



STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

(Updated March 2018 with Reference to the Child Safe Standards)

Latest DET Update: 09/03/2018 & 11/04/2018

First Developed in This Format: March 2018

Updated: September 2018

Rationale

Alphington Primary School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and engaging learning environment academically, emotionally and socially. Our aim is to develop children with the strong sense of values and the learning that allows them to contribute positively within their community.

School Profile

Alphington is a school of 430 students situated in an area bounded by Heidelberg Road and the Yarra River. It is set amidst residential streets, close to parklands, a sporting oval and public transport, and is a focal point for the community it serves. The school includes flexible classroom areas, two library/resource centres, a multipurpose room and art/craft room. Classrooms are technology rich with interactive whiteboards, netbooks and iPads. The playground includes both active and passive spaces with two artificial turf playing areas and two flexible ball-sport courts.

Alphington Primary School strives for personal growth and academic achievement. It aims to promote curiosity and to nurture the development of confidence and resilience. The school program encourages children to learn independently and collaboratively, to be valued and value others and to take pride and pleasure in participation and achievement.

School values, philosophy & vision

Alphington Primary School actively seeks to engage with parents and the community to ensure a positive and inclusive school culture in which every student has the opportunity to develop academically and personally. The values of curiosity, integrity, kindness, resilience and respect support our students to be successful and empowered to shape their future. These values capture our commitment to the delivery of an authentic and engaging curriculum and positive learning interactions prefaced by high quality relationships between all staff, children and parents/carers. We subscribe to doing the 'best we can' in all our endeavours. We value our strong school community partnerships and see this as integral to our success and achievement within our local area and in the Victorian Department of Training, Northern Region.

The school works collaboratively with students and parents/ carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices, based on the school's values, expected social competencies and positive peer relationships. There are intervention strategies in place to address inappropriate behaviours which can negatively impact on the learning environment of the individual and of others. Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive and to be treated with respect and dignity.

At Alphington Primary School, we strongly endorse the following:

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.

We promote diversity and tolerance, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (if applicable)

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally in all aspects of school life

Purpose

- To ensure Alphington Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines in regard to student engagement and wellbeing.
- To create a school culture that promotes student attendance, positive behaviour and a safe, supportive environment
- To provide children with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and children feel physically and emotionally secure.
- To create a safe and respectful school environment and prevent bullying, cyber bullying and other unacceptable behaviours.
- To provide support for individual circumstances when a student begins to disengage from their learning, when regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated

Implementation

Rights and Responsibilities:

It is the right of all members of the school community to experience a safe, comfortable and supportive learning and teaching environment. Staff, students and parents/carers have a right to be treated with respect, and enjoy an environment free from bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation.

Rights and Responsibilities of Children

Rights	Responsibilities
<p><i>Children have a right to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel safe at school • Learn without interference in an encouraging environment • Be treated fairly and with respect 	<p><i>Children have a responsibility to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the rights of other children, teachers and community members • Demonstrate the school and community expectations and values • Participate in learning activities to the best of their ability • Contribute positively to the educational experiences of themselves and other learners

Rights and Responsibilities of Staff

Rights	Responsibilities
<p><i>Staff have a right to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in a cooperative, positive and safe environment • Be supported in their professional duties by school administration, colleagues, parents and The Department of Education and Training (DET) • Be treated with respect by all members of the school community 	<p><i>Staff have a responsibility to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all children with quality educational experiences • Communicate effectively with children, parents/carers and colleagues • Act in a professional manner • Demonstrate the school and community expectations and values

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p><i>Parents/Carers have a right to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what is required of their children in terms of learning and behaviour • Receive regular communication about their child's progress and behaviour 	<p><i>Parents/Carers have a responsibility to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support their child's education • Ensure regular school attendance • Promote appropriate behaviour • Demonstrate the school and community expectations and values • Act in a respectful and constructive manner when dealing with the school

All members have an obligation to ensure school property is appropriately used and maintained.

Bullying & Harassment

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upsets or hurts another person or damages their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

Cyberbullying is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

Homophobic Bullying on the basis of sexuality is a common experience for young people who are same sex attracted or for those who may not behave according to gender stereotypes.

Categories of bullying include direct physical bullying (hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing or damaging property), direct verbal bullying (name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, racist remarks or verbal abuse), indirect verbal bullying (lying or spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes, mimicking or encouraging others to socially exclude someone) and cyberbullying (direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies including harassment using a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory website or deliberately excluding someone from social spaces).

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

Alphington Primary School has **zero tolerance of bullying and of harassment in any form.**

The wellbeing of every child at the school is our highest priority.

We acknowledge our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Everyone within the school community will be alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.

We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

We recognise that developing a child safe environment is an ongoing process. Implementing the Child Safe Standards requires an ongoing commitment. It will not be achieved in one activity or exercise.

We:

- take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing
- consistently respond to all incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school and ensure that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents
- ensure that support is provided to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour

- provide regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents or caregivers about the management of incidents
- address cyber bullying as part of our *ICT User agreement*

The school encourages all children to speak up when bullying or harassment is encountered.

Aboriginal Children and Children from Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

The school recognises that creating a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture is an important first step. Symbols and images that surround a place send an important message about respect. By acknowledging the Country in which the school is located, we are demonstrating our willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures. An important part of showing respect is including 'Acknowledgement of Country' as part of its ceremonies.

The school recognises that cultural safety is living in an environment that is safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are what they need.

It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

Children with Disabilities

The school recognises that promotion of the safety of children with a disability involves:

- acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure risk assessment processes considers their needs
- ensuring the school clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties
- being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability
- supporting staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability
- thinking about how the school can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families

Identifying Children in Need of Extra Support

We recognise that some children, as a group or as individuals, may need extra support in their learning to flourish at school. In other instances children may need additional support with social and emotional development when their behaviours impact on the learning environment of themselves or others.

Our school will utilise the following information and tools to identify children in need of extra support:

1. Personal information gathered upon enrolment
2. Attendance rates
3. Academic performance, particularly in literacy and numeracy assessments
4. Behaviour observed by teachers and support staff
5. Engagement with student families
6. Reports from external experts such as educational psychologists, speech pathologists and other professionals

Student Behaviour and Consequences

The positive and responsible behaviour of children is essential to the smooth running of the school, to the achievement of optimal learning opportunities, and to the development of a supportive and cooperative school environment.

Every child deserves a safe and positive learning experience where they are engaged and supported to reach their full potential.

Alphington Primary School has procedurally fair processes for managing student behaviour. Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must not be used at this school under any circumstance.

Definitions

Corporal punishment is a form of physical *punishment* that involves the deliberate infliction of pain as retribution for an offence, or for the purpose of disciplining or reforming a wrongdoer, or to deter attitudes or behaviour deemed unacceptable.

Physical **restraint** means the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a child's body or part of their body.

Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a child alone in a room or area from which the child is physically prevented from leaving. This includes situations where a door is locked as well as where the door is blocked by other objects or held closed by staff. It does not include timeout, which is a behaviour management technique that is part of a Behaviour Support Plan, involves the monitored separation of the child in a non-locked setting, and is implemented for the purpose of calming.

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school classroom practices, including targeted and individualised support when required.

Whole school practices include:

- Establishing predictable, fair and open classrooms and school environments where processes for behaviour management are clear & understood by all.
- 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 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, will be supported 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
- Engaging in dispute resolution

Broader support strategies will include:

- Involving and supporting the parent/carer
- Involving leadership staff
- Mentoring and /or counselling
- Convening student support group meetings
- Developing individualised learning, behaviour or attendance plans
- Providing broader educational programs (excursions, camps)
- Involving community support agencies
- Contact with the Regional Office

Discipline Procedures – suspension and expulsion

A student may 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 which may put the health, safety and well-being of other students, staff or themselves at significant risk.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Use of behaviour and attendance sheets to monitor behaviour

- Withdrawal from class activities for a specified period. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed of such withdrawals
- Convening of a school support group.

Responding to Challenging Behaviour

When concerns arise about a student's behaviour, or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of challenging behaviour, a more targeted response is required. This may include both support measures and disciplinary measures.

Successful interventions require:

- strong staff-student relationships
- an understanding of the underlying factors influencing behaviour
- an understanding of the immediate triggers for its occurrence.

Any decisions made about addressing challenging behaviours will be clearly documented and discussed with the student's parent or carer

Where students repeatedly demonstrate challenging behaviour, the school will implement more structured intervention strategies as part of a staged response to address the behaviour. Intervention strategies to be implemented include:

- assessing the behaviour, focussing on its influences, triggers and function (i.e. what purpose it serves). This should involve observation and talking with the student, their family and relevant wellbeing professionals.
- developing a behaviour support plan and/or individual education plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- explicit teaching of replacement behaviours (recognise students will need time to practice these before they become habit)
- engaging appropriate support services, such as a Student Welfare Coordinator, student support services or community agencies to undertake assessments and/or provide specialist support
- establishing a Support group to establish the student's needs and supports required
- implementing appropriate disciplinary measures that are proportionate to problem behaviours
- considering alternative learning or behaviour management options such as student development centres or re-engagement programs.

Support and discipline responses always will involve the classroom teacher.

Where there are ongoing behaviour issues, teachers will work with school leadership and/or school wellbeing staff to get specialist support for the student. For serious behavioural issues where suspension or expulsion is being considered, the Principal must be directly involved in decision-making.

The school will keep detailed records of instances of challenging behavior and management responses reported by students, teachers, non-school based staff and the school community.

In the event of an incident threatening life or property, the school will contact emergency services by calling **000**. The school also will immediately report to Security Services Unit (phone: 03 9589 6266) any incident:

posing a risk to the safety of a student, parent, visitor or staff member including:

- serious injury or death
- allegations of or actual physical or sexual assault
- constituting a threat to property or the environment
- involving physical restraint or isolation of a student.

Attendance

The school has developed the mandatory prerequisite Admission and Enrolment Policies to support children's attendance.

Children are expected to attend school every day during normal school hours unless there is an approved exemption.

The school will record attendance twice daily.

The school will use only CASES21, eCASES21, through Compass, to record student attendance.

Parents/carers are required to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school.

The school will record in writing the reason (if any) given by the parent/carer and determine if the explanation is reasonable.

The school will develop a strategy for following up immediately when unexplained absences occur.

Poor or irregular attendance will be a matter for the class teacher and leadership team.

The child's absences will be recorded on the Student Report.

Please refer also to the school's *Child Safe Policy, Bullying & Harassment Policy, Attendance Policy, Responding to Violent & Dangerous Child Behaviour of Concern (Restraint) Policy*.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET updates early March & late April 2018).

This policy was ratified by School Council in October 2018

References:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/policyrequirements.aspx