STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the main office of Nelson Park school (03) 52783620.

1. PURPOSE:

a. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:
   - Our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students.
   - Expectations for positive student behaviour.
   - Support available to students and families.
   - Our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate students' behaviour.

b. Nelson Park 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 helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are intrinsically linked.

c. 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.

2. SCOPE:

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

b. This policy also applies to both the Libau and Illinois Campus and any difference between campuses is specified.

A. CONTENTS:

1. School Purpose
2. School Profile Statement
3. School Mission
4. School Profile
5. School Values, Philosophy and Vision
6. Engagement Strategies
7. Identifying Students in Need of Support
8. Student Rights and Responsibilities
9. Students Behavioural Expectations
10. Engaging with Families
11. Evaluation
12. Further information and resources

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

B. DEFINITIONS:

DEFINITION: What is Student Engagement?
Student engagement and school connectedness underpin effective student learning. Student engagement can be defined as three interrelated components:

1. ***Behavioural engagement*** – student's participation in their education, including academic, social and optional activities.
2. ***Emotional engagement*** – student's emotional reactions in the school and classroom, and their sense of belonging and connectedness to the school.
3. ***Cognitive engagement*** – student's investment in learning, their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

1. SCHOOL PURPOSE:

To provide a supportive, coordinated and consistent approach to the education and wellbeing of children and young people attending Nelson Park School.

2. SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT:

Nelson Park School was established in 1967 as a specialist education setting for students from 5-18 years of age with mild intellectual disabilities. The dual campus school is situated in the Geelong region with a Foundation to Year 9 campus in Libau Avenue, Bell Park, and another campus at Illinois Avenue, Corio catering for students in Years 10-12.

C. POLICY

3. SCHOOL MISSION:

Nelson Park School is dedicated to the development of each student's intellectual, social and emotional growth. Our primary focus is to enable students to discover their strengths and develop the confidence and skills needed to fulfil their educational and personal potential, both now and in the future. This means engaging families and the wider community as learning partners in the provision of diverse, evolving curriculum that inspires passion, supports personal growth and equips students with essential life skills. We empower students to become confident and adaptable life-long learners who are ready to build positive, purposeful futures.

4. SCHOOL PROFILE:

Nelson Park School is a dynamic setting which embraces educational excellence and leadership. The school's motto of 'Life-long Learners' reflects the school's commitment to optimising the independence of each student.
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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

Nelson Park School offers a curriculum that is dynamic, inclusive, integrated and responsive to the wide range of needs presented by students. Students are supported within a multidisciplinary framework that includes parents, caregivers, teachers, ES staff, therapy team, student wellbeing officers and wider community support services. Students are placed in year level groups which takes into account their individual needs.

The curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum in all areas of the school, with the secondary school providing an applied learning program of the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC). Individual Education Programs are developed for all students at the beginning of each year in consultation with parents and carers, with learning goals established to be reported against mid-year and end of year.
Teaching and learning is developed at the point of need and incorporates strategies which cater to different student learning styles.

When requested by other schools and agencies Nelson Park offers consultancy services in the areas of Autism, Health and Human Relations, Teacher Aides, Challenging Behaviours, Curriculum and Life Skills.
Enrolment increases over the past 8 years reflect the current state-wide trend in special settings. Students come from a variety of suburbs across Geelong and the wider region.

Nelson Park School uses the following surveys to inform the planning of student wellbeing and engagement programs:

1. Internal School Student Survey
2. Parent opinion survey
3. Staff opinion survey
4. Student attendances measured

5. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Nelson Park School's Values and Mission are integral to the work that we do and are the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of Try Your Best, Good Choices, Care for School and Respect at every opportunity.
Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

6. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Nelson Park School 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:

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

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, PBS data Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data.
- Deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs and VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations.
- Teachers at Nelson Park School use a whole school 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 Nelson Park 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 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 communicated 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, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- All students are supported by various staff including The Principal, Assistant Principals, Student Wellbeing Officers, Mental Health Practitioner, Therapy Team, Health and Wellbeing Leading Teachers and Classroom Teachers. 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
    - Bullying No Way
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs).

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

Targeted

- The school has Learning Specialists (1 x Foundation to year 6, 1 x years 7-12), Health and Wellbeing Leading Teachers (F-6, 7-9, 10-12) and Student Wellbeing Officers, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their cohort, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support.
- All students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future.
- 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 an Educational Needs Assessment will be carried out by Nelson Park School staff.
- Nelson Park School assists students to plan their Year 10, 11 and work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan .
- 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 have undertaken training in the Berry St Educational Model and apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.

Individual

Nelson Park School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- *Student Support Groups*
- *Individual Education Plans*
- *Behaviour - Students*
- *Behaviour Support Plans*
- *Student Support Services*
- Referral to Student Wellbeing Officers, Mental Health Practitioner or Therapy Team through PBSAT referral process
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- *Mental health toolkit*
- *Headspace*
- Navigator
- LOOKOUT
- Compass
- 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.
- Considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

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 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.

7. IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Nelson Park 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, help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Nelson Park 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.
- PBS data
- Attendance records
- Academic performance
- Observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation.
- Attendance and suspension data
- Engagement with families
- Referrals through the PBSAT Process
- Compass records / data

8. STUDENTS 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.

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.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

- 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 (refer to the Bullying No Way Program).

9. STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our values of Respect, Try Your Best, Care for School and Good Choices. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Nelson Park School's Bullying policy and Anti-Bullying Consequences Chart.
In order to support students to self-regulate and remain engaged in learning, Nelson Park School staff implement the following strategies:

- Consistent use of Tier 1 support strategies (PBS)
- Individual Student Focus Plan
- Behaviour support plans
- Redirection
- "First this, then that"
- Classroom and whole school rewards – Gotchas, Prize box
- Quiet areas
- Break cards
- Movement breaks
- Brain breaks
- Mindfulness
- Sensory spaces
- Strategies adapted from the Berry St Educational Model

When a student acts in breach of the behavioural expectations of our school community, Nelson Park School 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

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

- Restorative practices
- Detentions
- Behaviour reviews
- 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.

The Principal of Nelson Park School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

10. ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Nelson Park 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 Communication 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.
- Celebrate learning – Student Led Conferences.
- Whole school assemblies.
- Open invitation for parents to attend whole school sports days and whole school celebrations.

11. EVALUATION:

Nelson Park 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:

a. Student survey data
b. PBS data
c. Incidents data

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

d. School reports
e. Parent survey
f. Case management
g. CASES21
h. SOCS

12. FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education 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
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

13. EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's two-year review cycle.

Policy last reviewed	01/07/2025
Consultation	Consultative
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2027