**STUDENT WELLBEING AND
ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

**Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Eltham North Primary School

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

1. our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
2. expectations for positive student behaviour
3. support available to students and families
4. our school’s policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Eltham North 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, 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**

Eltham North Primary School invites a community atmosphere and beautiful surrounds in a positive learning environment. At Eltham North we have proud academic tradition and maximise every learning opportunity to shape our students' future through high quality, values enriched teaching and learning.

As a Victorian Government Primary School, Eltham North has a clear vision and purpose. The school is renowned for fostering student excellence with the support and involvement of our learning community.

At Eltham North, the school community works together to ensure every child has a positive, happy and rewarding school experience. Parents and teachers are genuine partners in the learning process, ensuring students are encouraged to participate, to strive to achieve their best, to be considerate and supportive of others, and to value the pursuit of knowledge.

The school attracts and retains an experienced, caring and innovative staff who work to provide a range of high quality learning opportunities to stimulate and challenge the individual needs and talents of their students. This is done within a collaborative culture, creating a strong sense of community and team spirit.

At Eltham North, our challenge is to target key indicators which define what it is to be a truly successful learner, a learner who not only achieves well in national testing, but who is deemed successful within the context of his/her area of talent. To achieve this we focus on providing our students with access to a broad range of learning opportunities that respond to the diversity of their individual needs and abilities. We believe these opportunities will continue to evolve through the commitment of our dedicated staff.

We are confident our focus on individual needs and abilities will be achieved through maintaining strong partnerships with parents and the wider community. This, in turn, provides a comprehensive approach to challenging our students to achieve their best and build self-confidence in their personal abilities. This approach of building the foundations of academic and social capabilities of our students reflects our school's ethos:

1. **School values, philosophy and vision**

Eltham North Primary 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 respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

Our school’s vision is to empower students to reach their personal best, and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults. You can view this at: <http://www.elthamnorthps.vic.edu.au/vision-statement>

Our Statement of Values is available online at: <http://www.elthamnorthps.vic.edu.au/school-value>

**3.Wellbeing and engagement strategies**

 At Eltham North Primary School student engagement has three interrelated components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement.

Behavioural engagement refers to students’ participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of our school.

Emotional engagement encompasses students’ emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school and measures a students’ sense of belonging or connectedness to our school. Cognitive engagement relates to a students’ investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to providing safe, secure and high quality learning and development opportunities for every student in all Victorian schools. At Eltham North PS we believe students will reach their full educational potential when they are happy, healthy and safe, when there is a positive school culture that is fair and respectful and when they are engaged and supported in their learning.

The emotional and physical wellbeing of our students is pivotal to their success at school, as adolescents, and in their future lives. Physically and emotionally healthy students are happy, able to deal positively with life’s challenges, experience a sense of connectedness with the school and others, and are well placed to develop into well-balanced and successful young adults. Our school is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full educational potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked. It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher is a vital source of support and a determinant in the success of their students. The teachers at this school will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. This school recognises the need to be engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning profiles and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs. Our school strives to be a learning community where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are valued and respected. Our heterogeneous profile means that in any given class a range of student ability exists, in some cases spanning five years. Within this diversity, our school aims to challenge all students to become optimistic, resilient, creative and critical thinkers. We seek to promote our school values of cooperation, achievement, respect and empathy throughout the curriculum, in co-curricular activities, and in our daily operations.

Our teaching and learning philosophy is based around our 4Rs.

That is …..

• The teaching and learning is relevant to each student’s interests, lives and aspirations

• The teaching and learning is rigorous, and teachers will make a commitment to appropriately support, build and challenge every student

• Relationships are an essential component of effective learning and teaching

• Our practices are responsive to contemporary research and innovation.

• The teaching program/learning activities will acknowledge the individual needs of the students and their different learning styles in a school environment that recognises and respects cultural differences, individuality and diversity

• The curriculum will be learner - centred where the students are encouraged to be active, responsible and independent learners, self-confident and willing to take risks with their learning

• Teachers will endeavour to build positive relationships with their students by focusing on the students’ needs, by responding appropriately to student behaviour and by encouraging students to participate in a variety of class and extra-curricular activities, for example Choir, JSC Environmental Leadership Program, lunchtime activities, GateWay Challenge

• The school will support the personal, social and academic needs of the students, by providing agreed behavioural expectations in a safe and productive environment and developing activities that focus on behavioural issues, conflict resolution and building student self-esteem through the BSEM and RRRR.

• Teachers will endeavour to support students to achieve success as they move through the learning process by acknowledging differences, by providing, where appropriate, individual learning programs and by encouraging risk - taking in a climate of mutual respect and support.

The school’s Values Education Program, which is linked to the school curriculum, focuses on the agreed school values and provides rich educational learning experiences such as: - The Student Leadership program where students are encouraged to share knowledge and work effectively together - The Buddy Program which fosters positive relationships with others - Lunchtime Activities Program where students have leisure time choices - Student Awards which recognise effort and achievement ie House Captains, JSC, Enviro leaders

• Student work and achievements will be regularly showcased and publicly recognised and celebrated in the school Newsletter and at weekly whole-school and Level assemblies

• The school will implement and maintain programs such as: Power UP, BSEM, RRRR, Behaviour Management and Transition

• The school will provide forums and programs that support the wellbeing of students, parents and families and social skills groups

• The school at all times aims to provide a safe school environment by providing yard duty teachers to supervise the playgrounds and outdoor areas, a first aid officer and by ensuring that Occupational Health and Safety issues are addressed as soon as is practical

• The school will provide, when appropriate, support staff such as MWHC, SSS Guidance Officer and Speech Pathologist

• An active Junior School Council will form part of the school’s decision-making team and provide for the sharing of responsible decision making through student consultation processes

• Staff will be provided with professional development regarding student wellbeing, behaviour management and appropriate program development

• The school will provide channels of communication that promote shared responsibility between teachers/ teachers, Student / student and parents/teachers, aimed at ensuring the wellbeing of all students

**Eltham North Primary School Wellbeing Programs to support strategies**

**Berry Street Education Program**

The Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) provides strategies for teaching and learning that enables teachers to increase engagement of students with complex, unmet learning needs and to successfully improve *all* students’ self-regulation, relationships, wellbeing, growth and academic achievement. The BSEM pedagogical strategies incorporate trauma-informed teaching, positive education, and wellbeing practices. All staff have been fully trained in the BSEM model and implement wellbeing practices into the school day, including a whole class morning meeting to ensuring students are ‘ready to learn’. The key concepts of BSEM are regularly revisited and ensure teachers are implementing evidence-based strategies for engagement and support.

**Peaceful Kids Program**

Peaceful Kids’ is a Mindfulness and Positive Psychology based program to lessen anxiety and stress and increase resilience in children. The program has been created to fulfil a need in schools to offer all children a developmentally appropriate program that gives children the skills, practice and support to utilize coping strategies that lessen the symptoms of anxiety and stress.   The program also involves parental involvement and commitment to supporting the strategies at home.

**Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships Program**

The *Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships* Program aims to develop students’ social, emotional and positive relationship skills. Efforts to promote social and emotional skills and positive gender norms in children and young people has been shown to improve health related outcomes and subjective wellbeing. It also reduces antisocial behaviours including engagement in gender-related violence.

The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) learning materials cover eight topics of Social and Emotional Learning across all levels of primary school: Emotional Literacy; Personal Strengths; Positive Coping; Problem Solving; Stress Management; Help Seeking; Gender and Identity; and Positive Gender Relationships. The program content is taught on a weekly basis during our Whole School Wellbeing hour (Monday morning at 9:00am), but is referred to throughout the school day when dealing with issues related to student wellbeing.

**The Friends for Life Program**

The Friends for Life Program is a small group program that focuses on developing skills such as friendship skills; understanding ourselves, our strengths and others; resolving conflict; building confidence and resilience; teasing and bullying – why and how we cope; and assertiveness skills. The program is facilitated by an ACU student completing their Masters in Educational and Developmental psychology under supervision. The program operates for 10 sessions (one session per week over a school term). The program is available for students in different year levels, depending on identified cohort needs.

**Positive Psychology**

As part of our student wellbeing program, we are embracing the ideas and practices of Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology focuses on the strengths, virtues, beneficial conditions and processes that contribute to wellbeing and thriving. Positive education also works on the precept that the skills and mindsets that promote positive emotions, positive relationships and character strengths, also promote learning and academic success.Research suggests that there are two significant things that help us develop positive emotions: gratitude and performing acts of kindness. People who are grateful, who feel and express gratitude on a regular basis, tend to be happier and more resilient. Similarly, performing small acts of kindness for someone each day makes you feel good. When you feel good, you are better at helping and looking after other people, which in turns creates more positive emotion. Throughout the school there is a focus on developing the core components of a positive classroom: learning to become **mindful** by developing an awareness of one’s own feelings and those of others, helping children understand and express **gratitude** towards those who assist and support them, and demonstrating **empathy** towards others experiencing various challenges.

**Mindful Meditation**

In helping our children become more mindful, we have introduced mindful meditation sessions in classrooms. The Meditation Capsules Program has been implemented to introduce our students to the process of mindful meditation. Meditation Capsules supports students to understand the concept of being mindful - maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment. Mindfulness has been shown to increases positive emotions while reducing negative emotions and [stress](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Weinstein-MindfulnessStress.pdf); helps us [tune out distractions](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/research_digest/how_meditation_is_good_for_mind_and_body#how_mindfulness_helps_our_brains_focus) and improves our [memory](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20363650) and [attention skills](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22363278); fosters compassion and altruism; and [enhances relationships](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0005789404800285). There’s also evidence that teaching mindfulness in the classroom reduces behaviour problems and aggression among students, and improves their happiness levels and [ability to pay attention](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/mindful_kids_peaceful_schools). [Teachers](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/a_training_to_make_teachers_less_stressed) trained in mindfulness also show lower blood pressure, less negative emotion and symptoms of depression, and greater compassion and empathy. ‘Smiling Mind’ is an i-phone application that provides recorded meditation sessions and is also used extensively in classrooms.

**Power Up Program**

The Power Up Program is a hybrid model of the ‘M-Power Girls’ Program and the ‘Revved Up’ Program developed by Tandy Johnson, Assistant Principal. These programs were previously taught as gender-specific programs. However, it is evident that both genders benefit from support to develop social relationship skills (previously the focus of M-Power Girls), as well as anger management skills (previously the focus of Revved Up). This combined program consists of 8 sessions and is facilitated by Year 5 & 6 classroom teachers in Term 1-2.

**Social Relationships Program**

The Social Relationships Program is a small group program that focuses on developing skills such as friendship skills; understanding ourselves, our strengths and others; resolving conflict; building confidence and resilience; teasing and bullying – why and how we cope; and assertiveness skills.

**Transition Programs**

Eltham North Primary School runs transition programs for Kindergarten - Prep students and for Year 6 – Year 7 students.

**Kinder – Prep Transition Program**

The Kinder – Prep Transition Program aims to facilitate the transition from kindergarten to school as smoothly as possible. Various activities are held to achieve this.

Kinder Storytime sessions are held in Terms 2 and 3 where children are invited to attend a session at the , where one of the Prep teachers or Support staff read a story and prepare an activity for the children to complete. This gives the children an opportunity to meet some of the teachers and gain a sense of familiarity with the school. Parents stay for these sessions, too, so the children feel comfortable.

The Transition Program involves the children attending 3 sessions at the school. The children participate in a variety of fun activities designed to familiarise them with the Prep teachers, support staff and the Prep classrooms. Parents attend an information session with the principal during these times. An information evening for parents is also held where various school personnel discuss different aspects of the school and its programs. A comprehensive school handbook is provided to all families to acquaint them with the various school procedures and programs.

**Transition to Secondary School Program**

The Transition to Secondary School Program involves all Year 6 students learning about life at secondary school. The sessions include anxieties at starting in a new school, issues of concern for students, peer relationships, goals, assertiveness, problem solving, decisions and choices, and the organisation of secondary schools. Each year some ex-Eltham North students in Year 7 from various secondary colleges return to share their experiences of secondary school. The sessions are run weekly in Term 4. In December, all Year 6 students get to spend an ‘Orientation Day’ at their future secondary school.

**Lunchtime Activity Programs**

The Lunchtime Activity Programs were designed to provide children with a variety of activities to participate in during the school’s lunch hour. A variety of activities are planned and co-ordinated by a teacher. Some of the activities include: playing board games, card-making, drawing, recorder group, yoga, environmental activities, choir, sports, movies, Lego and school magazine. These activities are open to students in various year levels each week, so that all students have an opportunity to participate. The Library and Mindfulness Centre is also open at lunchtime every day. The children can read, draw or play a variety of board games in the two zones at lunchtimes.

Targeted

* we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy>
* students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Students with Disability](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
* wellbeing and health 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
* staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma ( All staff trained in BSEM-trauma informed practice model)

Individual

Eltham North Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These may include:

* building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
* meeting with student 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
* monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
* engaging with our regional Koorie Education Support Officers
* running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
	+ with a disability
	+ in Out of Home Care
	+ with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

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

Eltham North Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Eltham North Primary 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

**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 student code of Conduct can be viewed at*:*

<http://www.elthamnorthps.vic.edu.au/s/Welfare_Student_Code_2015.pdf>

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 and Training.

The Principal of Eltham North Primary 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**

The school will support families to engage in their child’s learning and build their capacity as active learners. It provides an environment that welcomes all parents/carers and is responsive to them as partners in learning. The school will ensure that the unique experiences and skills of our students’ families enrich the learning environment and the school community.

The school will create successful partnerships with parents/carers and families by:

* ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school’s Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
* conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
* providing volunteer opportunities to enable parents/carers and students to contribute
* involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
* involving families as participants in school decision-making
* coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school
* providing opportunities to enhance parenting knowledge and skills

**8.Evaluation**

Eltham North 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, including attendance and absence data
* SOCS

Eltham North Primary 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 [or insert other online parent/carer/student communication platform]

* Included in staff induction processes
* Included in transition and enrolment packs
* 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](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/guidance/1-suspension-process)
* [Expulsions - Decision](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/guidance/decision)

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

* [Attendance](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/policy)
* [Student Engagement](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-engagement/policy)
* [Child Safe Standards](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy)
* [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/policy)
* [Students with Disability](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy)
* [LGBTIQ Student Support](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy)
* [Behaviour - Students](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/policy)
* [Suspensions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy)
* [Expulsions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy)
* [Restraint and Seclusion](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

* [Child Safety Policy-](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/555c182de4b00adef8fc6cdf/t/62957eedfa406a0a04afaa80/1653964525810/Statement%2BCommitment%2Bto%2BChild%2BSafety.pdf)
* [Bullying Prevention Policy-](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/555c182de4b00adef8fc6cdf/t/62957cd6fcc32152098eafef/1653963991208/Bullying%2BPrevention%2BPolicy.pdf)
* [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/555c182de4b00adef8fc6cdf/t/629583e6e8329c2709db0393/1653965799160/Inclusion%2Band%2BDiversity%2Bpolicy.pdf)

## **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

| Policy last reviewed | March 2022 |
| --- | --- |
| Consultation | School council |
| Approved by | Principal  |
| Next scheduled review date | March 2024 |