

Yarrunga Primary School

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION POLICY

October 2016



Purpose

The purpose of the School Engagement and Inclusion Policy is to articulate the school community's shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, student values, student support and student behaviour. The policy supports the rights and outlines the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment.

Yarrunga Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Yarrunga Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Yarrunga Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

School Profile:

Our motto is 'Learning Today for Tomorrow'. As such our programs are aimed at encouraging and developing students at our school to become lifelong learners.

We have high expectations of every student. We support them in the development of their goals for learning and provide sufficient time and support to realise these dreams.

The Yarrunga community has its own unique identity. The school is placed at the centre of this community and plays a vital role in the lives of our families. The school supports parents with their learning, challenges in life and conducts programs to enhance their role as parents.

Established in the only suburb of Wangaratta and on the industrial fringe, Yarrunga Primary School is a beautiful and environmentally sound educational oasis. The school was built in the 1950's but new and attractive permanent buildings were erected in 2005. The buildings provide an outstanding learning environment for children and workplace for staff.

The school is located on a large site. The oval includes soccer, football and cricket playing areas. The grounds include three sets of playground equipment. Shade sails have been installed over the playground equipment and large umbrellas provide shade at the table seating areas. Shade areas and a grassed area have been provided in the new courtyard.

The school is networked for information and communications technologies and students have access to netbooks and iPads in each classroom.

While most of the families live in town, they often rely on part-time jobs in the agricultural and service industries. These jobs have been severely reduced over the past 3 years. There has also been a crisis in public housing in the area. With many older public housing buildings now sold off, there have been a limited number of places for families. This has led to many families, particularly larger families seeking housing elsewhere and coupled with limited opportunities for employment, the enrolments of the school have been affected. The population of the school is 164 and currently in quite stable. The socio-economic profile of Yarrunga Primary School is one of overall disadvantage with a high mobility rate.

The school has made a long-term commitment involving the community in the school and the school in the community. Formal partnerships with the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, Sidney Myer Fund, The Centre and Rangeview Nursing Home have enhanced the programs offered at the school. Close ties with local service clubs (Wangaratta Rotary, Appin Park Rotary and Wangaratta Lions) have provided support and opportunities for the school to be involved in the wider Wangaratta community.

A full-time primary welfare officer and part-time school chaplain currently support a myriad of student welfare programs at Yarrunga Primary School. The number of LBOTE students, are now gradually increasing at the school together with a number of aboriginal students. The inclusion of indigenous history and culture in curriculum and school activities in Koori education are positive programs at this school together with a fine quality Japanese LOTE program.

The school has many experienced staff committed to providing a stimulating, safe and caring school environment for the local community.

School Values:

Under our framework of School Wide Positive Behaviour, Yarrunga Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment. Student Well-being and Student Learning Outcomes are inextricably linked. We have high expectations for positive behaviours. We will ensure these behaviours are recognised as well as implementing a system of restorative practices and consequences for negative behaviours. We have an underpinning philosophy of creating a school climate where students want to be at school and on time.

Yarrunga Primary School values are

1. Be a Learner
2. Be Respectful
3. Being Responsible

These values help create a positive and supportive school community, in which we take pride to belong to.

Ongoing implementation of these values occurs throughout the school. With a designated 1 hour teaching block timetabled for all classes.

Core values are addressed at a whole school level with the emphasis on the discreet difference of each individual value.

The values include –

Care and Compassion

Doing Your Best

Fair Go

Freedom

Honesty and Trustworthiness

Integrity

Respect

Responsibility

Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion

Student Rights and Responsibilities

All students have the right to:

- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community.
- Be in a secure and happy environment
- Be listened to
- Feel free to express themselves
- Experience success
- Feel safe and protected at school
- Develop to their academic, social and emotional potential
- Access to timely support services

All students have the responsibility to:

- Be involved in all school activities
- Have a go at set tasks
- Allow others to learn
- Respect and value others through their words and actions
- Follow teacher directions
- Set a good example
- Encourage others to experience success
- Be punctual and attend school daily on a regular basis.
- Report inappropriate behaviour by adults towards children

Staff Rights and Responsibilities

All teachers and support staff have the right to:

- Be free from disruption in the teaching and learning process.
- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community
- Be supported and assisted by other staff
- Appropriate support from the school community
- Safe working environments and conditions
- Effective communication processes that are regularly reviewed
- Negotiated role description and professional development plans that cater for their individual and school needs

All teachers and support staff have the responsibility to:

- Provide effective teaching and learning practices
- Pursue relevant continued PD relating to their own interests and areas of need and to the needs of the school
- Provide adequate active supervision of students
- Be understanding and tolerant of the different backgrounds and behaviour of students
- Be flexible in their approach

- Be interested in what they teach.
- Be well planned and organised
- Provide differentiated activities where necessary to meet individual student needs
- Support and encourage teaching colleagues and other school staff
- Encourage awareness and understanding of school values
- Implement the Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Request advice and assistance when needed
- Be prepared to genuinely listen to students, parents and other staff
- Report inappropriate behaviour towards children and/or other circumstances that may be negatively impacting upon student safety.

Parent/Carers Rights and Responsibilities

All parents/carers have the right to:

- Have access to teaching staff and leadership at mutually agreed times
- Be informed and be given the opportunity to express themselves on matters of school policy
- Be accurately informed about the progress of their children at school
- Be consulted about serious, inappropriate behaviours involving their children
- Be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the school community
- Have personal information treated with confidentiality
- Access to timely welfare and support services

All parents/carers have the responsibility to:

- Encourage good behaviour in their children
- Support school staff in their efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment
- Support school staff in discipline procedures associated with the implementation of the Student Engagement Policy
- Treat others as they would like to be treated themselves
- Provide the school with relevant information regarding their child's health and wellbeing
- Collaboratively share responsibility with the school staff for their child's education
- Send their child to school on a daily regular basis

Creating a positive school culture

At Yarrunga Primary School we are committed to creating a positive school culture by:

- Maintaining positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers, students and parents
- Maintaining community links with our parents and students through the ongoing Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program, Volunteers Program, Nursing Home and Kindergarten visits and breakfast club.
- Maintaining learning links with parents and carers through initiatives such as the access to the Centre and certificated training courses
- Maintaining a learning community that provides multiple and differentiated opportunities for students to achieve success.
- Provide every opportunity to broaden students' experiences by offering a wide variety of extra programs to engage students:- School excursions and camps, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, Nursing Home visits, PE program, Information Technology, Kids Council, Lunchtime activities, environmental programs, music, art and community participation. These activities foster

the qualities of: leadership, initiative, independence, self-confidence, self-esteem, problem solving, decision-making, resilience, teamwork and social skills.

Proactively Engaging with Parents/Carers

At Yarrunga Primary School we support the effective involvement of all families as equal partners in the education of children. We have a formal volunteer program to recognise the valuable contribution that parents and members of the wider school community make to the education of our students. All staff aim to contribute to a welcoming culture for parents/carers and families by:

- Providing parents access to the school's Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Facilitating effective school-home and home-school communication
- Providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers to contribute (Yellow Pages)
- Involving families through home-reading and other curriculum-related initiatives
- Involving families as participants in school decision-making
- Providing opportunities to enhance parenting knowledge and skills

Promoting Positive Values and Behaviours

At Yarrunga Primary School we promote positive values and behaviours by:

- Building and maintaining positive relationships
- Minimising issues which can trigger student misbehaviour within the classroom
- Encouraging students to work with others and to take greater responsibility for their own social, emotional, physical and academic development
- Increasing student awareness of the impact of their behaviour has on others
- Incorporating resources for teaching positive social and educational values and behaviours
- Integrating other programs and practices, such as prep and grade six transition programs, a buddy system, regular whole school assemblies and a range of multi-age and extra-curricular activities offered during school hours and
- Implement restorative practices to fix the problems that may arise.

Unacceptable behaviour demonstrated *towards* students:

All staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident to discuss any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and all staff undergo professional development around Mandatory Reporting annually.

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident of abuse has occurred they are required to report the incident. Factors contributing to a reasonable belief may include:

- A child stating that they or someone they know has been abused
- A child demonstrating behaviour consistent with that of someone who has suffered abuse
- Someone else raising a suspicion of abuse
- An observation of abuse occurring.

Unacceptable behaviour demonstrated *by* students:

Students have the right to be safe and secure. The following are examples of behaviour by students considered to be intimidating and dangerous and therefore unacceptable:

- Any behaviour deemed as bullying, for example direct physical bullying, direct verbal bullying and indirect bullying
- Fighting, or any other form of aggressive behaviour
- Throwing sand, stones or other dangerous objects
- Using or carrying weapons (sticks, knives, lighters)
- Harassment (cultural, religious, racial, gender/sexuality and related to disability)
- Stealing
- Leaving the school ground or classroom without permission
- Climbing trees, rocks, fences, roofs, or other structures other than the designated play equipment
- Violence based games (excessive tackling games)

It is acknowledged that there will be behaviours and events that go against the values of the school. When this occurs Yarrunga Primary School will use a **Restorative Practice** approach to repair damaged relationships between individuals and groups.

Bullying

Bullying is a pattern of behaviour by one person or a group towards others which is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or cause discomfort.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance **on more than one occasion**. And where there is an imbalance of power.

Types of bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. Direct physical bullying

This form includes hitting, tripping, pushing or damaging property.

2. Direct verbal bullying

This includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

3. Indirect bullying

This is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation.

Indirect bullying includes

- Lying and spreading rumours

What bullying is not

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

There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

1. Mutual conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students and not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one sided way.

2. Social rejection or dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, **it is not bullying**.

3. Single-episode acts

- Playing nasty jokes to embarrass or humiliate.
- Mimicking
- Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- Damaging someone's social reputation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students.

Prevention:

Preventative approaches to classroom management include-

- **Values Education**-the school wide focus on values education is a critical element in building an understanding within all students of their rights and responsibilities as members of our community. Basic values are explicitly taught and reinforced throughout the school year. Through constant teacher modelling students see values in action, they learn to use the correct vocabulary, to understand their rights and to expect others to treat them reasonably and fairly. Students understand that they have a right to learn in a safe and secure environment. They know that they have a responsibility as a member of the grade to encourage others to act appropriately. They understand that the individual does not have the right to interfere with the learning of others. School is seen as a neutral zone where neighbourhood grievances are left at the gate.
- **Behavioural Management Plans**- in each class behavioural management plans are established at the beginning of each school year. These plans include - the rights and responsibilities of all class members, rewards and consequences. The plans assume a group management approach whereby students and teacher have communal responsibility to manage classroom behaviour and the teacher is designated by the group to ensure that student right and responsibilities are up held. The plans include peer support where students support and encourage one another to manage their own behaviours.
- **Relationship building**- staff constantly work towards building positive relationships with all students. It is through the building of positive relationships with the students, that staff are seen as being interested in and genuinely caring about the welfare of the students. Staff, are trusted by the students, and students on the whole like the staff and strive to please. Staff, treat students with respect, have clearly understood expectations for acceptable behaviour and ensure that they act as role models for the students. "Enhanced learning results from the building and maintaining of positive relationships within the school community", (Payne, 1996, p. 145).
- **Social skills programs** – programs such as Bounce Back, Friends, Seeing Red, Stop, Think, Do!, Rookies, Seasons For Change, Better Buddies, Calmer Classrooms and Program Achieve are an integral part of the curriculum. These programs are used to develop the students' social skills and provide the students with strategies to manage their own behaviours. These social skills programs enable the students to understand and have empathy for others; give them positive ways to manage conflict rather than relying on aggression; and gives the students strategies to manage their own anger. The personal skills of resilience, persistence, organisation, and confidence are an integral part of the school program. The students learn the meaning of these concepts and are given the opportunity to practice these skills in a supportive environment where they are able to achieve success.
- **Student leadership roles** –beginning in Prep, students are given supported opportunities to undertake leadership roles within the classroom and whole school.

These student leaders are involved in decision making within the school. The leadership opportunities develop an understanding of democracy and giving the students experiences in being successful members of a democratic society. These student leadership roles include weekly Classmates, House Captains, School Captains and Kid's Council.

- **Engaging and relevant curriculum-** curriculum is based on the interests and experiences of the students, is relevant to their world and caters for different learning styles whilst teaching the fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy. High but achievable expectations are established for all students. Supports and scaffolding are provided where necessary to enable the students to achieve their goals. Glasser, (1987), states that "less than half of all students are making little or no effort to learn because they don't believe that school satisfies their needs". By providing an engaging and relevant curriculum this trigger for misbehaviour is minimised.
- **Explicit instruction-** Students are supported and encouraged to reach their full potential in all social, emotional and academic areas. Understanding where the students are at, what skills they have and what they need to progress onto the next level are integral to all teaching that occurs. Teaching is explicit and focuses on small chunks of learning at any one time. Scaffolding and supports are available for students to successfully progress from one level to the next. Instruction is given at the point of need of each student to ensure that work is achievable for all, whilst still challenging more competent students. This includes the adapting of curriculum to suit individual students with poor academic skills, the use of intervention programs such as Reading Recovery and small groups.
- **Reward systems-** these focus on, encourage and praise positive behaviour through the use of verbal labelled praise. Stickers, free time, games and other class chosen rewards. Both students and teacher can acknowledge and reward these correct behaviours.
- **Celebrating of successes-** successes are celebrated regularly in the classrooms, with families and with the whole school community through such things as Principal Awards, classmate of the week, phone calls or letters home to parents and special features in the school newsletter and local press.
- **Parental involvement-** parents are actively encouraged to become part of their child's education, to regularly visit the school and to assist in the school programs. Parents are informed of repeated misbehaviours and expected to assist the school in supporting the management approaches used by the school.
- **Parental education-** parenting programs are conducted by the school, in conjunction with outside agencies to develop the positive parenting skills of the parents. This empowers the parents into understanding and using effective and consistent behaviour management methods at home.
- **Community involvement-** Community Links, Classroom Companions, and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden volunteers program enables and encourages the outside community to become involved in the education of our students. These people build important relationships with the students both inside and outside the school. Students are involved in regular Nursing Home visits, and volunteering on community programs such as tree planting, the Regent Honey Eater project, and the Wangaratta Jazz Festival. These important links with outside groups enable the students to develop a sense of belonging to the wider Yarrunga community.
- **Minimising situations-** all efforts are made to minimise situations where students are likely to misbehave, for example, if a classroom teacher is absent, a student who finds it difficult to relate to casual relief teachers will be relocated to another

classroom for the day, thus minimising the stress triggers for the student and possible misbehaviour.

Intervention

Intervention approaches to student management are used when necessary to quickly and non-aggressively stop disruptive and unsafe behaviours.

- **Classroom Management Plans-** these plans clearly establish the expected behaviours within the grade and the consequence for misbehaviour. The stages for managing misbehaviour are clearly defined and increase in severity for repeated misbehaviours. The stages include ignoring, non verbal and verbal hinting, verbal warning, redirecting the student's attention, moving the student to another position within the classroom, relocating the student to the classroom of a buddy teacher, after school detention and suspension.
- **Relocation of students-** repetitive misbehaviour results in the student being given time out, away from their class. The student is placed in the classroom of a buddy teacher for a period of time ranging from the remainder of the session to 3 days. Once a child has been relocated for a full day, a class meeting is held before the child is permitted to return to the grade. During a 'circle time' session the rest of the students are expected to explain to the misbehaving student how the behaviour makes them feel, and why it is inappropriate. The class as a whole then decides by vote whether or not to allow the student to return to the group. This is an extremely effective strategy as it involves communal responsibility for classroom management, gives the students very strong and personal feedback on how their behaviours affects others and works on the sense of belonging to the group. Most students strive to belong to the group and will actively try to avoid being isolated from their peers. The length of time of the relocation increases each time the child is relocated and ranges from one session to 2 or more, full days.
- **Formal discussions-** students who continually make poor choices regarding their behaviour attend an individual meeting with the teacher at a later time. During these discussions the student is expected to verbalise their misbehaviour and the reasons for it, the effect of the misbehaviour on others, and propose alternative more productive behaviours which could be displayed. Logical consequences and restorative practises are agreed to by both the teacher and student. The teacher then follows up to ensure that the restorative practises are undertaken.
- **A consistent approach-** consistency of approaches is a vital component of all classroom behaviour management. Students know what to expect, they know that fair and logical consequences will be applied to misbehaviour. Students feel empowered as they are encouraged to assert their right to learn without interruption. All students know that disruptive behaviours will not be tolerated.
- **Red Cards-** in situations where a child becomes a danger to other students or refuses to be relocated from the grade a red card system is used. The red card is sent to either the principal or vice principal and they come to the classroom and direct the student to leave the room in an assertive but non-aggressive way. If the child still refuses to leave the room, then the other grade members are directed to leave the classroom with the teacher. This quickly and effectively removes threats of physical and verbal abuse and takes away the power of an audience from the misbehaving student. Once the situation has been defused and the student has calmed down, discussion will take place, logical consequences will be worked out and retribution will be planned for.

- **Withdrawal Room-** when a student's behaviour in the yard is deemed to be unsafe or unacceptable then the student will be sent for time out of the yard, in the withdrawal room. The length of the time out will vary according to the severity of the behaviour and can range from half a session to extended periods of a week or more. Teachers staff the withdrawal room on a roster basis. Students are expected to sit quietly in the withdrawal room and calm down. Once calm they are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and suggest more appropriate actions for the future.
- **Notifying Parents-** students are expected to take responsibility for their behaviours. A part of this responsibility is informing their parents of their actions. This can take the form of a student ringing their parent up to tell them that they have chosen not to do their work, or write a letter home. Students are expected to phone their parent notifying them of after school detention and the behaviours that caused it. Forcing the student to take responsibility for their behaviours is a very powerful deterrent with students.
Teachers frequently contact parents to inform them of student unacceptable behaviours and to explain the consequences of these actions. Staff, work with the parent in trying to establish an understanding of the reasons why unacceptable behaviours are occurring. Parents are expected to work with the school in minimising the factors which trigger unacceptable behaviours and to support the school in its decisions regarding consequences for misbehaviour.
- **Parental Meetings-** When repeated severe behaviour patterns occur, parents are expected to attend the school for a meeting, to work with and support the school in formulating effective and productive solutions to the student's misbehaviour. Parents are regularly informed about the effectiveness of approaches implemented.

Escalation of Student Behavioural Difficulties

Yarrunga Primary School staff members are encouraged to involve the school's leadership team when required at any stage of intervention regarding student behaviour.

Suspension

The Principal may suspend a student if the student:

- Behaves in a manner that poses a danger to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person
- Commits an act of significant violence or causes significant damage or destruction to property, or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
- Processes, uses or deliberately assists others to use prohibited drugs or substances
- Fails to comply with any reasonable and clearly communicated instruction of a Principal, teacher, support staff member or other adult
- Consistently behaves in a manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student or students
- Consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person

If a student is suspended, it will be for the shortest time necessary. The aim of the suspension is to provide an opportunity for the student, their parent/s or carers and the school's staff to reflect on the present difficulties and develop positive, student-focused engagement strategies. At any time during a suspension, parents/carers can request that a student support group meeting be convened.

In-school Suspensions

An in-school suspension can have a number of positive outcomes for the school and the student:

- The suspended students and the rest of the class can continue work, with disruption minimised
- Time can be allocated for support for the individual student their parents/carers (if appropriate)
- It allows out-of-school suspension to be used for the most extreme behavioural issues

Expulsion

The School Principal has the authority to permanently exclude a student from his or her school according to the procedures set out below. Permanent expulsion from a school is the most extreme sanction open to a Principal. Except in the most unusual and extreme circumstances, it will only be used after other relevant forms of behaviour management outlined in this policy have been exhausted.

The Principal can expel a student if, whilst attending school or directly travelling to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school, including travel organised by the school:

- The student's behaviour is of such magnitude that when comparing the student's educational needs with the need to maintain the health, safety, and wellbeing of staff and students and the effectiveness of the school's educational programs, an expulsion is the only available mechanism.

Corporal punishment is NOT used in the school.

Responding to the needs of all students

Yarrunga Primary School is committed to providing a highly engaging and effective learning environment for all students. Whilst many students will be adequately catered for within the 'normal' classroom environment and curriculum, we acknowledge that many students have additional needs, either for support or extension. Our school is committed to identifying and responding to the needs of these students through coordinated early intervention and prevention strategies.

Attendance

Whilst student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents/carers, staff members at Yarrunga Primary School are committed to providing active support for full student attendance by:

- Setting and communicating high expectations for attendance to all members of the school community
- Questioning student absences promptly and consistently. Office staff ring parents to confirm absences daily
- Provide a texting service so parents can text the school if their children are absent
- Creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- Providing early identification of and immediate supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance

Expectations for attendance – Parents

Parents/carers are required to:

- Ensure that their child is on time for school each day

- Notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence (either via phone/email/text, a note.)
- Notify the school in advance of planned absences (either via phone/email, a note)
- Ensure that all contact details are correct and up to date

Guidelines

This policy is based upon the following documents, programs and resources:

- *Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines* (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)
- Australian Curriculum
- Yarrunga Primary School Strategic Plan
- Teacher reference materials

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four year review cycle.

REVIEW: 2020

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: