Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Ruskin Park Primary School on 9723 3886 or at ruskin.park.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.

Ruskin Park 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.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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Policy

1. **School profile**

Ruskin Park Primary School is situated two kilometres east of central Croydon in a well-established leafy residential area. The school has developed and maintained an excellent reputation in the community and has a proud history of providing high quality education to the students, who come from differing backgrounds and have a range of educational needs and abilities.

Our school in 2026 will comprise of 25 classrooms with our state of the art building housing twelve classes along with two art rooms, a science centre and food technology centre. On site we also have a separate library, Japanese centre, music room and a gymnasium. We have 506 students enrolled from Foundation to Year 6 and over 50 school staff including a wellbeing coordinator and learning specialists.

Our specifically designed classrooms and administration block 'rose from the ashes' of the fire in 1976 and our spacious tree filled grounds provide a stimulating environment in which students can learn.

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

Ruskin Park Primary School seeks to motivate a 'Rising to the Challenge' attitude in students by providing a caring and supportive environment. Students who have a positive attitude and feel secure in accepting challenges are more willing to embrace new experiences and become lifelong learners.

Our school values are of

- Honesty
- Respect
- Resilience
- Persistence

Students, staff and members of the community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of honesty, respect, resilience and persistence at every opportunity.

3. **Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

Ruskin Park 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.

Universal – all about the school, did not change anything

- we hold high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- we prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- we create a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- we welcome all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning

- we analyse and are responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data, Living Ripples data and school level assessment data
- we use the Readers and Writer's instructional framework for Literacy and the Primary Maths model through PMSS to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- we 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
- we promote a culture of Growth Mindset, based on the belief that we are able to develop our abilities through effort and learning and that we don't know something 'Yet.'
- we value the effort and attitudes of students rather than the outcome
- we follow and implement Positive Education practices including through programs such as Respectful Relationships and URStrong.
- 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
- we carefully plan 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
- we monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- our students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- We create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to their teacher, a trusted staff member, Assistant Principal and 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
    - UR Strong
    - Restorative Practices

    - Living Ripples
    - eSmart
- our programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- we provide opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- we run full year buddy programs for Years 5 & Foundation
- 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

- each year group, or sub school, has a Year Group Learning Leader, a senior 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
- a designated Student Wellbeing school referral process for:
    - students referred for Disability Inclusion Profile Services
    - DET SSS supports
    - school psychologist
    - Mental Health in School's supports
- 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 – supporting the MARRUNG Educational Plan
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all culturally and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school, including through early intervention programs
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQA+ 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 apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced *trauma*

Individual

Ruskin Park 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 including PSD & Disability and Inclusion, Out of Home Care & Koorie students
- conducting termly or as necessary Student Support Group meetings to create, monitor and discuss IEP's for all students funded under PSD & Disability and Inclusion or are Out of Home Care or Koorie students. Other SSG meetings may occur in conjunction with the parent's/school
- student Health Care Needs plan for students who require medical care
- 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 and Orange Door
    - 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

4. Identifying students in need of support

Ruskin Park 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. Ruskin Park 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

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 in an appropriate manner.

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

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, Ruskin Park 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 implements 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
- restorative practices
- 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
- referral to the Leadership team
- 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.

The Principal of Ruskin Park 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

Ruskin Park 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
- 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

Ruskin Park 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
- wellbeing check ins
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Ruskin Park 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.

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

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
- LGBTIQA+ 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
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2026
Consultation	February 2026- School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2028