



## STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School on 97581527 or [upper.ferntree.gully.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:upper.ferntree.gully.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

### 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.

Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

### CONTENTS

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



## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School nestled at the base of the beautiful Dandenong Ranges, offers its 89 students an attractive setting, a safe and stimulating learning environment, a variety of playgrounds and an Outside School Hours Care facility.

Our school has excellent modern facilities. Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School is committed to continuous improvement and strives to achieve excellence through the provision of a comprehensive curriculum program that develops the physical, social, emotional and cognitive learning of each child. We recognise the importance for students to be literate and numerate and place a strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills.

Our teachers work in teams develop and plan in line with the Victorian Curriculum all students learn the Japanese language and culture. We have an extra-curricula program encompassing sport, the performing arts, camps, excursions, student leadership and enrichment activities. We believe our school is child centred where each student is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We pride ourselves on our school values of Respect, Resilience, Teamwork and Integrity and our approach to wellbeing fosters collaborative learning across the levels and aims to develop resiliency in our students.

Learning support is provided for students who have identified as needing support or extension with educational support staff implementing programs that support individuals, small groups and extension programs for students

Our school is part of the Knox Network. Our school is also a part of the Boutique Schools Network in Knox. The strong collegiate group provides support in professional learning for staff and offering programs across schools.

### 2. School values, philosophy, and vision

Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School's philosophy is that children's cognitive, physical, emotional and social skills develop at different rates. Understanding this means we plan a differentiated curriculum with personalised learning to meet individual needs. We pride ourselves on getting to know each of our students as an individual.

Developing literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills are a priority. The school believes integrating learning across core curriculum areas provides ways in which students can make connections and enhance learning.

The school uses School Wide Positive Behaviour, Values education approach and Restorative Practices to build a safe, caring, positive and engaging learning community.

Students learn collaborative and co-operative skills, strengthening their relationships with their peers whilst building their confidence to manage an ever changing world.

Students are encouraged to become active participants in their learning, to set personal goals and become responsible for their actions. It is the belief all students are leaders and role models.

The school highly values education as a partnership of students, staff, parents and the local community.



Small schools are about community, relationships and connection. We provide the opportunity to closely monitor the learning and growth of our students in order to help them achieve their goals. We have the flexibility to adapt continuously to the learning needs of our students. Our staff and parents have a strong partnership and are passionate about our community.

## Our Vision

To be an engaging and inclusive learning community where students are confident, creative, curious and lifelong learners.

## Our Values

Values and beliefs strongly influence the decisions we make, our behaviours and procedures, as individuals, as a school and as a community. The core values, beliefs and practices outlined here underpin all we aim to achieve and do at Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School.

### Respect

- We respect ourselves by valuing who we are and doing our personal best.
- We respect others by treating them fairly and in the way we would like to be treated.
- We respect our community by being inclusive/friendly to others and taking care of our environment.

### Integrity

- We are honest with each other.
- We are accountable for the decisions we make.
- We own up to our mistakes.

### Resilience

- We accept feedback and use it for improvement.
- We bounce back when things just don't seem to be going right.
- We make an effort to make things right again.

### Teamwork

- We make sure that we contribute.
- We make sure that we encourage and give others the opportunity to contribute.
- We work together to achieve the best we possibly can.



### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

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

#### Universal

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing*
- *creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning*
- *analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data*
- *teachers at Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School use a consistent 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 Upper Ferntree Gully Primary school adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching*
- *our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community*
- *carefully planned transition programs 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. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers or the Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and whole school activities*
- *all students are welcome to self-refer to the 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*
  - *Play is the Way*
  - *School Wide Positive Behaviour expectations*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs*
- *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

- *we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for all our students including Koorie students, students who identify as LGBTIQ+, refugee students*
- *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*
- *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](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)



*Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement.*

- *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 Education 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**

Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team Our whole school staff play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Upper Ferntree Gully 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, particularly in literacy and numeracy assessments*
- *observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation*
- *attendance, detention and suspension data*
- *engagement with families*
- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*



## 5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- contribute positively to the educational experience from themselves and other students
- 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.*

*Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.*

*When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Upper Ferntree Gully 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 disciplinary 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. [Appendix 1](#) outlines our staged processes.*



*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 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 Upper Ferntree Gully 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**

Upper Ferntree Gully 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 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.

## **8. Evaluation**

Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.





Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Upper Ferntree Gully 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.

## 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/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

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



## APPENDIX 1:





## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2022
Consultation	School Council Staff
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2024