

Exford Primary School

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY 2020



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Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact exford.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.

Exford 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

Exford Primary School was opened on July 1, 1902 under the name of Exford Estate School. Exford PS has always been quite isolated geographically: in recent years new housing estates nearby have grown closer to us in proximity and have had an impact on our enrolments. In May 2013, a strict facilities-based enrolment boundary was placed around our school, given that we are not connected to mains water nor mains sewerage and manage rural school facilities with a larger than anticipated population, and also given that we are the local neighbourhood school for this part of Melton shire.

Exford Primary School has grown almost five times over in a very short period of time: we have gone from having 97 students (Census 2008), to our current enrolment of 468 students (Census 2020). This student cohort increase has been supported by an equal growth in staff numbers and a spread of teacher employment across Principal and Leading Teacher class, Highly Accomplished, Proficient, and Graduate teacher classifications. We continue with the very important emphasis on inducting and welcoming our new students, families and staff into the Exford PS learning community. It also heralds the necessity to strategically plan for responsible growth in the context of locality and Melton Network educational needs, with our School Council continuing to work with DET / VSBA regarding our complete school upgrade (planning is underway, with commencement of Stage 1 of our Master Plan due in April 2021 and planning of Stage 2 already having commenced).

Our continued growth in student enrolments was supported by an almost doubling of staff numbers and a spread of teacher employment across the Principal, Leading Teacher, Learning Specialist, Classroom Teacher Ranges 1 and 2 and Graduate teacher classifications. We have continued with the very important emphasis on inducting and welcoming our new students, families and staff into the Exford PS learning community. It also has heralded the necessity to strategically plan for responsible growth in the context of locality and Melton Network educational needs. The Student mobility factor has continued to be an influence on our teaching and learning, with each year's new student intake comprising of students at year levels other than at Foundation level. We have now experienced a subsequent drop in enrolments due to the opening of two new primary schools at Eynesbury and Strathtulloh.

School values, philosophy and vision

At Exford PS, we are united in our expectations that we all display our school values - we have a saying, 'In everything we SAY and everything we DO, we need to show Kindness, Respect and to always do our Personal Best. A matrix of behaviours and school contexts has been developed and displayed around the school to inform and remind all community members of our expectations of each other. We use 'Gotchas' as a school wide incentive program, to acknowledge and encourage students to display one or more of our values. They are able to save and redeem their Gotchas for prizes and experiences which are connective in nature, for example shared experiences, sports clinics or from the wide range of prizes available at the Gotcha Stall (e.g. having lunch with another student or a staff member). Our school values are explicitly taught throughout all of our teaching and learning programs and our Student of the Week certificates are also awarded for demonstrating a school value. The images for the school values were designed by students and we have had these images turned into soft toys and we use the soft toys and displays in our classrooms to teach,

reinforce, encourage and praise our students' ability to consistently relate to and reflect on their own use of the school values.

2. Engagement strategies

Exford Primary School continued to perform at a high level in the area of Student Engagement and Wellbeing, with student, parent and staff opinion survey data correlating to our consistent daily observations. We have very calm and settled classrooms with high expectations of ourselves and the way we relate to each other. As a consequence, our classroom environments support students to be actively involved in engaging and motivating learning programs. In 2016, we joined the regional focus on implementing School Wide Positive Behaviour Program in our school and we continued this work in 2020/21, including throughout the Remote Learning times.

We continue to focus on supporting students to develop friendship skills, courtesy and resiliency as critical elements in the way they relate to each other. Striving to be great Exford citizens is important at our school and to our families. Our student leaders, School and Vice School Captains and Student Leaders, take their responsibilities very seriously, as do the staff and our parent community. One of our challenges as we grow is how we continue to connect our students to each other. We have two Assemblies each week, with student performances and student awards. We have a Buddy program amongst our classes and teachers. This forms part of our deliberate strategy to build connectedness across our school. Creating a strong feeling of community within the school and a climate where students and their families, both existing and new, feel strongly connected to and proud of their school remained an important focus for us, especially in light of our continued growth.

Attendance and punctuality to school remained an area of focus for us throughout 2020. In 2021, supporting our students' connection and engagement is most important - in the light of both Remote Learning and the impact of the departure of the students to the new school has had on student friendships and wellbeing.

3. Identifying students in need of support

At Exford PS, every member of staff shares in the responsibility for the wellbeing of each child. We provide a very calm learning environment and a whole-school pastoral care approach. Consequently, students feel very positive about school, teachers, school-mates and their class-mates and have a great sense of belonging to and ownership of their school. Each teacher is responsible for all the wellbeing needs of their class, from the children's academic and personal development to monitoring attendance.

At Exford PS, we provide a very supportive transition program for Prep students and other new students entering at other year levels. Mobility is an increasing factor for us, with many new students beginning at Exford during their schooling. Supporting new students to build friendships and connections to the school is an important focus at Exford PS. Monitoring students' progress and catering for individual learning needs is an integral part of our school program. In a usual school year, we have an extensive range of activities for our students to do at lunch times - this is particularly supportive for our students with sensory needs. Our staff are creative in the range of additional curriculum activities offered to our students

at lunch times - Knitting Club, Lego Club, Mindfulness Club, Arts Club and Games Club. We ran of many these activities through WebEx as we could and included activity days, Trivia sessions, sports challenges, incursions and special days throughout 2020/

We had many students with learning disabilities, some are funded under the Program for Students with Disabilities. PSD students are supported in the classroom with Education Support staff. All students with a diagnosed disability or learning need are supported through Student Support Group meetings which are held each term to discuss and reflect on progress of the Individual Learning Plans.

4. 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, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

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.

5. Student behavioural expectations

Exford Primary School acknowledges that the behaviour of staff, parents, carers and students has an impact on our school community and culture. We acknowledge a shared responsibility to create a positive learning environment for the children and young people at our school.

As Principals and school leaders, we will:

- model positive behaviour and effective leadership
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community
- work collaboratively to create a school environment where respectful and safe behaviour is expected of everyone
- behave in a manner consistent with the standards of our profession and meet core responsibilities to provide safe and inclusive environments
- plan, implement and review our work to ensure the care, safety, security and general wellbeing of all students at school

- identify and support students who are or may be at risk
- do our best to ensure every child achieves their personal and learning potential
- work with parents to understand their child's needs and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly
- respond appropriately when safe and inclusive behaviour is not demonstrated and implement appropriate interventions and sanctions when required
- inform parents of the school's communication and complaints procedures
- ask any person who is acting in an offensive, intimidating or otherwise inappropriate way to leave the school grounds.

As teachers and non-teaching school staff, we will:

- model positive behaviour to students consistent with the standards of our profession
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community
- proactively engage with parents about student outcomes
- work with parents to understand the needs of each student and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly
- work collaboratively with parents to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for students with additional needs
- communicate with the Principal and school leaders in the event we anticipate or face any tension or challenging behaviours from parents/ caregivers
- treat all members of the school community with respect.

As parents and carers, we will:

- model positive behaviour to our child
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community
- ensure our child attends school on time, every day the school is open for instruction
- take an interest in our child's school and learning
- work with the school to achieve the best outcomes for our child
- communicate constructively with the school and use expected processes and protocols when raising concerns
- support school staff to maintain a safe learning environment for all students
- follow the school's processes for communication with staff and making complaints
- treat all school leaders, staff, students, and other members of the school community with respect.

As students, we will:

- model positive behaviour to other students
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community.
- comply with and model school values
- behave in a safe and responsible manner
- respect ourselves, other members of the school community and the school environment.
- actively participate in school
- not disrupt the learning of others and make the most of our educational opportunities.

As community members, we will:

- model positive behaviour to the school community
- treat other members of the school community with respect
- support school staff to maintain a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students
- utilise the school's processes for communication with staff and submitting complaints.

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.t.aspx>

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

6. Engaging with families

Exford 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.

When asked, our parent community identify the strong emphasis on courtesy, values, student resilience and personal and interpersonal learning fostered by our programs as being important reasons for selecting Exford for their children.

Parents seek the high quality educational program offered by the school as evidenced by the:

- Personal and family oriented atmosphere
- Personalised learning programs, supported by small class sizes for all year levels
- Successful transition program with pre-schools and Secondary colleges
- Commitment of the students, staff and parents
- Effective and friendly communication within the school community
- Individual caring and support for all students

Parental participation and involvement engenders pride, warmth, a sense of belonging and a strong partnership between home and school.

7. Evaluation

Exford 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
- SOCS

Throughout the challenges of 2020, 2021 and 2022, our focus was on supporting our students to remain connected to the school and to each other and to support their learning to the best of our ability. We engaged our students using the Seesaw and WebEx platforms, with teachers adjusting their practices to include pre-recorded teaching, live teaching and group work in WebEx and the use of Seesaw to post learning tasks to and receive from the students. We tracked the work the students were uploading and supported families with the loan of devices and conversations with parents to support them to assist their children at home.

Our teachers' work in our Professional Learning Teams focused on the coaching done with our Learning Specialists and Leading Teachers. Our Professional Learning Team Leaders continued to build their leadership capacity, working in partnership with our Leading Teacher. The work of our PLTs has become a critical element of our work in improving student learning outcomes. We joined the Differentiated Support for School Improvement Initiative, with a focus on growing our middle-level leaders as they lead their teams in planning for differentiated teaching and learning.

All Programs for Students with a Disability students showed progress at satisfactory or above in achieving their individual goals.

Our Teacher Judgement target was for all students to make a growth of 1.0 against the Victorian Curriculum and their own progress. Due to the challenges of 2020's Remote Learning and its impact on student learning, wellbeing and attendance, we have not met this target. However, we wish to acknowledge the efforts our staff and our parent community made to support our students through this very challenging year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Exford Primary School's Child Safe Policy
- Exford Primary School's Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Exford Primary School's Visitor Policy
- Further policy information and information about Exford Primary School can be obtained by visiting <http://www.exfordps.vic.edu.au/>

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by school council on November 2020 and is scheduled for review in November 2024.