



Tyabb Railway Station Primary School

Student Engagement & Well-Being Policy

**Produced in consultation
with the school community**

**To be read in conjunction with
*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools –
Student Engagement Policy Guidelines***

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**Principal: Carole Mayes
School Council President: Glen Slocombe**

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1 School profile statement

Our Vision

We welcome children into a safe and richly diverse learning community that is united in the pursuit of educational excellence. Each child is recognized as an individual, and will be nurtured and guided to achieve his or her full potential through lifelong learning and personal growth.

Tyabb Railway Station Primary School is located in Tyabb, on Western Port Bay, Victoria. The majority of the students are from the local area, however a significant number of students come from Somerville and Hastings.

Our school enjoys a combination of heritage listed buildings with a new purpose learning centre to be incorporated in 2010. Our outstanding facilities provide a quiet, secure learning environment and promote 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 highly competent skills in a broad range of sports. Strong performing arts and visual arts programs enable students to experience success in these fields.

Tyabb Railway Station Primary School is a dynamic, thriving learning community. 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.

We 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.

Tyabb Railway Station Primary School exists for the growth and development of children and this is reflected in all decisions made by the school. It provides excellence in education by offering planned, high quality teaching and learning based on current educational research and ongoing professional learning.

Students at our school are taught the skills to work co-operatively with others, to behave respectfully and to value their cultural heritage. Student learning is enhanced by the inclusion of a global perspective and upholds the spirit and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2 Whole-school prevention statement

Our school's Student Engagement and Wellbeing Goals are:

- To introduce programs that will better engage and cater for boys.
- To carefully monitor and develop our wellbeing and student management programs.
- To refine appropriate programs that lead to improved student attendance.

The school exists for the growth and development of children and this will be reflected in all decisions made at the school. Individual students are challenged to reach their potential in a safe, respectful and harmonious environment.

The wellbeing of students is a major focus of the school. The school has, for several years, had a senior staff member as a welfare teacher and has employed a Primary Welfare Officer.

As part of the welfare program at the school, all staff have qualified for their First Aid certification.

The school has access to a guidance officer, speech pathologist and a trained SPA implementer. 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 include reference to Student Engagement and Wellbeing at the school.

3 Rights and responsibilities

3.1 Guiding principles

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.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

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).

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter 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.

All DEECD employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions.

Everyone should:

- Encourage compliance with the Charter
- Support others to act compatibly with the Charter, and
- Respect and promote Human Rights

Part of the monitoring of Human Rights will be to complete the Charter Compliance Checklist on the School Compliance web site.

3.4 Students with disabilities

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability
- his or her preferred adjustment

- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum.
- costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers.
- benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers.
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The Discrimination and Disability Act and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

3.5 Bullying and Harassment

Definitions

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings)

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of.
- spreading of rumours online.
- sending unwanted messages.
- defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include

- poor health – anxiety, depression.

- lower self esteem.
- reduced study performance.
- missed classes, social withdrawal.
- reduced career prospects.

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable. Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle: (The most common)

They include:

- Offensive staring and leering.
- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
- Questions about another's sexual activity.
- Persistent comments about a person's private life or family.
- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body.
- Offensive name calling.

Explicit: (obvious)

They include:

- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
- Displays of sexually graphic material– pornography.
- Requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

Bullying can involve such things as

- Grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.
- Publicly excluding a person from your group.
- Taking or breaking a person's property.
- Knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk.
- Teasing a person because of their looks.

Cyberbullying

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly.

This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say.
- how you treat others.
- respecting people's property (eg copyright).
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information (we used to call it 'stranger danger')
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- Discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator who you feel comfortable with.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition • Participate fully in the school's educational program 	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn and contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. • 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. • 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.
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Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/carers have a right to 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>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote positive educational outcomes for their children by taking an active interest in their child’s educational progress and by modeling positive behaviours. • Ensure their child’s regular attendance • Engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child’s learning. • Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Teachers have a right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment • Be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student 	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement the engagement policy. • Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively. • Know the content they teach. • Know their students. • Plan and assess for effective learning. • Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments. • Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.

4. Shared expectations

We welcome children into a safe and richly diverse learning community that is united in the pursuit of educational excellence. Each child is recognised as an individual, and will be nurtured and guided to achieve his or her full potential through lifelong learning and personal growth.

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 and professional 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 on 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).

Diversity in the school community

The school aims to address diversity by:

- Maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who is better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community.
- Attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer,
- Increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce,
- Enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs,
- Creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems.

5. School actions and consequences

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 such positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.

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.
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

Broader support strategies will include:

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators
- 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, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts
- involving community support agencies.

Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow the procedures listed in section 4.3 of the DEECD guidelines published in **Effective Schools are Engaging Schools Student Engagement Policy Guidelines**. Appendices 12 to 18 of the guidelines provide flowcharts and proformas for use in suspension and expulsion procedures.

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where:

- all other measures have been implemented without success.
- an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time.

Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.

- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.

Where students are required to undertake school work after school, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes.

The principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of after-school work would create undue hardship (for example, where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.

- Convening of a support group (See Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for process required).

References

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