

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact YarraMe 9478 8895

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.

YarraMe 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.

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POLICY

SCHOOL PROFILE

YarraMe School is a Victorian State Government Department of Education and Training (DET) specialist school that exclusively addresses the educational needs of 'at-risk students' with significant social and emotional challenges.

The students we support are in a state of crisis, exhibiting a combination of educational, behavioural, social and emotional problems.

We engage students in a positive, evidence based social and emotional learning curriculum that is both needs based and caring.

YarraMe School provides students with personalised supports that are tailored to maximise positive student engagement in learning and social skill development.

YarraMe School engages students in learning through personalised, flexible and strength-based programs within a safe, supportive and inclusive framework.

SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Our Vision, Mission and Values:

We are deeply passionate about being champions for positive and respectful relationship, inclusive learning and building relationships

A Centre of Expertise focused on delivering personalised, evidence-based education models with partnerships that support life long learning

Compassion, Collaboration, Capacity

The students referred to YarraMe School come from a range of backgrounds. Some of these include Trauma, Autism, Speech and Language Difficulties, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Attachment Disorder, Anxiety and Learning Difficulties. Students with these diagnoses often present with associated behaviours such as verbal and physical aggression, defiance, withdrawal, self-injury, helplessness and difficulties in forming and maintaining friendships.

YarraMe School delivers a Social and Emotional (SEL) 'learning intensive' helping students with severe and persistent social/emotional, learning and behavioral needs. The learning intensive is a process. The process is driven by data, characterised by increased intensity and personalisation, and considers the academic and behavioral needs of the student. This learning intensive intervention is known as a 'Tier 3 intervention,' and is embedded within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.

YarraMe School uses therapeutic and crisis prevention strategies to understand and respond to student behaviour, such as functional behaviour and safety plans. These 'Behaviour Support Plans' are developed over time and inform strategies and actions for success.

The School Wide Positive Support (SWPBS) framework is implemented across our intake and outreach programs. SWPBS builds a continuum of support for staff and students, which is supported by a three-tiered model. At each tier there is an emphasis on outcomes in the form of behaviour expectations for student and staff behaviour, and data to guide decision-making on the best practices needed to support student learning and social behaviour.

Our school empowers students by establishing relationships built on trust and an empathic understanding of the needs of the individual within a safe and consistent environment.

OUR TEAM AROUND THE LEARNER APPROACH

Most of the students who attend our school have experienced severe disruption in their educational progress. Some have never been able to manage formal schooling and most will have an Individual Education Plan. Our therapeutic approach enables all students to experience success, often for the first time with significant student learning outcomes.

Therapeutic education addresses emotional and cognitive development together, using a wraparound process to best meet the needs of each student. YarraMe School staff think together at all times about the particular emotional and cognitive needs of each student using the 'iceberg analogy' to assist in understanding the antecedents of student behaviour.

We work in partnership with referring schools, families and caregivers to develop a strengths-based model to improve learning engagement. YarraMe School specialist clinical psychologist and speech pathologist consult to us to help diagnose and address specific behavioural and learning difficulties.

We provide expert support in our transition programs with referring schools, and continue working closely with the school to monitor student engagement.

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 referred to us

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 their key teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours are supported most effectively through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices.

At Yarra Me School we:

- Establish fair, democratic processes in classrooms and school environment.
- Ensure student participation in the development of classroom and whole-school expectations.
- Provide personalised learning programs.
- Consistently acknowledge all students.
- Empower students by creating opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making.
- Provide physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning.
- Implement school-wide positive and educative behaviour support strategies.

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, are responded to through a staged response

with a focus on prevention and early intervention, including:

- Understanding the student.
- Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers.
- Providing consistent school and classroom environments.
- Scaffolding the student's learning program.

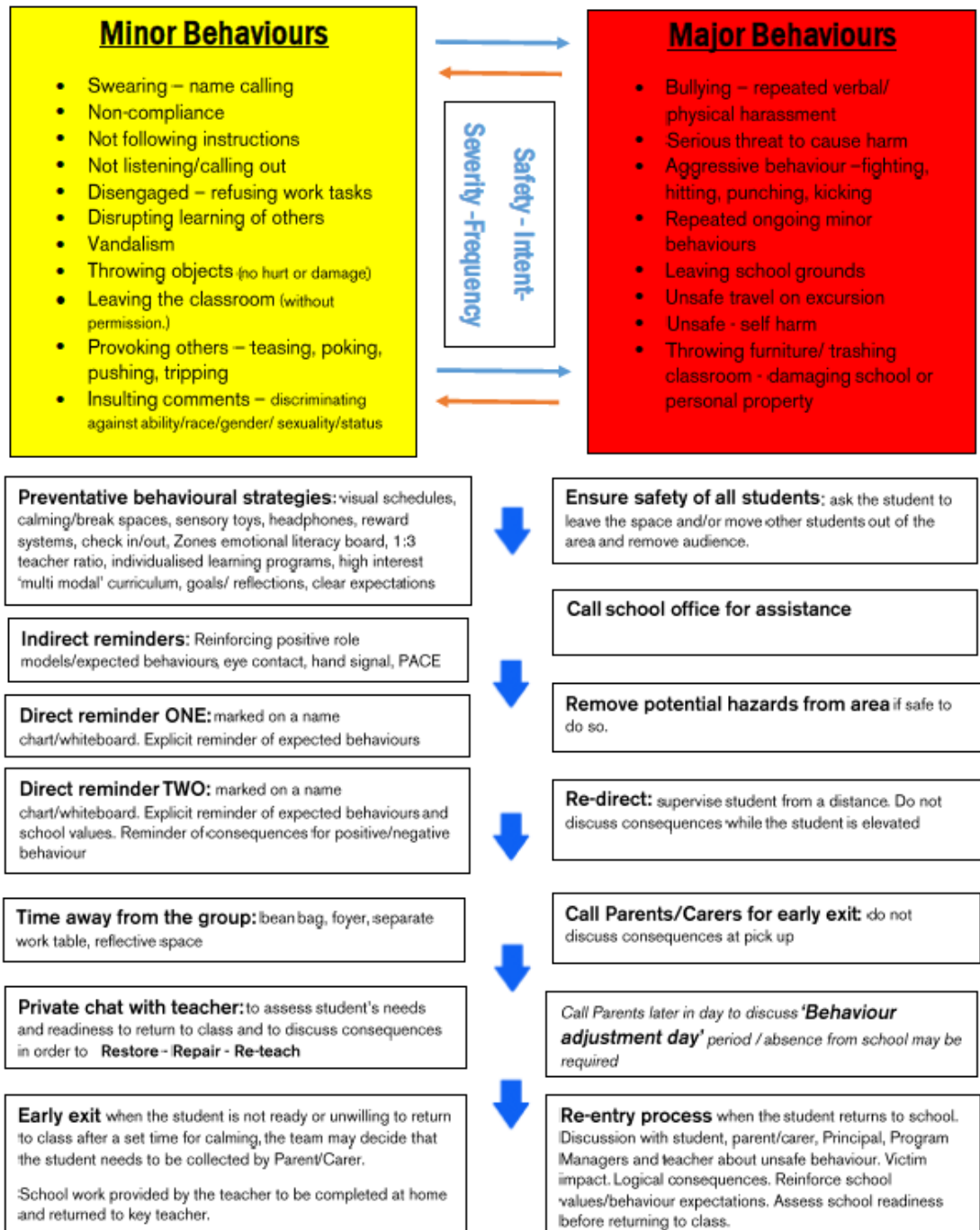
Broader support strategies include:

- Involving and supporting the parents/carers.
- Convening student support group meetings.
- Developing personalised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans.
- Involving community support agencies

A student should only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been

implemented without success or where an immediate 'reflective' period is the only course of action in response to the student's behaviour i.e. when the behaviour is considered 'Major' as per SWPBS Behaviour Framework.

Yarra Me Behaviour Response Framework



Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Code of Conduct.

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, YarraMe 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 before considering disciplinary measures such as withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

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
- referral to the Program Manager
- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- Behaviour Adjustment Day
- Cessation of the YarraMe School component of the student's shared enrolment with the mainstream school; YarraMe School does not suspend or expel students

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 YarraMe 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

ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

YarraMe 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 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 Personalised Learning plans for students.

EVALUATION

YarraMe 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

YarraMe 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
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Included in enrolment packs
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training 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](#)
- [LGBTIQ 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This policy is scheduled for evaluation and review every three – four years.

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| Policy last reviewed | 24/5/22 |
| Consultation | Staff and School Council |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | 24/5/25 |