



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.

Bittern PS 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

Established in 1916, Bittern Primary School is located five kilometres west of Hastings, in a semi-rural setting. It is part of the Western Port cluster of schools.

Bittern Primary School is a community school of 152 students nestled in Portsmouth Road, Bittern.

The school is well established and is one of the main meeting places for the Bittern community. The School Family Occupation index is 0.56 and whilst this is an increase from the previous Strategic Plan, this factor has remained fairly consistent in the previous few years. The school presents as a semi-rural setting with a large sports recreation reserve and centre at the back of the school. A council reserve running down the length of the school is also used by the general public. Bittern PS has a varied combination of facilities including a now well established Building the Education revolution [BER] centre that has open learning spaces being consistently utilised.

Bittern Primary School aims to provide a caring and challenging learning environment in which students feel safe and supported to achieve their best and to equip students with the skills, abilities and knowledge to become valued members of the community.

The school is focused on improving students' outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy and there is a strong sense of connectedness for the students in the school, with a focus on student leadership and a healthy Student Representative Council.

Bittern Primary School strives to create a dynamic community partnership fostering lifelong learners enabled by the skills, values and attitudes necessary for success in a changing world. The values of the school are embedded in the culture of the school, including - Respect, Trust, High Expectations, Professional Attitude and Teamwork.

Bittern Primary School is committed to building a culture of shared belief and collective responsibility for whole school improvement and building an environment where all staff, students and leaders are enabled by the skills, values and attitudes necessary for success in a changing world.

The school offers an Out of School Care Program to families and this is used regularly by many of the families at the school from 7.00-8.45am and from 3.15 to 6.00pm. This is held in the Art Room. The Out of School Care Program is a school council run program. A qualified coordinator is employed to oversee the program and to ensure it meets the Victorian Government Qualifications and Standards for Out of School Care Programs.

The school has visiting staff and service providers that work on a regular basis in the school. These include a Lunch Program Provider (run by parents on Fridays), 2 Instrumental music teachers one day per week providing private tuition, a community volunteer worker one day per 3-4 weeks. We also have a range of Student Support Services staff who work directly with students and other outside consultants who may be required to work on-site. The risks of visitors to the school involves the possibility of persons entering the school who do not have appropriate checks or qualifications in place. The school has developed a Code of Conduct which must be in place for all visitors, contractors, external providers of programs, non-school based services/staff who are on-site. Regular visitor and workers will hold a current Working with Children Check. Bittern PS will ensure that all delivery people and workers onsite are supervised by a school staff member.

The school has a range of incursions and school visitors throughout the year. Students and staff go off-site for a range of activities including sports events and excursions. The middle and senior school (Years 3-6) attend a school camp for two to three days every second year. Teachers and parents organising Camps and Excursions and Incursions are aware of the procedures for ensuring these external venues provide a copy of their own Child Safety Policy as well as being provided with a copy of our Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Mandatory Reporting policy.

2. School values, philosophy and vision



Bittern Primary School
Enabling success in a changing world



VISION

Bittern PS strives to create a dynamic community partnership fostering lifelong learners enabled by the skills, values and attitudes necessary for success in a changing world.

MOTTO

Enabling success in a changing world

Bittern PS's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our school's vision (outlined above) is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Statement of Values is available online at:

www.bitternps.vic.edu.au

4. Engagement strategies

Bittern PS 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

- *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*
- *deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*

- *teachers at BPS use an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *teachers at BPS 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 to support students moving into different stages of their schooling*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents*
- *monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level*
- *students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support 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*
- *we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:*
 - *Respectful Relationships*
 - *Bully Stoppers*
 - *Safe Schools*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs*

Targeted

- *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*
- *connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer*
- *all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year*

- *staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*

Individual

- *Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>*
- *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*
- *Navigator*
- *Lookout*

Bittern PS implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- *building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances*
- *meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school*
- *developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or 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 ChildFirst*
 - *Re-engagement programs such as Navigator*

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.*

5. Identifying students in need of support

Bittern PS 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. Bittern PS 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*

6. 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.

7. 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 Bittern PS's school wide Behaviour Management process.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Bittern PS 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 such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour*
- *withdrawal of privileges*
- *referral to the Year Level Coordinator*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*
- *behaviour reviews*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

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.

8. Engaging with families

Bittern PS values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

9. Evaluation

Bittern PS 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

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Please refer to our Policy section on our schools website.

REVIEW CYCLE

DATE IMPLEMENTED	1 st March 2021
AUTHOR	Margaret Dolan and Kellie Christie
APPROVED BY	School Council
APPROVAL AUTHORITY (SIGNATURE AND DATE)	
ENDORSED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT (SIGNATURE AND DATE)	
DATE FOR REVIEW	Term 4 2022
RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW	Margaret Dolan