



Respect and Empathy for All

Swan Reach Primary School

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Approved by School Council: not required

Review Date: 08/2021

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.

Swan Reach 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 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

Swan Reach Primary School was established in 1875. It is a rural school with just over 100 students, located 22 km East of Bairnsdale on the Banks of the Tambo River. Enrolment has remained steady over the past 5 years with an expectation of similar numbers in the next two to five years.

As a rural school, Swan Reach Primary serves a wide geographical area. Most students travel to school by car or utilise the school bus service that operates morning and afternoon. A small number of students who live in the immediate area, walk or ride to school. Swan Reach Primary School has developed close ties to the local community and enjoy support from our local businesses and community services. Our biennial Twilight Country Fair and other events such as the Cultural Diversity Festival are well supported and attended by the local community. Other projects such as the school garden development have been actively supported by local businesses.

The school community is becoming increasingly culturally diverse with around 10% identifying as aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and families with cultural ties to New Zealand, The Philippines, Pakistan, and the Netherlands. We celebrate this diversity and encourage our whole community to embrace difference and learn from one another with open minds.

The School grounds are quite large and split into two levels with well-maintained trees and garden areas. The upper level includes a partially covered basketball court, sandpit and climbing fort and a rainforest path leading to the colourful Mediterranean courtyard and sensory garden. The lower level was expanded onto reclaimed wetland adjacent to the Highway, and includes a large sporting oval, two playgrounds and a rebound wall.

Staff at Swan Reach Primary endeavour to provide positive, supportive and challenging learning environments and encourage each student to strive for personal best. The school has a dedicated library, kitchen and Art/Drama/music room in addition to five classrooms. We currently have 18 school staff members including administration, teachers, education support and specialist teachers. Our specialist programs for Prep to Grade 6 include Japanese Language, Art, Music, and drama. The Stephanie Alexander Cooking program is introduced for Grades 4 to 6. The students develop life skills in gardening and food cultivation as well as food preparation and cooking, with meals based around seasonal produce.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Respect and Empathy for all is the Swan Reach School Motto. The words hang proudly on the walls of our Front Office for everyone to see. It is also embedded in the culture of our school and forms the foundation on which all else is built. Respect, empathy and resilience are integrated into the curriculum and school wide expectations. They are reinforced from the top down through communication, teaching and learning practice, peer interactions, and behavioural management. It is evident in the strong sense of belonging and mutual respect that our students display and the positive feedback from both outside our school community and within.

The philosophy of the school is to value each child's individuality and encourage resilience to persist when things get hard. We aim to provide a quality education, tailored to meet the unique needs of each student, supporting them as they grow in skill and confidence to become the best version of themselves. We believe this best occurs in an open and friendly atmosphere where children are encouraged to be enthusiastic and responsible learners with the flexibility to cope with our changing

society. Promotion of self-esteem and cooperation underpins all that we do, and care and respect for others is practised and valued by School Council, staff and students alike.

3. Engagement strategies

Swan Reach Primary 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. The school uses the *Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support Framework* to plan and implement practices across the whole school to improve educational and behaviour outcomes for all students. Swan Reach Primary School follows the *SHARE Principles of Inclusive Education*: Student centred; Human Rights focused; Acknowledges Strengths; Respects legal obligations; Evidence based. This recognises the rights of each student to access and participate in quality education that celebrates and welcomes difference and responds to the individual needs of students, welcoming them as contributing partners in their own education.

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

Universal - whole school strategies that promote positive behaviour and inclusion.

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive and authentic 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
- teachers at Swan Reach Primary School ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Swan Reach 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 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 including:
 - Kinder visits
 - Open days
 - 7-week Kinder transition program
 - promotion day for all year levels
 - Secondary school transition days for grade 6 students
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents. Our school values are reinforced through the school assembly awards and the Random act of kindness raffle.
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level. Regular communication with parents highlighting the importance of attendance and the impact of missing school. Individual attendance awards are given out at the end of each term and there is a whole class reward lunch for the highest attendance.
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through student feedback surveys and questionnaires. Students are also

encouraged to speak with their teachers or Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.

- create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students, primarily through the school wide Buddies program, Prep transition buddies program and also during whole school events such as sporting days and school celebrations.
- All students are welcome to approach the Principal, Teachers or ES staff 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
 - Behaviour Matrix
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue-specific behaviour such as:
 - Monty the therapy dog
 - Life Education Van
 - Cyber safety programs
- opportunities for student inclusion such as:
 - sports teams
 - recess and lunchtime activities
 - Gardening
 - Breakfast Club and Foodbank

Targeted - specific strategies, designed to address particular concerns in certain age groups or friendship circles.

- each year group has a 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 Koori students with a Koori Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- The respectful relationships team 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
- Staff will utilise external and school based educational support programs to enrich their classroom practice. Such as: *SPIS speech in schools, Alien talk, SAS program, School Nurse, Sexual development programs.*

Individual - student specific strategies that may be considered and applied on a case by case basis.

Swan Reach 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
 - Koori Engagement Officer
 - School based Individual and group programs run by external providers such as Relationships Australia, *iConnect*, *S.A.S*, *Equine Therapy*, *Drum Beat*.
 - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, child and adolescent mental health services or *Child First*

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.
- Connecting with, and supporting families in need, by providing resources from various organisations and programs such as *Save the Children*, *Food bank* and *State School Supplies*.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Swan Reach Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The 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

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.

At Swan Reach Primary, there are clear expectations of students, with regard to whole school engagement, attendance and behaviour. This creates a highly predictable environment that allows students to understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from each other.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in the school's educational program
- 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
- develop and explore their talents, interests and ambition.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program and to attend regularly
- 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

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.

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.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and embedded in our School-wide Positive Behaviours Strategy and Behaviour Matrix. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Swan Reach Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behavioural standards of our school community, Swan Reach Primary 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 Principal
- 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.

7. Engaging with families

Swan Reach 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:

- 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 developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Swan Reach 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 and student notes from UeducateUs
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS
- NCC
- Health and wellbeing key contact meeting notes

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related policies: *Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards.*

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 14/08/2020 and is scheduled for review in 08/2021.