



## NEERIM SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy



**Respect**

**Learning**

**Teamwork**

**Perseverance**

#### 1. Rationale

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

Neerim South Primary School has a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse**. We support and respect all students. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability, in line with the Child Safe Standards.

Neerim South Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

#### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

#### 3. CONTENTS

1. School Profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

#### 4. POLICY

##### 1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Neerim South Primary School is located in West Gippsland in the small rural town of Neerim South, approximately 120 kms east of Melbourne on the way to the Baw Baw National Park. The school was established in 1881 and has been on its current expansive, elevated site surrounded by a combination of residential, farming and sporting allotments since 1909. Our town has an active community, which is committed to improving the lives of its residents, particularly in the areas of sport and recreation. Neerim South and surrounds has been a strong beef and dairy farming district, with a timber industry component, but this is changing as the population of the area grows and more lifestyle size acreages and town subdivisions happen.

Our current school population is 139 students. While the majority of students still live in the immediate locality, we have an extensive bus system that caters for those from outlying areas and there are a growing number of families driving from other towns who are also choosing to enrol their children at Neerim South Primary School.

We cater for a diverse range of students from Foundation to Year 6 offering a seven-year sequential program in each of the Victorian Curriculum domains. We have a range of students with additional learning, cultural and social complexities which reinforces the school's strong reputation for being an inclusive educational facility and supportive of all students, but this also brings with it significant resource challenges. Our focus is to ensure that our curriculum provides for a range of learning styles in a bid to improve student engagement and develop a positive attitude to lifelong learning and the development of a community of learners.

There are 9.3 teaching staff (a principal, 6 x full time class teachers, 1 x Literacy specialist/intervention teacher and 3 x part time specialists) and 3.92 non-teaching staff (1.2 x Business Manager/Administration and 3 x Education Support staff and 0.4 EFT Chaplain) at Neerim South Primary School in 2019. A good balance between experience and youth, ongoing, contract and leadership positions has been maintained. All teaching staff are VIT registered and meet the requirements of employment within the Educational Department of Victoria. The staff members at Neerim South Primary School are friendly, passionate, caring, dedicated and approachable, always striving to build their skills to deliver quality programs while also taking the time to learn and maximise the unique abilities of each child. Neerim South Primary School currently has six classes, two junior and four senior.

Our curriculum offers a wide range of specialist programs in Visual Art, LOTE – Chinese Mandarin, Science and Technology, Physical Education and small group literacy intervention classes. Enrichment programs including swimming, basketball, dance, Life Education, camps and private music tuition not only support all areas of the curriculum but allows students to discover their individual passions, interests and engage with the world and cultures outside their immediate environment.

Neerim South Primary School prides itself on setting high expectations for students, providing the support scaffolding and resources to ensure every student has the opportunity to achieve their personal best – academically, socially and emotionally. A comprehensive curriculum, a vision for academic excellence and strong values assist in empowering our students to become self-motivated, successful and active global citizens. Neerim South Primary School encourages our students to value Respect, Learning, Teamwork and Perseverance to ensure that we have active and engaged learners.

Student voice is valued and encouraged across the school with our student leaders taking on vital roles throughout the school on a daily and weekly basis, including the running of student led assemblies and Junior School Council.

Our school has a combination of modern and historic facilities and provides well-maintained buildings including the Orana Community Centre, Stadium and the 1909 Cowan Hamano Building. The 3-6 BER Learning Unit has 4 open learning classrooms, a library, outdoor learning areas, office and storage spaces while the F-1 Learning unit has 3 classrooms, an Art room and a small reading intervention room. The school has attractive and expansive grounds with large open spaces and ample undercover areas. Our students have access to a variety of facilities including an Outside School Hours Care centre, stadium, swimming pool, tennis and netball courts, skate park and full-sized sports oval.

We strongly value and actively encourage community links and involvement at all levels within the school. There is an active Parents and Friends Association which welcomes all families. Support is also provided for families by the provision of an Outside School Hours Care program, which includes before school, after school and vacation care programs. Neerim South Primary School parents continue to rate our school highly.

In 2019 Neerim South Primary School partnered with Neerim District Secondary College, Neerim District Rural Primary, Noojee Primary, Jindivick Primary, Labertouche Primary, Lardner and District Primary and Mary Beck Pre-School in Neerim South to form the Tarago Education Community (TEC). The aim of this partnership is to develop a program of co-operation between the government schools in our rural district to improve the 0-18 year education experience for residents of the Tarago area. As a result of this joint venture we now share two Chinese Mandarin teachers and a Chinese language assistant across the TEC and we take part in transition days with our local Pre-School and Secondary College. Our school also actively participates in the West Gippsland School Network, enjoying the support of Student Support Service Officers, collegiate networks, network initiatives and coaching.

Neerim South Primary School is committed to maximising the learning potential and educational opportunities for all students by providing professional, highly skilled and dedicated staff, support services and quality programs and encouraging co-operation and involvement of parents and the wider community. Along with modern and excellent facilities, continual innovation and sound teaching programs across the school, Neerim South Primary School is certainly placing itself well for continued educational success and growth in enrolments.

## **2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION**

Neerim South 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, Learning, Teamwork, and Perseverance at every opportunity.

Our school's vision is to provide a safe, inclusive and engaging learning environment that enables all students to achieve their full potential.

Our mission is to offer an education that strives for academic excellence and provide an inclusive, balanced learning program, rich in experiences. The school will provide opportunities for each student to become confident and responsible global citizen, meeting challenges and embracing opportunities of our changing world.

The values of Respect, Learning, Teamwork and Perseverance are seen as being central to the life of our school and how all members of the school community should conduct themselves. As a school we attempt to apply these in our everyday dealings with each other and in the development of our programs and policies.

Our Statement of Values is available online on our website

## **3. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Neerim South Primary School endeavours to promote a healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students and to raise awareness of what makes students resilient; to develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and increase coping skills. Our school is a positive environment in which all teachers assume responsibility for student wellbeing, endeavouring to provide successful experiences for all children; where they feel safe and secure in a supportive environment and where a sense of belonging and wellbeing are strengthened.

Neerim South Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. 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 (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

### **Whole School**

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- 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
- 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 teachers at Neerim South Primary School use a gradual release of responsibility as an 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 Neerim South Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching

- our school's Statement of Values 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
- our students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council and other forums including class group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Chaplain, and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Circle Time
  - Life Education
  - Buddy program
  - Student leadership positions and roles of responsibility
  - opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, lunchtime clubs)

### **Targeted**

- Neerim South Primary School has five Professional Learning Community (PLC) Leaders, a Student Welfare Officer, a Respectful Relationships and Be You action team leaders. These leaders are responsible for leading the staff to monitor the health and wellbeing and the learning progress of all our students
- All Koorie students have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which contains explicit goals and tracks their learning progress throughout the year through termly Student Support Group Meetings and connection with the Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Students with severe or challenging behaviours are supported through the development of Positive Behaviour Management Plans and regular Care Team Meetings with parents, staff and allied health professionals.
- 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

### **Individual**

Neerim South Primary 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 student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning 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
- The Chaplain
- Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First

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
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring

#### **4. IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT**

Neerim South 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 help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Neerim South 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
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

#### **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, 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.

#### **6. STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Example School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Neerim South Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

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.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
  
- Withdrawal of invitation to attend extracurricular activities outside the school gates
- Referral to the PLC Leader or Principal
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

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

## 7. ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Neerim South Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

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 or by contacting the school office
- 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 homework and other 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

Neerim South Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- Student survey data
- Incidents data
- School reports
- Parent survey
- Case management
- CASES21
- SOCS
- Child Safe Standards

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Bullying Prevention

#### **9. Related Policies**

- Duty of Care Policy
- Child Safe Standards Policies
- Student Welfare Policy

#### **10. Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the School Strategic Plan, which is a five- year cycle.

#### **11. Revision History**

Date	Description	Author
11/08/2015	Ratified by School Council	Environment SC
28/06/2016	Add Revision History	Environment SC
19/09/2019	Revise and update using new DET template	Principal
21/10/2019	Approved and Endorsed by School Council	Environment SC