

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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.

Baringa 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.

SCOPE

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

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POLICY

1. School profile

Baringa School provides special education to students aged 5-18 diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability. Student enrolment in 2020 was 178.8 full time equivalent. The student population draws from a wide geographical area predominantly within the Latrobe Valley, including Moe, Morwell,

Traralgon and Churchill. We also have students from Rawson, Trafalgar and Willow Grove in the Baw Baw Shire. The large majority of our student cohort are transported to school by bus.

Baringa School students come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Baringa school provides a safe, supportive learning environment, through individualised learning programs aimed to maximise the potential of all students. Our aim is to develop independent and motivated students who take responsibility for their learning by providing consistent, targeted and differentiated instruction and learning opportunities.

In order to provide a learning program that is stimulating and relevant to the needs of our students, the school operates within four distinct units/teams; Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary and the Senior Learning Centre (SLC). Teachers, Education Support Staff, two Speech Pathologist and a Speech Assistant, a Mental Health Practitioner, Chaplain and a consultative Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist support small classes. Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) focus on all areas of the Victorian Curriculum with a particular emphasis on literacy, numeracy, social skills, science and health and PE. Our Primary teams have additional focuses in the area of personal safety while our Secondary and SLC teams provide programs involving community access, vocational training, work experience and life skills.

Experienced and dedicated staff teach students the skills and knowledge they need to become valued and contributing members in their local communities.

School values, philosophy and vision

Baringa Schools Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community.

Baringa School believes that every child, irrespective of their disability, can and will learn in an environment of dignity and respect. It is the role of the school and its community to build on a child's strengths and talents to ensure that each child reaches their full potential. The school aims to develop students who are able to contribute to, and participate in all aspects of community life in a positive way. Students will develop a wide range of skills to enable them to live enviable lives as independently as possible.

The schools mission is to create resilient and independent life long learners. To facilitate the achievement of all learners, we provide:

- A quality inclusive learning environment that is responsive to student voice and agency
- Differentiated, in-depth and individualised learning plans, aligned to the Victorian Curriculum
- Highly effective teaching, focussed on improving student outcomes.
- Enriching, engaging resources that support student's physical, social and emotional development
- Strong community partnerships to assist students in their engagement in work and future pathways
- Opportunities for parents to participate in learning and decision-making partnerships
- Networks that promote and support student achievement, wellbeing and engagement

We believe that effective learning occurs when outstanding and innovative teachers provide a variety of tasks that actively engage students who are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. The expectation is that students will be successful and enthusiastic learners capable of building positive relationships.

Baringa School is inclusive, valuing the diversity of community members. All members share responsibility for the development of an inspired, educational community of independent citizens. There are connections including service to and support from the wider community.

Baringa School Community values Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be a Learner are reinforced throughout the school and promoted with parents and the wider school community.

2. Engagement strategies

Baringa 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:

Universal

- 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including VET programs, workplace programs such as Hopeworks and the Advance program to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Baringa School use a Gradual Release 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 Baringa 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, newsletters, school Facebook page and end of year school concert.

- 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 school captains program and other forums including classroom-based feedback and Student Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, wellbeing coordinator and additional wellbeing staff including the Welfare Officer and Chaplain and Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through Mentoring and Buddy programs.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Student Welfare Officer, School Chaplain, Mental Health Practitioner (if older than 12), Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Safe Schools
 - Zones of Regulation
- we develop programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, drama club, recess and lunchtime activities)

Targeted

- we have a designated wellbeing team with a number of staff in key roles including the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator and Welfare Officer whose primary roles are to monitor the health and wellbeing of students across the school and act as a point of contact for student who may need additional support.
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- 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
- speech staff develop targeted social skills programs utilising the Zones of Regulations Program. They develop social stories and other visual resources to support student engagement.

Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Education Plans](#)

- [Behaviour Contracts - Students](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)
- [Safety Plans](#)
- [PBIS Shop](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

Baringa 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 (biannual SSG meetings in terms 1 and 3).
- 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
 - Mental Health Practitioner
 - 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 GOTCHYA programs

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 including:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

3. Identifying students in need of support

Baringa 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. Baringa 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 (School Profiles)
- 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
- Sentral incident data
- ISOC reports
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers or staff

4. 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.

5. Student behavioural expectations and management

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 Baringa Schools Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Baringa School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion

Guidelines and Behaviour policy. 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 detention, 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
- placed on a behaviour expectations contract
- 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 student Wellbeing Co-ordinator/room
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

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 Baringa School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

6. Engaging with families

Baringa 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.

- involving families in other curriculum-related activities (eg. School sports days)
- 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.

7. Evaluation

Baringa 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 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

Baringa 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 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

- [CHILD SAFE POLICY](#)
- [CODE OF CONDUCT](#)
- [CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS POLICY](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed 17/08/2021 Approved by	Terri Clark and School Council President Frank Cullens
Next scheduled review date	July 2023