



# WAYI SCHOOL

## STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school Administration Office via phone or email.

### 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.

Wayi 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.

### CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families

## 8. Evaluation

### POLICY

#### 1. School profile

Wayi School provides highly individualised programs of learning for students with an intellectual disability. The school welcomes students from 5 to 18 years of age.

School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with a comprehensive learning program and access to support networks. It also helps to develop important skills, knowledge and values that enable them for further learning and active participation in the community. Wayi School provides a stimulating, safe and challenging learning environment where student achievement is acknowledged and celebrated.

The curriculum and extracurricular programs provide learning in an environment that is appropriately challenging, engaging and motivating. Individual Education Programs – developed by teachers in consultation with parents and therapists – focus on developing personal growth for each student. Wayi School has a strong commitment to student wellbeing. Our school values parent input and works closely with families to ensure the required supports are available both at school and at home.

Wayi School was established in 2023 and is located within the city of Hume, approximately 25 kilometres north of Melbourne. Our school adjoins several established community resources including Mount Ridley College and various Hume City Council facilities; partnerships with our local community are valued and utilised to create inclusive and safe environments.

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

Wayi School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of **Voice, Choice** and **Independence** at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to empower and inspire every member of our learning community. Our Statement of Values is available online at <https://wayischool.vic.edu.au/our-school/vision-values-mission/>

Wayi School is committed to creating innovative learning environments that nurture and develop all students through an ability and strength-based approach. Through collaborative partnerships, we provide learning that is individualised and holistic to ensure students become valued and contributing members of their community.

#### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Wayi 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.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

### **Universal**

Interventions at a Tier 1 level, are universal in design and are intended to provide a preventative framework for all student support. Strategies are included below:

- all students are supported to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#) through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families, Student Support Groups, and Individual Education Plans
- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- School-wide Positive Behaviour Supports (SWPBS), which aim to create a positive school climate, a culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for all school community members
- Student Support Group meetings scheduled at least once per term
- school values are embedded in school language and activities
- targeted staff professional development for staff to meet evolving student needs
- delivering an engaging and diverse curriculum to ensure that students are able to participate in subjects and programs that are structured to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs and VPC to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Wayi School use the Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Wayi School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students
- 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
- carefully planned 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
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council

and other forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Education Support staff, therapists, and Leadership whenever they have any questions or concerns

- create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school celebrations, sports days, musical performances and playground engagement programs
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Bully Stoppers
  - Safe Schools
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, playground engagement activities)
- buddy programs, peer support programs
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours.

At Wayi School, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

- begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect or open a discussion
- fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds
- celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through school newsletters, school assemblies, parent information nights
- lead on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people
- acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families
- use Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) to provide advice to government schools about creating culturally inclusive learning environments
- zero tolerance of racism in our commitment to child safety
- address racism from students, staff, volunteers or visitors directly. Make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with, and the culture of the school works to prevent incidents from occurring
- work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and to promote cultural inclusion
- find out about the Traditional Owners of the land/s where the school is situated

on the Map of Indigenous Australia and learn about the importance of acknowledging Traditional Owners

### **Targeted**

Targeted interventions at a Tier 2 level, cater for the varied learning and wellbeing needs of student cohorts. In addition to targeted educational programs, often additional team members such as leadership staff and health practitioners support the implementation of plans and monitor student engagement. Strategies are included below:

- 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
- all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQ+ 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 Education Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader supports our whole school implementation and development of self/social awareness and management of skills related to recognition and expressions of emotions, development of resilience and collaboration
- targeted consultation with speech and occupational therapy staff to support students who require further development in socio-sexual and social safety skills
- targeted consultation with speech and occupational therapy staff to support students who require further development in social interaction skills to build expressive communication
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.
- small group targeted sessions focusing on social and personal development are implemented across learning neighbourhoods.

### **Individual**

Wayi 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
- meeting with students and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the

- student engage with school
- developing an Individual Education 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 or ChildFirst
  - 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, including attending externally coordinated Care Team Meetings
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students
- running Case Conferences involving the family and other professionals connected to the student

#### **4. Identifying students in need of support**

Wayi School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing and Engagement team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Wayi 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
- students are referred to additional support via Compass.

Wayi School applies the Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) framework to identify students in need of support. The MTSS Framework utilises evidence informed practices to establish efficient and effective systems to support student engagement and wellbeing that are responsive to the neurodiverse needs of our students.

The MTSS Framework interlinks with Wayi School's SWPBS Framework, supporting staff to utilise high-impact, evidence-based pedagogical practices to ensure every student receives the appropriate level of support, instruction and adjustments to be successful. The MTSS framework centers on a strong foundation of universal Tier 1 practices which increase in intensity until the barriers to teaching and learning are addressed. The result is a continuum of resources, strategies and structures that directly address the academic, wellbeing and social needs across all cohorts.

## **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.

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**

Our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy details the behavioural expectations for students, staff, parents/carers and visitors. The matrix of expected behaviours in every area of the school explicitly identifies ways in which everyone is expected to conduct themselves. Students learn ways in which they can enact the school values through explicit teaching and related activities.

Behavioural expectations of all students, staff and families are embedded in our school statement of values and within our SWPBS Framework. At Wayi School all students are encouraged to follow the Expected Behaviours. When supporting our students to learn these expected behaviours, we have several strategies and teaching tools in place for our classroom staff to follow ensuring that these practices are embedded in their everyday learning. All staff refer to the Positive Behaviour Support Pyramid. This is in line within our MTSS Framework of staff supports.

If a student displays distressed or disengaged behaviour within our school community, Wayi School will institute a re-engagement staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines to support student, staff and families. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about their child's

behaviour and the support strategies implemented by teachers and other school staff.

Further behaviour support measures may be used as part of the re-engagement staged response for distressed and disengaged behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that all risk factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Distressed and disengaged behaviour measures at our school will be applied on a case-by-case scenario taking into consideration of the duration, intensity and frequency of the student's behaviour. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Re-engagement staged responses that may be applied include:

- referring to school expected behaviours and remind students by reinforcing positive behaviour expectations
- Teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate adjustments within the school environment
- implementing restorative practices embedded within classroom environment.

Collection of distressed and disengaged behaviour data to identify the function of behaviour including:

- monitoring and recording student's behaviour
- discussion within classroom team to identify possible reasons for targeted behaviour
- Leading Teachers, the Principal and other professionals as deemed appropriate to provide advice
- Care Team Meeting scheduled with parent/carer to discuss behaviour support. Parents are also informed of strategies used in behaviour support plan
- develop and implement appropriate support strategies such as altering learning program, developing a behaviour support plan, a behaviour response plan and re-engagement plan
- a relevant person has been identified to support the student (in most cases this will be their parent or carer) or another person as nominated by the parent or carer.

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, Wayi 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. Staff at Wayi School are trained in the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Supports framework and regularly discuss, devise and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to influence positive student behaviour. Disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class, are considered the 'last resort' for an in-school response and are implemented after consultation with the Student Wellbeing and Engagement team.

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.

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 Wayi 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**

Wayi 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, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with 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**

Wayi 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 Support Group meeting feedback
- student survey data

- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS.

Wayi 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.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- available publicly on our school's website
- included in staff induction processes
- included in transition and enrolment packs
- included as annual reference in school newsletter
- made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

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
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2026
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Consultation	Consultation with students, parents and staff in Term 2 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2028 – to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 2 years thereafter.