - Implementation of effective and supportive transition programs, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school
  - Class and home group structures and environments that enable opportunities for increased connectedness to individual teachers and peers
  - Structures and activities encouraging parents/carers' involvement in the life of the school
  - Collaborative and cooperative programs with other schools, community groups and agencies.

## Links and Appendices

- DEECD's [Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DEECD's [Safe Schools are Effective School's](#)
- DEECD's [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
  
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Sunsmart Policy
- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Internet User's Agreement
- Information & Communications Technology Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Use of Children's Work & Photographs for Public Display
- Drug Education Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Head Lice Policy
- Onsite Supervision Policy
  
- [Appendix 1: Individual Learning Plan Template](#)
- [Appendix 2: Staged Response checklist](#)
- [Appendix 6: Student Absence Learning Plan template](#)
- [Appendix 7: Attendance Improvement Plan or Return to School Plan template](#)
- [Appendix 9: Student Attendance Checklist](#)
- [Appendix 13: Notice of Suspension proforma](#)
- [Appendix 15: Notice of Expulsion proforma](#)
- [Appendix 16: Expulsion Report proforma](#)
- [Appendix 18: Expulsion Appeal proforma](#)
- [Appendix 19: Expulsion Review Panel Report](#)
  - [Parent/Carer Fact Sheet](#)
  - [Student Fact Sheet](#)
  - [Procedures for expulsion](#)

## References

School Accountability and Improvement Framework	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm</a>
Effective Schools are Engaging Schools	<a href="http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/student/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf">http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/student/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf</a>
Disability Standards for Education	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm</a> <a href="http://www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au/bar_none_kit_for_schools.htm">http://www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au/bar_none_kit_for_schools.htm</a>
Safe Schools	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm</a> <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm</a> <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearning/supportservices/www/default.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearning/supportservices/www/default.htm</a>
Charter of Human Rights	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm</a> <a href="http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/">http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/</a>
Equal Opportunity Act	<a href="http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eo/eoact.htm">http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eo/eoact.htm</a>
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm</a>
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	<a href="http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf">http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf</a>

## **Date Passed by School Council**

The Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy was passed by School Council on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

## **Proposed Date of Review**

The School Wellbeing Sub Committee of School Council will be responsible for co-ordinating and planning the review of the Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy, under the auspices of School Council. The review period will be three years from the policy being passed by School Council.