



Ascot Vale Primary School

# Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

26th August 2024



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the Ascot Vale Primary School office in person or on (03) 9370 6507.

## 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, supportive and inclusive 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.

Ascot Vale 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
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Ascot Vale Primary School, established in 1885, is located 6km north-west from the Melbourne CBD and is situated within the South-Western Region of the Department of Education & Training as one of 24 schools within the Moonee Valley Network of schools.

The current multi-age structure commenced in 1984 with support from the school community and continues to be a strong feature of the way we learn together. Two or three classes combine to make a unit of children from several year levels or age groups. Teachers are assigned to a class of children of similar year levels and combine with a different age group where possible to form a multi-age unit of learners. The multi-age combinations across the school in 2024 included: Unit 1: P/1/2, Unit 2: 3/4 & 5/6, Unit 3: P/1 /2, Unit 4: 3 / 4 & 5/6, Unit 5: P/1/2, Unit 6: 3/4 & 5/6. AVPS has 20.82 EFT school staff members including: 2 Principal Class Officers, 15.15 Teaching Staff and 3.67 Education Support Staff.

As of August 2024, we have 273 students enrolled from Year Prep to 6. Most students live locally (within 2km of the school) and almost 80% of students walk or ride their bike to school. Ascot Vale Primary School has developed close partnerships with community organisations such as the Flemington Farmers Market, Kelly Sports and Dance Theatre, and enjoys strong support from our local community.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging multi-age learning environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially. We are very proud of our diverse and inclusive school community.

### 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Ascot Vale Primary school is a unique learning community. Our school community is vibrant and inclusive. Our students are independent, passionate, confident and embrace the joy of learning. As a result, our students are engaged, inquisitive and happy. They are empowered for lifelong learning and to have a positive impact on the world around them.

Our school values guide us in all we think and do. We provide high-quality teaching and learning in a multi-age classroom environment. We do everything with a spirit of collaboration and friendship. We support our students to have the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to be valuable and valued members of our school community. At Ascot Vale Primary School, our community behaviours and actions are guided by our principles: Gratitude, Respect, Excellence, Empathy and Responsibility.

Our Statement of Values is available online [here](#).




### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Ascot Vale 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.

Ascot Vale Primary School implements The Resilience Project to deliver an evidence-based, positive mental health program to build resilient and happy students. This program focuses on Emotional Literacy, Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness, (GEM).

A summary of the universal/Tier 1 (whole of school), targeted/Tier 2 (year group specific) and individual/Tier 3 engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

	Type of support	Definition	The proportion of students accessing support
Tier 1	 <b>Universal supports</b>	<b>Tier 1</b> supports are the foundation for behaviour and academic performance. They involve the whole school and all classrooms. They support all students.	<b>100%</b>
Tier 2	 <b>Targeted supports</b>	<b>Tier 2</b> supports address specific academic and behavioural skill needs. Teams identify students with additional needs and match them with more intensive supports.	<b>Up to 20%</b>
Tier 3	 <b>Individualised Supports</b>	<b>Tier 3</b> involves the most intensive support offered by schools. It involves specialised and individual intervention approaches for students with high-risk behaviour. Tier 3 support is resource intensive. Schools should invest in prevention-focused activities to limit the need for Tier 3.	<b>Up to 5%</b>

### Universal/Tier 1

Our school-wide strategies include:

- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- Prioritising positive multi-age 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 Ascot Vale Primary School use the Gradual Release of Responsibility 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 Ascot Vale 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 Philosophy is 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 being acknowledged in the classroom, and formally via communication to parents
- Students’ wellbeing and emotional regulation is supported by in-class visits from our AVPS Wellbeing Dog, Riley
- Monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort, and individual level
- Students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including class meetings and Student Voice Team. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- Creating opportunities for multi-age connections amongst students through athletics, music programs and regular multi-age and the buddy program
- Delivering our school’s wellbeing curriculum, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - The Resilience Project
  - Zones of Regulation
  - iyarn (Years 3–6)
- [Interrelate](#) programs are held annually to help teach Year 3/ 4 and 5/6 children safety regarding topics of sex, alcohol, and drug abuse
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, Lunch Clubs, and other 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/Tier 2

- All staff are responsible for their cohort and monitor the health and wellbeing of their students, 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 – refer to our [Child Safe Standard 1 Culturally Safe Environment](#) for further information
- 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 including through partnerships with the Western English Language School
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds by advocating to ensure support resources are provided to families in need

- 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 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
- 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](#)

### Individual/Tier 3

#### Student Support Groups

An SSG is a partnership between schools, parents/carers, the student, and relevant agencies. The group works together to plan and support the educational, health, social, cultural, and emotional wellbeing of students with diverse learning needs to:

- ensure that those with the most knowledge of, and responsibility for the student, work together to establish shared goals for the student’s education
- plan reasonable adjustments for the student to access the curriculum and participate in their education
- provide educational planning that is ongoing throughout the student’s school life
- monitor the progress of the student, often via an [Individual Education Plan \(IEP\)](#) or a [Behaviour Support Plan \(BSP\)](#).

#### Behaviour – Students

Ascot Vale PS promotes positive behaviour, prevention and early intervention strategies, a tiered response approach for student behaviour and wellbeing and professional learning opportunities for staff. (See our [Expectations and Managing Behaviour policy](#) for more information.)

#### Student Support Services

Student Support Services (SSS) teams are comprised of professionals including:

- psychologists
- speech pathologists
- social workers

They support schools in assisting children and young people facing barriers to learning to achieve their educational and developmental potential.

SSS staff work as part of an integrated health and wellbeing team within each area, focusing on providing:

- workforce capability building for school staff
- group based and individual support
- the provision of specialised services.

### [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

The Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) is one of the supports available to help Ascot Vale Primary School meet the needs of eligible students with disability and high needs. This program is being phased out for Ascot Vale Primary School in 2025. It is being replaced by Disability Inclusion (see below).

### [Disability Inclusion](#)

Disability Inclusion is part of the Government's approach to inclusive education. Disability Inclusion is ensuring every student at every ability thrives at school and in life. It provides extra support for students with disability in Victorian Government schools. Disability Inclusion is improving the way students with disability are supported in government schools. Disability Inclusion is delivering:

- A new tiered funding model
- A strengths-based disability profile for students with a disability
- Professional learning and supporting workforce capabilities including coaching, evidence based guidance and resources.

Disability Inclusion started at AVPS in Term 1, 2023, and will fully replace the Program for Students with Disabilities when funding for that program concludes at the end of 2025.

### [Mental Health Toolkit](#)

The Mental Health Toolkit provides expert guidance and resources on mental health promotion and support, aimed at schools and school communities, health and wellbeing workforces and mental health practitioners. It draws from existing Department resources, guidance, programs, and leverages expert external advice on promoting and supporting mental health in schools.

### [Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader](#)

Starting in Term 1, 2024, Ascot Vale Primary School has introduced a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader (MHWL). Participating schools receive funding to employ a MHWL, a qualified teacher, to work across the school to implement a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing for students, staff and families based on a broad knowledge of the needs of the school community. This means:

- building the capacity of school staff, in particular classroom teachers, to identify and support students with mental health concerns in the classroom

- supporting the school to create clear referral pathways internally (within school) and externally (to community services) for students identified as requiring further assessment and intervention
- coordinating targeted mental health support for students by working with regional staff, school wellbeing and leadership teams, teachers, parents/carers and external agencies
- advocating for student voice and agency in their wellbeing and mental health needs.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Leaders receive evidence-based training in mental health literacy, supporting student need, and building school capacity, and receive ongoing professional development through Communities of Practice. The training program is developed and facilitated by the University of Melbourne.

## LOOKOUT

LOOKOUT Education Support Centres are designed to boost the capability of early childhood services, schools, carers, child protection practitioners and out-of-home care services to improve educational outcomes for children and young people living in out-of-home care.

### Other individual wellbeing strategies

Ascot Vale Primary School 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
- engaging with our regional [Koorie Engagement Support Officers](#)
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability

- in Out of Home Care
- with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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

Ascot Vale 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Ascot Vale 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
- Prep–Year 2 check-ins and iyarn (Years 3–6).

Students enrolled under the department’s [International Student Program](#) are supported in accordance with our legal obligations, and Department policy and guidelines.

#### **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, racism, 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 and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/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 Ascot Vale Primary School's [Expectations and Managing Behaviour](#) document and our [Bullying Prevention](#) policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Ascot Vale Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

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-managed consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Principal or Assistant Principal
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion.

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 Ascot Vale 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

Ascot Vale 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, supported by our [Communications 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.

## 8. Evaluation

Ascot Vale 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
- Student Online Care System (SOCS).

Ascot Vale Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible. An example of this is the use of weekly check-ins via iyarn for all Year 3–6 students.

## 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
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school 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 Process](#)

## 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:

- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [Expectations and Managing Behaviour](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Statement of Values and Philosophy](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August–October 2024
Consultation	Leadership and Student Wellbeing Teams (staff): 15/08/2024 Education and Policy Subcommittee: 20/08/2024 School Council: 26/08/2024
Approved by	Principal 26/08/2024
Next scheduled review date	Term 3, 2026