



Strathmore
PRIMARY SCHOOL No.4612

Strive to Achieve

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING POLICY

SCHOOL PROFILE STATEMENT

Strathmore Primary School is located in a suburban street to the north-west of Melbourne and has a proud history and a reputation for providing a quality education. The school is located in the South Western Victoria Region and the school is a member of the Moonee Valley network of schools. The school has a range of buildings with active and passive outdoor spaces. School facilities include an administration block and staffroom, twenty-two classrooms, well-equipped specialist areas, a multi-purpose hall and a library. All spaces are heated and air-conditioned. The school has benefited from the Building the Education Revolution Program in the form of a library and six open learning spaces. The grounds are well established with attractive native gardens that will be further enhanced by the new building works expected to start soon. There is an extensive range of play areas for students including three adventure playgrounds, all covered with shade cloth. Other areas include a large oval, basketball and netball courts, bat tennis courts, sandpits, passive play areas and cricket nets. The socio-economic profile of the school is high and the proportion of students with English as a second language is mid/high compared to the state. The enrolment is currently 497.6 students. The school attracts students from both our local community and the wider community as a result of our reputation as being a high-performing school. Strathmore Primary School aims to fully develop each young person academically, socially, emotionally and physically so they are well-adjusted students who perform to the very best of their ability in all areas. We believe this can be best achieved in a happy, caring, safe and stimulating environment with the mutual commitment, support and cooperation of teachers, parents, students and the wider school community. A culture of collegiality and professionalism is developing at Strathmore Primary. Professional Learning Teams have been established at all levels with recent changes strengthening the teaching and learning programs. Staff are further developing in the use of evidence and data to inform planning for student learning. Teachers have raised expectations of student learning and continue to target the students who require additional learning support and extension. Through acquisition of additional and latest ICT equipment and training we are well equipped to embrace learning through high quality teaching and tools for students to reach their potential. The school is establishing School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) as a means to improve consistency of behaviour management and acknowledgement across the school. The school has 27.2 equivalent full time staff, including

a Principal and Assistant Principal, a Leading Teacher and 6.3 equivalent full time non-teaching staff. Specialist programs include Art, Physical Education, Italian and Music.

WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION STATEMENT

Strathmore Primary School believes that students are better prepared for learning when they are happy, safe and healthy. This simple philosophy implies that the emotional and physical well-being of students is fundamental to their effective learning. Emotionally and physically 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. Therefore, Strathmore Primary School is committed to parents, teachers and students working in partnership to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Strathmore Primary School believes that positive and responsible student behaviour is essential to the smooth running of the school, to the achievement of optimal learning opportunities and to the creation of a safe, supportive and cooperative environment within the classroom and in the school yard. The school is therefore committed to the achievement of the following aims to:

- provide a school environment which recognises, values and builds student wellbeing
- develop students who are emotionally and physically healthy
- develop students' strategies to reduce their vulnerabilities and increase their resilience
- develop students' positive social behaviours and problem solving skills
- prepare staff to be confident, skilled and proactive in the management of student welfare issues
- build a school environment based on positive behaviour, responsibility, cooperation and respect for the rights, feelings and property of one another
- establish clear expectations for student behaviour and well understood, logical consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- manage inappropriate behaviour in a positive, proactive, constructive and equitable manner.

Strathmore Primary School specifically aims ***to ensure students are engaged and confident learners who feel safe and connected to school, thus promoting student attitudes and behaviours that support academic excellence.***

To promote student engagement, student wellbeing, student attendance and positive behaviours, Strathmore Primary School has embedded in its practices a range of primary prevention and early intervention programs.

The Values Education incorporates the Department of Education and Training's "Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships" resource in conjunction with the school-developed Positive Behaviour Support framework and Key School Values. Each week, the Values Education program is promoted at the whole school assembly and integrated into classroom and specialist teachers' programs.

A range of successful student welfare programs are embedded in the school's practices. Prep and Year 5 Buddies and Year 6 Leadership are conducted each year, focussing on building

and maintaining friendship and leadership skills. All Prep students are matched with a Year 5/6 Buddy and strong relationships are forged through regular contact during class time and in the yard. The school's philosophy on student leadership embraces a commitment that each Year 5/6 student will assume a significant leadership role in the school. Senior leadership opportunities include School and House Captaincy, Environmental Leaders and Junior School Council representation. At a whole school level, student engagement and wellbeing is further sustained by retaining the range of programs recognised as long standing traditions to which the students eagerly look forward. Notable of these each year are such programs as Athletics, Swimming and Cross-Country Carnivals, Camps, 1/2 sleepover, School Fete, Movie Night, Science and Technology Fair, Arts Festival, School Carols and of course the Strathmore 5000 Billy Cart Race.

All teachers are committed to providing stimulating, challenging and engaging activities for their students. Staff has identified as an area for improvement students' willingness to take risks and acknowledges that this aspect of learning confidence needs to be fostered from Prep. Similarly, staff recognises the need to continually explore and extend teaching strategies and programs that will motivate and challenge students and take maximum account of their talents, interests and learning styles.

Student safety is a high priority of the school and is duly well resourced. A First Aid Coordinator manages first aid supplies, staff training and procedures. Approximately one quarter of the staff maintain Level 2 first aid training, including CPR training and a core group of staff is rostered to manage all first aid incidents at recesses. At the beginning of each year, all staff members are trained in the treatment and care of the school's medically at-risk students. As an Asthma Friendly School, asthma training is regularly provided to staff. Additionally, with a significant number of students at risk of anaphylaxis, all staff members are also annually trained in the use of epipens. To maximise student safety and healthy relationships in the playground, a yard duty roster of staff is developed and stringently adhered to each year. This roster ensures coverage of the whole yard enabling students to readily seek teacher assistance when needed. To further guarantee student safety, adventure playground equipment is purpose-designed, age-appropriate and covered by shade structures.

One of the school's greatest strengths over many years is the manner in which the school's behaviour management processes prevent and respond to incidents of inappropriate behaviour in the yard and in the classroom. The school is committed to maintaining accurate and detailed documentation of all incidents. In the event of inappropriate behaviour, staff follows clear procedures and applies logical consequences. The weekly and term summaries of yard incidents enable the Student Welfare Coordinator to respond to patterns of individual and general student misbehaviour. A similar register of classroom incidents is also maintained, enabling the Student Welfare Coordinator to assist teachers to implement a range of behaviour management strategies within their classrooms.

The school has in place a range of successful strategies to promote student attendance and punctuality. Parent and student education programs stress to parents and students the impact of absence and/or late arrival on the student, his/her class teacher and his/her fellow classmates. This information is transmitted to parents and students at every opportunity, via such avenues as the school newsletter, school assemblies, parent information evenings and Prep parent orientation sessions. This information is also included in all school handbooks.

The school uses a late pass system and an agreed definition for "late" and teachers record in class rolls, their students' late arrivals. Class teachers assume responsibility for monitoring and responding to students' absence and late arrivals. This is done by teachers either contacting, by phone or in person, parents of children whose attendance is of concern or requesting that the Assistant Principal makes contact in the case of more persistent lateness. By providing summary data to teachers at the end of each term, teachers are more aware of the attendance patterns of their students and are proactive in procuring explanations from parents for their children's absences.

A range of strategies is also implemented to positively reinforce attendance and punctuality, these strategies peaking during designated attendance weeks/months. Classes are encouraged to graph and present class attendance data. Various awards and certificates are regularly presented to individual students and classes. Additionally, recognition is given to improved student attendance and/or punctuality with similar certificates awarded and parents contacted and thanked.

Last but by no means least, student engagement and wellbeing are enhanced by the influence of parents and the home environment on students. Parent expectations and support of their children generally remain high. Most parents maintain close communication with the school, enabling the school to be aware of and respond to their children's social and emotional needs. Moreover, because most students begin at the school in Prep and together move through each year level, students forge close friendships with, and are ensured ongoing support from, their peers and their peers' families.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Strathmore Primary School believes that every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive, that is free from all forms of harassment and discrimination and provides equal opportunity for all. The school acknowledges its responsibility to value and encourage diversity and ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. This commitment is reinforced each Monday morning at assembly when students, staff and parents unite in reciting the School Community Promise:

'We are proud members of the Strathmore Primary School Community.'

We are proud to call Australia our home.

Together we will strive to achieve our best and honour our school values.

Together we will make everyone feel welcome, safe and respected'.

The school's Student Code of Conduct provides a simple summary of the rights and responsibilities of its students.

RIGHT

Something to which you are entitled and which should not be taken from you.

RESPONSIBILITY

Something you should do without being asked to preserve the rights of yourself or others.

Rights

- You have the right to work and play without interference
- You have the right to have others care about you
- You have the right to be safe at school
- You have the right to be respected as an individual
- You have the right to be treated with fairness and kindness

Responsibilities

- You are responsible for your work and actions
- You have a responsibility to help make our school a happy place where we care about other people
- You have a responsibility to care about our school, its equipment and the belongings of others
- You have a responsibility to follow school rules
- You have a responsibility to make our school a safe place
- You have a responsibility to put things right if you break a rule
- In more explicitly developing a set of rights and responsibilities as they pertain specifically to students, staff and parents/carers, the school has taken account of its legal responsibilities under the following relevant legislations:
 - *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*
 - *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
 - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
 - *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*

Strathmore Primary School is committed to ensuring, for its students a bullying-free and harassment-free environment. The school has an Anti Bullying and Harassments Policy specifically for this purpose (Refer to Appendix).

This policy addresses:

Harassment

Any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or

offensive to a person.

Bullying

Repeated physical or psychological oppression of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Cyberbullying

A form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings).

EACH STUDENT HAS A RIGHT TO:	EACH STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO:
<p>School Culture</p> <p><i>Attend a school with a friendly, safe and happy environment</i></p> <p><i>Work in a secure environment, without intimidation, bullying or harassment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact and contribute in a positive way with others • Demonstrate the school values of Sense of Community and Belonging, Respect, Responsibility, Tolerance, Perseverance, Resilience and Integrity • Report inappropriate treatment of others, including bullying • Follow the school uniform policy
<p>Student Learning</p> <p><i>Fully participate in educational programs</i></p> <p><i>Be provided with interesting and varied learning experiences</i></p> <p><i>Be supported with additional support and student services as required</i></p> <p><i>Have successes acknowledged in various ways</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in all educational opportunities in a responsible manner • Actively involve themselves in learning whilst continually trying to achieve their best • Take increasing responsibility for their own learning • Follow set programs of support • Recognise and understand their personal strengths and weaknesses and focus on what needs improving • Respect the rights of others to learn and to teach
<p>Attendance</p> <p><i>Access a range of ongoing learning experiences</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend school regularly if well • Follow the set processes for late arrival or absenteeism (collecting a late pass, handing a note to the class teacher) • Find out about missed learning and, if required, complete it

<p>Communication</p> <p>Be informed about current and future happenings around the school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come prepared for events and activities • Meet given deadlines
<p>Safety</p> <p>Be provided with the required first aid treatment.</p> <p>Play in a school yard in which equipment or people don't hurt you</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play and work in ways that do not risk the safety of themselves or others • Play within designated play areas • Report injuries to school staff • Assist other students who are injured or upset • Report any faulty equipment to school staff • Report any "non- badged" visitors to the office
<p>Community Partnerships</p> <p>Interact with community members who can assist students with their learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome community members into the school • Actively listen to what community members have to share and ask appropriate questions • Present as good role models for the school, asking questions to extend learning • Thank visitors for their attendance and contribution • Think about the new information learnt and use what is important for their future development
<p>(Cyber Bullying)</p> <p>Use a range of information communication technologies</p> <p>Access internet sites that have been appropriately filtered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate appropriate use of technology in the learning process • Sign and adhere to the Strathmore Primary School Internet and Computer Usage policy and procedures • Only access sites approved by school staff • Alert teachers to inappropriate sites/information • Refrain from informing others about inappropriate websites
<p>PARENTS HAVE A RIGHT TO:</p>	<p>PARENTS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO:</p>
<p>School Culture</p> <p>Expect their child to attend a school that is safe and friendly and one which operates within a welcoming environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model positive behaviours in line with the school community's agreed values • Support the school to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment • Approach the school with any concerns • Follow school procedures

<p>Student Learning</p> <p>Expect individualised programs based on student needs to be delivered by teaching staff</p> <p>Expect staff to be up to date with research and professional learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support their children's engagement in the school environment and wider school activities • Encourage and support their children in their learning and participation • Attend relevant meetings in order to be informed of curriculum and related activities • Support their children in the completion of homework
<p>Attendance</p> <p>Expect the school to be open for learning at all expected times</p> <p>Be informed of their children's unexplained absences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their children attend school if well • Provide explanations for their children's absences • Promote learning as valuable
<p>Communication</p> <p>Be informed of student learning progress</p> <p>Be informed of upcoming events and activities</p> <p>Be contacted with positive feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate constructively with the school staff • Read the school newsletter and notices sent home • Access the school website after hours to clarify events/access permission forms • Attend parent/teacher conferences
<p>Safety</p> <p>Expect their child will attend a school that provides a safe learning environment both within the classroom and in the schoolyard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report any safety concerns to the office or teaching staff • Encourage their children to play safely • Adhere to speed and parking restrictions • Reinforce use of designated play areas • Use correct gates when entering/leaving the school
<p>Community Partnerships</p> <p>Expect the school to invite community members into the learning environment where appropriate</p> <p>Encourage students to participate in community events and activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote community/school relationships • Support the school according to family circumstance eg: assisting in classrooms, attending working bees or family nights, parent forums, school council
<p>Cyber Bullying</p> <p>Expect teachers to monitor and supervise students using ICT</p> <p>Expect the school to provide security filtering on all school computers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and maintain safe ICT usage in the home • Report any concerns to the school promptly

<p>EACH STAFF MEMBER (PRINCIPAL, TEACHER AND EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF) HAS A RIGHT TO:</p>	<p>EACH STAFF MEMBER (PRINCIPAL, TEACHER AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF) HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO:</p>
<p>School Culture <i>Work in a positive and safe school environment</i> <i>Receive support and recognition from peers and leaders</i> <i>Feel valued as a person and a professional</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to and maintain a positive work environment • Provide positive support to others, recognising their achievements • Treat others with respect
<p>Student Learning <i>Access comprehensive curriculum documentation, based on VELs expectations, and adapt its delivery based on student learning needs</i> <i>Access appropriate learning spaces</i> <i>Access available resources (human and material) to further support student learning</i> <i>Teach with minimal disruption</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain a safe, supportive and challenging learning environment • Know their students • Know how they learn and use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning • Assist students to develop their talents, pursue their interests and achieve their potential • Have a comprehensive knowledge of Victorian Curriculum appropriate to current teaching level/s • Collect ongoing student data and forward it to designated personnel to be entered onto the appropriate tracking systems • Plan engaging, differentiated and inclusive teaching experiences based on student data and student needs • Support students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning • Organise classrooms/furniture/layout to best support student learning groupings • Maintain appropriate room temperature and ventilation • Access appropriate student support services as needed • Implement student management processes in accordance with the school's student management processes
<p>Attendance <i>Expect students to be at school regularly, arriving prior to the start of the school day</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor student punctuality and attendance and respond to concerns through parent contact • Inform leadership of consistent attendance or punctuality concerns • Encourage and celebrate consistent attendance and punctuality
<p>Communication <i>Participate in a positive home/school communication</i> <i>Have confidentiality maintained</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate and further develop parent/school partnerships • Initiate contact for positive reasons • Avoid involvement in inappropriate discussions • Read emails and newsletters, attend meetings, demonstrate active listening • Set personal goals, collect evidence, attend meetings, discuss progress • Be open to the ideas of others

<p><i>Be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student</i></p> <p><i>Be informed of school related events</i></p> <p><i>Be involved in a recognition and appraisal process that involves receiving feedback from peers and leadership</i></p> <p><i>Present views and ideas related to school improvement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate all concerns pertaining to student safety and student welfare to leadership
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SHARED EXPECTATIONS

Effective schools share high expectations for the whole school community. These expectations are negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, are clear and concise, focus on prevention and early intervention, are supported by relevant procedures and are linked to actions and consequences.

The Strathmore Primary School community has a shared expectation that:

- The school will provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel they are part of the school and can engage effectively in their learning and experience success.
- The school will use inclusive teaching practices that ensure accessible educational provision for all students.
- The school will provide appropriate student support and services as needed.
- The school will foster partnerships between students, staff and parents that engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success.
- The school will address and celebrate diversity.
- Students will attend school on time every day.
- Students, staff and parents will act in accordance with their responsibilities
- Students, staff and parents will act in accordance with the school's values as detailed within the Values Education program and Positive Behaviour Support frameworks

The school aims to address and celebrate diversity by:

- maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce who are better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community
- attracting highly skilled and diverse staff making the school a preferred employer
- increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce
- enhancing the capacity for effective decision-making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems
- selecting texts that are socially and culturally inclusive

- recognising and celebrating a range of cultures within the school
- recognising similarities rather than differences between members of the school community
- welcoming and catering for Students with Disabilities.

SCHOOL ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Students will be helped to understand that for every action there are consequences, that these consequences are a direct result of students' behaviour and that these consequences can be positive or negative, depending on the nature of the students' behaviour. The school will endeavour to ensure that consequences are fair, predictable, highly likely to happen and logically related to behaviours. Logical consequences may be as simple as sincerely apologising to an offended friend, rendering assistance to an injured student, replacing damaged goods or cleaning up after littering.

Strathmore Primary School is committed to recognising and promoting students' positive behaviours and has a whole-school positive behavior acknowledgement system embedded as part of the school-wide Positive Behaviour Support framework.

The school has committed to the use of **Restorative Practices** with students.

Restorative Practices:

- are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness
- promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy
- involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution
- promote relationship management rather than behaviour management
- separate the deed from the doer
- are systematic, not situational
- are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied .

A major component of the school's Restorative Practices is the expectation that students will discuss and/or write about their behaviour in a reflective manner, focussing on how people have been affected and how they can make things better. Students may suggest verbal or written apologies, replacement of damaged goods, opportunities to demonstrate improved behaviour or civic duties.

PREVENTION

Strathmore Primary School strives to promote student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours through relationship based whole-school and classroom practices, including:

- adult modelling of appropriate behaviours
- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- ensuring student participation in the development of classroom and whole school expectations
- providing personalised learning programs where appropriate for individual students
- consistently acknowledging all students
- empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- implementing school-wide positive and educative behaviour support strategies.

As such, the school will implement its well-established programs and processes that include:

- the "Ready, Set, Learn" Program at the beginning of each year which focuses on building a classroom environment based on the school's Vision, Values, school song and school rules, rights and responsibilities
- the development of class based codes of behaviour and vision statements
- the provision of a differentiated curriculum that identifies and caters for students with specific learning needs
- a range of positive reinforcement strategies for desired behaviours
- the allocation of roles and responsibilities to students
- student leadership opportunities including School Captains, Junior School Council, House Captaincy, Peer Support and Buddies Programs
- student involvement in personalised goal setting, unit planning and assessment
- the provision of a range of active and passive recess time pursuits for students
- yard supervision in which teachers encourage organised and responsible play
- support for students in establishing and maintaining friendships.

For a more detailed explanation of the school's current programs and strategies to promote student engagement, attendance and positive behaviours, please refer to section 2 of this policy.

EARLY INTERVENTION

The school recognises that, despite its preventative behaviour management strategies and positive reinforcement of desired behaviour, a range of inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, may occur as the school's young students learn to be self-regulating. Similarly, despite the school's processes for encouraging, recording and monitoring student attendance, some students may not attend school regularly. In the event that a student chooses not to display the high standards of behaviour expected of them or has unsatisfactory school attendance, the following processes outline how the school will systematically address such instances.

A staged response to such incidents of inappropriate behaviour will be underpinned by the school's commitment to:

- understand the student's background and needs
- ensure a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- provide consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffold the student's learning program.

The school will employ a range of early intervention strategies including:

- application of logical consequences
- recording of late arrivals at the office
- parent contact to discuss attendance
- use of a daily communications book between school and home
- involvement of and support from parents through teacher/parent (and student) meetings
- involvement of the student wellbeing coordinator
- discussions and student counselling
- completion of a Behaviour Reflection Sheet
- development of an individualised learning, behaviour or attendance plan
- use of incentives such as special jobs/roles
- immediate, short period of time out from the yard or from a class activity accompanied by discussion with the teacher
- restricted play areas or activities
- completion of unfinished school work.

INTERVENTION

The school will employ a range of more stringent intervention strategies when a student's behaviour:

- is repeatedly inappropriate
- significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class
- endangers the safety of the student or others

- involves significant anti-social behaviour such as bullying.

Such intervention strategies may include:

- student/parent meeting with the Principal
- support from Student Support Services Officers (SSSOs) and outside agencies
- convening of a Student Support Group (SSG)
- withdrawal of privileges to participate in extra curricular activities
- planned and possibly regular time out from the yard
- withdrawal from class
- detention of no more than half the time allocated for any recess
- detention of no more than forty-five minutes after school, with the parent informed at least the day before the detention.

In employing these strategies, the school will ensure that students are not isolated from learning as a result of the actions and consequences for their inappropriate behaviour.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES – SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

When considering suspension or expulsion, Strathmore Primary School will follow the guidance given by DEECD in their factsheet:

‘Student Engagement and Inclusion.’

The school will only consider excluding a student from school in accordance with the Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion as listed here

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx>

and only when all other options have been implemented without success.

GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

The grounds for both suspension and expulsion have been updated to better enable principals to prevent and respond to behavioural incidents that may compromise the health, wellbeing and safety of staff and students. The main alterations to the grounds are:

- introducing the possession, use or sale of weapons as grounds for suspension or expulsion
- expanding the clause regarding dangerous behaviours to include *perceived* danger, as well as actual or threatened danger.

THE “RELEVANT PERSON”

It is important that every student has a person to support and advocate for them throughout a suspension or expulsion process. The new guidance on suspensions and expulsions has introduced the concept of a **relevant person**, which is the adult who will play this important support role.

Principals will now have to identify a student's relevant person before proceeding with a suspension or expulsion. **In most cases a student's relevant person will be their parent or carer.** However, a parent or carer can also nominate another responsible adult to act as relevant person if they cannot, for any reason, take on this role.

THE SUITABLE PERSONS LIST

In some cases, a parent or carer may be unable to act as the relevant person for their child during a suspension or expulsion process, and may also be unable to nominate another adult to fulfil this role.

In these situations the school principal will appoint a person from the 'suitable persons list' to act as the student's relevant person. The suitable persons list is a register of school and department employees with relevant welfare expertise, experience and training.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO BE HEARD

Prior to implementing a suspension or expulsion, the principal is obliged to ensure that the student has had the opportunity to be heard, and any information or documentation provided by the student or their relevant person has been taken into account in making the decision regarding suspension or expulsion.

The Student Support Group (SSG) meeting in the expulsion process is now called a Behaviour Review Conference and must be convened before a decision to expel has been made.

An SSG is no longer a requirement in a suspension process, however, it is recommended if a student is being suspended for 3 or more days or has 3 or more suspensions in a year. The student's relevant person can also request a meeting with the principal at any point during an expulsion process if they have any concerns.

REGIONAL SUPPORT

A Regional Office staff member is no longer required to participate in the SSG (now Behaviour Review Conference). Instead, to ensure there is still appropriate, independent oversight of expulsion processes, principals will access the support of a Regional Approved Support Person, who will be a practising principal class officer. This role will be listed on a Regional Approved List, approved by the Regional Director. Members of this list will also be called on to act on Expulsion Review Panels.

ADDED PROTECTIONS FOR VULNERABLE STUDENTS

Principals must notify the Department if they are considering expulsion for a student who is in out-of-home care or is an international student and should also do so and engage appropriate support when considering the expulsion of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students, or students on the Program for Students with Disability.

EXPULSION APPEALS AND POST EXPULSION PROCEDURE

The student has the right to appeal the principal's decision to expel them from the school. The relevant person may lodge the appeal on behalf of the student.

The grounds to appeal an expulsion have been expanded to include "there have not been sufficient prior interventions and strategies utilised prior to the decision to expel where the student has a history of behavioural issues". This new ground reflects the increased focus on schools implementing a staged response to managing student behaviour before resorting to suspension or expulsion.

Regional Directors may now elect whether to convene an Expulsion Review Panel when considering an appeal. If a panel is not convened, the Regional Director must directly provide an opportunity to the student and their relevant person to present their case against expulsion.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's on-going review cycle. It is anticipated that the policy will be reviewed after four years of implementation, however, changes as deemed necessary by the school's leadership and/or changes in Departmental terminology may necessitate that the policy is reviewed at an earlier time.

THIS POLICY WAS LAST RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL ON AUGUST, 2017

REFERENCES

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/codeofconduct.htm
School Accountability and Improvement Framework	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm
Effective Schools are Engaging Schools	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf
Disability Standards for Education	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm
Safe Schools	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/default.htm
Charter of Human Rights	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchrcharter.htm http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/
Equal Opportunity Act	http://www.def.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eeo/eeoact.htm
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm
VIT Teacher Code of Conduct	http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf