



## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

NEWBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL – A SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT (SWPBS) & RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS SCHOOL

OUR 'NEWBEE' VALUES – BE A LEARNER, BE RESPECTFUL AND BE SAFE  
2017 - 2021

### OUR SCHOOL

#### 1. Vision

We work to ensure our students are motivated learners who value themselves and their community and that they develop the knowledge and skills to become successful in all of their life endeavours.

At our school we believe that the key 21st Century Skills are:

- creativity & innovation
- critical thinking & problem solving
- communication & collaboration
- using technology & media safely and effectively.

We believe that these skills are learnt when students are immersed in rich, interest based investigations in order to promote thinking and research skills; to learn how to learn; to experience and develop responsible risk taking; and to develop reflective practices to fully engage in personal learning.

#### 2. Values

Our school values are:

Be a Learner

Be Respectful

Be Safe.

Our values are underpinned by evidenced based research demonstrating that teaching social and emotional literacy and ensuring that students feel a connectedness to school works.

At Newborough Primary School, positive student engagement and wellbeing is a high priority. Parents and teachers recognise that this element in a student's academic, personal and social curriculum is essential for continual improvement and development. Newborough Primary School aims to develop aspirant students who find purpose and value in their education. We know that this is also enhanced when students have a sense of connectedness to teachers and peers.

#### *Social and Emotional Learning and Connectedness to School*

At Newborough Primary School we know that the school environment comprises many risks and protective factors that impact upon students' resilience and emotional wellbeing. Research shows that students who feel cared for by peers and teachers at their school and feel connected to learning are more likely to have improved mental health, not engage in anti-social behaviour and to be motivated and to show improved academic outcomes.

A substantial body of evidence shows that well-delivered, evidence-informed social and emotional learning programs in schools improve mental health, social behaviour and academic performance and reduces bullying and gender based discrimination.

We do this in the following ways:

1. by creating and maintaining a positive culture of learning in our daily practices and providing an engaging and innovative curriculum that is appropriate to the developmental stages of children
2. implementing school-based social and emotional learning programs, including Respectful Relationships and SWPBS to enhance the wellbeing of individual students and build social health and social capital within the community
3. providing a safe and secure learning environment where students are treated equitably and expectations are clear and reasonable.
4. providing a stimulating curriculum with a variety of intra-school and inter-school activities that include specialist programs such as the Arts, Languages; Physical Education; camps and excursions; the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program; various sporting opportunities; an annual whole school performance; intervention programs such as Reading Recovery; transition programs with the local kindergarten and secondary colleges; an instrumental program: a choir and various community linked programs and activities.
5. opportunities for students to develop and experience leadership roles in both formal and informal settings.

### **3. Whole-school Approach**

Our values have been developed over time as part of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework. SWPBS is an evidence-based, whole school approach and we explicitly teach our values to support students to develop resilience, improve learning and engagement and build positive and respectful relationships.

Since 2009, Newborough Primary School has implemented SWPBS and this evidenced based student support approach has had a positive impact on student behaviour. This approach has enabled our school to develop clearly defined expectations and an opportunity to teach and model these expectations to the children. The underlying theme is teaching behavioural expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject.

The primary prevention of SWPBS consists of expectations and a school culture and environment that is developed and taught by school staff to achieve:

- high but achievable expectations for student learning and behaviour
- strategies to identify and address unacceptable behaviours
- positive and supportive teacher/student relationships
- positive and supportive student/student relationships.

In 2017 Newborough Primary School also became a Respectful Relationships school. Combined with the SWPBS framework the whole school approach also includes the objectives of:

- establishing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment
- building positive social norms
- generates a sense of connectedness to teachers and peers
- explicitly teaches social and emotional skills
- generates a commitment to the academic goals of the school.

The whole school approach of Newborough Primary School addresses state and regional priorities to achieve learning for life, happy, healthy and resilient kids, breaking the link between disadvantage and outcomes for students, making sure there is pride and confidence in our schools. The approach also aims to improve learning outcomes in the areas of literacy and numeracy and increase student attendance.

The Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy should be considered alongside our School's Statement of Values, Child Safe Standards and Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policies. This Policy also reinforces the school's commitment to the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 and the basic principles of freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

### **4. Defining engagement**

Engagement refers to the extent to which students are connected to and involved in their learning. It can be categorised in three ways:

1. *Behavioural Engagement – participation in education: including academic, social and extra-curricular activities.*
2. *Emotional Engagement – reacting emotionally within the school and the classroom and how connected the students are to the school.*
3. *Cognitive Engagement – being intrinsically motivated to learn*

### **5. Students with disabilities and learning difficulties**

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with a disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, an education provider should take into account information about:

- the nature of the student's disability
- his or her preferred adjustment
- any adjustments that have been provided previously
- any recommended or alternative adjustments.

This information might come from the student, an associate of the student, independent experts, or a combination of these people. It will usually be presented in the form of an individual learning plan (ILP) that is regularly reviewed and advised by all parties.

An education provider should ensure that the student, or an associate of the student, has timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The provider should also ensure that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

The provider may consider all likely costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, providing special resources or modifying the curriculum
- costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers
- benefits of the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and
- any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider if the student participates.

The DDA and the Education Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship to a person or organisation.

### **6. Koorie Students**

Newborough Primary School acknowledges the Gunnai Kurnai people as the traditional owners of the land on which we are located. We work closely with Gunnai Kurnai leaders and educators to ensure our community is safe and inclusive. In particular, we commit to:

- work in partnership with the local Koorie community to develop place-based approaches to improving student outcomes
- support the development of high expectations and individualised learning for Koorie students
- create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Koorie cultures and identities
- view success for their Koorie students as core business.

### **7. Bullying and harassment**

Bullying is unacceptable at Newborough Primary School. Bullying is unreasonable behaviour that is intimidating, threatening or humiliating and repeated over time or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour. Bullying can be physical, verbal or indirect, and creates an unfriendly, threatening or offensive environment.

Bullying and harassment is against the law and can have short and long term detrimental effects on victims. The effects of harassment or bullying include

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

All members of the school community have a role in ensuring that the school is safe and that bullying and harassment do not occur. If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should report it to an appropriate person. Staff expectations are detailed in the School Statement of Values and, SWPBS handbook and DET suspension and exclusion guidelines. In general they consist of both education and staged consequences for offenders.

Harassment is behaviour (through words or actions) based on the personal characteristics listed above that are unwanted, unasked for, unreturned and likely to make school an unfriendly or uncomfortable place by:

- humiliating (putting someone down)
- seriously embarrassing
- offending (hurting someone's feelings) or
- intimidating (threatening someone so they behave in a certain way).

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance; request for sex or any other sexual behaviour that a reasonable person would know or expect would offend, humiliate, seriously embarrass or humiliate another.

Racial and religious vilification is unacceptable at Newborough Primary School.

Vilification is behaviour (through words or actions) that incites hatred, serious contempt or ridicule of another person or group of people because of their race or religious belief.

### **8. Diversity in the school community**

The school aims to address diversity by:

- maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community
- attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer
- increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce
- enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs
- creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems.

### **Tiered interventions and teaching appropriate behaviours**

**As a SWPBS School, we create the pre-conditions for engagement and learning**

***Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours is supported through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:***

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning

***Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, is responded to through a staged response, including:***

- understanding the student's background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program.

***Broader support strategies will include:***

- involving and supporting the parents/carers,
- engaging with the student interventions coordinator, Primary Welfare Officer and DEECD Student Support Services specialists
- tutoring/peer tutoring
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts
- involving community support agencies.

## **9. Managing student misbehaviour**

### **Discipline procedures – minor and major incidents**

At Newborough Primary School we practice a staged response approach to managing significant behaviour issues with individual students.

In addition, responses are designed to incorporate education and reflection. For example, if a child is unsafe in the yard, time away from the yard reflecting on the Newbee value of 'Be Safe'.

These responses are recorded and entered as data into the schools data management system and

analysed in the context of our engagement policy and SWPBS commitment.

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time.
- Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.
- Detention - teachers may require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work or duties at a reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.
- Convening of a support group (See Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance).

### **Discipline procedures – suspension and expulsion**

When considering suspension or expulsion, schools are required to follow guidelines detailed in ministerial order number 625 (2013) –

A **principal** may suspend a student if, whilst attending school or travelling to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school (including travel to or from that activity), the student—

- (a) behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
- (b) causes significant damage to or destruction of property;
- (c) commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;
- (d) possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
- (e) fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
- (f) consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender identity; **disability**; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parental status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes; or
- (g) consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

