



# ARDEER SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

A positive school culture ensures that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. Ardeer South Primary School aims to be an effective school, engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students and their different learning profiles.



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

### 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.

Ardeer 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, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

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

### SCOPE

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

### CONTENTS

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

## **POLICY**

### **1. School profile**

Ardeer South Primary School was opened on 16th November 1973 and is situated in Sunshine West, approximately 20km west of Melbourne within the City of Brimbank.

In February 2024 our enrolment was 161 students. The student population is drawn from a diverse range of cultural and socio economic backgrounds. We currently have no enrolled overseas students and only 2 students who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. In 2024, there are 76 EAL students (English as an Additional Language) students which is 48%. We have currently 2 students in Out of Home Care. There are 8 students on the Program for Students with Disabilities. A mix of straight and composite classes are taught across the school, dependent on cohort sizes and the needs of students. We offer specialist programs in Physical Education, Auslan, Visual Arts and Library.

The school is housed in two main buildings with air-conditioning to all rooms. In addition to classrooms there is a large multipurpose room, Italian room, Library, Art/craft room, Literacy Intervention room, and a dedicated space for teachers to collaborate in Professional Learning Communities. The school grounds are spacious and attractive with an oval, soccer field, three separate playground areas, sand pits and asphalt/synthetic areas offering many opportunities for students to be active. The playground environment includes passive garden spaces. In 2021 we were supported by the Brimbank Council Urban Forest Strategy to plant trees along the fence line of our oval. Stage 2 of this planting has continued in 2022.

Ardeer South Primary School provides a comprehensive program that supports and develops each student's academic, emotional, physical, social and cultural needs in a positive, calm and supportive environment. Transition programs have been established with local kindergartens and secondary colleges. The school has an ongoing commitment to the development and refinement of curriculum and policy through a process of cyclic evaluation. We prioritise developing skills and building capacity in Literacy and Numeracy to ensure that each child has every opportunity to achieve their greatest potential. Students are encouraged to develop and demonstrate their understanding of concepts and content in Digital Technologies. The use of information computer technologies support student learning with all classrooms having Interactive Whiteboards, facility for Apple TV, desktop computers and access to school Netbooks and Apple i-Pads. Student Leadership roles including School Captains and House Captains provide opportunities for students to have voice in school decision making processes.

### **2. School values, philosophy and vision**

Our School values are Respect, Learning, Responsibility and Safety. We reinforce the school values in all aspects of our social and emotional learning program. Dedicated, caring staff work together with families to encourage students to develop to their full potential, physically, academically, and socially, in order to be better equipped to meet the challenges of secondary education and beyond. We aim to have children with a growth mindset as we build on students' knowledge and desire to be independent and confident members within and outside of our school community that will enable them to thrive beyond their time at Ardeer South. The school motto, 'Preparing for the Future' reflects this goal.

Ardeer South Primary School has a vision to create a friendly, welcoming and inclusive learning environment. We aim to develop happy, engaged, life-long learners who enjoy coming to school. Families are welcomed into our school community and in partnership with the staff and the wider Ardeer South community they make a significant and authentic contribution to student learning and wellbeing. We are committed to providing a high-quality education that is challenging and enables all students to achieve personal success. Encouraging student voice and agency in their learning provides students with opportunities to actively shape their own learning and contribute to school decision making.

As a school, we are always striving to create a culture of continuous improvement, operating within the Professional Learning Communities structures. Current teaching and learning practices are being continually refined and enriched through participation in appropriate professional development activities. There is a strong commitment to staff collaboration that supports continuous improvement in order to embed outstanding teaching and learning practices within the school. Students are at the heart of every decision with a belief that all students can progress and achieve.

Ardeer South Primary School aims to provide a positive learning environment, which is responsive to and supportive of, children's educational and social development through the implementation of a consistent approach to student wellbeing. We recognise that the acquisition of social skills is a developmental process and that children are at varying stages. The rights and responsibilities of students, teachers and parents are paramount within the wellbeing and discipline program as we work towards common goals in an environment which encourages co-operation in the education process.

Our Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy reflects our school community's efforts to develop a consistent, logical, realistic and purposeful approach to student behaviour. We believe that student discipline is a collaborative effort. All staff must work together, striving for consensus on procedures and consistent implementation, moving away from punishment that focuses on what not to do, but rather to teach the child alternative successful ways to behave. Lastly we believe that student behaviour can be taught using the same strategies used to teach all areas of the Victorian Curriculum.

Student, parent and staff relationships are highly valued, promoting all to feel engaged and connected as a community of learners. Students who feel safe, challenged and supported by a positive school environment are able to aspire to be the best they can. Our engagement and wellbeing approach is based on the following principles: the right to learn, the right to be respected, and the right to be safe.

A whole school approach to anti-bullying and building social and resilience skills occurs from Prep to Year 6 through everyday acknowledgement of making positive choices. A consistent focus has been on building the learning capacity of staff and students to improve our learning culture and student outcomes. Teachers work in professional learning teams to meet the learning needs of all students. All students are supported both emotionally and academically through a range of programs and the building of positive relationships. The individual learning needs of our students are strongly supported through a range of means including classroom teaching, the Program for Students with Disabilities, individual learning plans and intensive literacy support.

Our philosophy:

*Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.*

Our vision:

*All students are confident, curious learners who feel supported and able to meet the challenges at school and beyond.*

Our values: Responsibility, Respect, Learning, Safety

## **Statement of Purpose**

Ardeer South Primary School strives to be a quality, dynamic learning community that equips our students with the knowledge, skills and values to meet future challenges as resilient, creative and independent lifelong learners.

It is a school that values individuality (whilst being considerate and respectful of others) and promotes excellence in a happy, safe, caring and inspiring environment that embraces the broader community.

## Our School Community Values

**Respect**- We respect ourselves, our school and each another, and understand that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on the people around us.

**Responsibility** – We aim at all times to be fair, honest, make good decisions and take accountability for choices and actions.

**Learning** - We aim to display the traits of effective learners at all times - perseverance, curiosity, independence and resilience.

**Safety** - We maintain the physical and emotional safety of all members of our community

Staff are fully committed to the development of the students and themselves through professional growth and continued improvement.

Student engagement and school connectedness is vital for effective student learning. Student engagement can be defined in three components.

- **Behavioural engagement** - a student's participation in education, including academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school.
- **Emotional engagement** – a student's emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school, a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- **Cognitive engagement** – a student's investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

## School Connection Statement

***Ardeer South Primary School endeavours to create an environment in which every child feels happy, safe and valued.***

### 3. Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies

Ardeer South Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. 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 Strategies

In order that children develop a sense of responsibility for their actions and an awareness of the need to care for and value the rights of others, class and school protocols are developed at the beginning of each year through a collaborative process involving students and teachers. These behaviour expectations are reinforced formally and informally throughout the year, are displayed in each classroom and shared with parents.

Restorative Practice in conjunction with our Positive Behaviour Practices is an approach aimed at ensuring a safe and happy learning environment. It seeks to promote resilience and to contribute to the building of positive

relationships in the school community. It is focussed on helping students become aware of the impact of their behaviour on others through personal accountability and learning from a conflict situation.

Our school-wide positive behaviours initiative has been adopted to address a wide range of positive and negative behaviours in the classroom and playground.

Our objective is to create an effective, respectful, learning environment. We strive to create a place where students look forward to coming to each day.

Information on grounds and processes for suspension and expulsion are available here:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/suspension.aspx>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/Expulsionterm032018.aspx>

#### **Universal Strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:**

- *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 and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued*
- *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 Ardeer South Primary School use 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 Ardeer 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 and School Philosophy 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 with parents*
- *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 Student Leadership Team. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal / Assistant Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music and art programs*
- *all students are welcome to self refer to the Principal / Assistant Principal or School Chaplain if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:*
  - School Wide Positive Behavior*
  - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships*
  - Morning Circles (Trauma Informed Practice)*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*

\*This policy is written in consultation with DET Guidelines.

- *measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.*

**Targeted Strategies to promote positive behaviour and inclusion include:**

- *each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support*
- *Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – refer to our Child Safety documents outlining the school strategies to support Koorie students for further information*
- *our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school including through our commitment to the Child Safe Standards.*
- *we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through building strong family and community connections with organisations and support services*
- *we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department’s policy on [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)*
- *all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment*
- *students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department’s policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans*
- *wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year*
- *staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma*
- *students enrolled under the Department’s international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)*
- *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*
- *Example School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan*

## Individual Strategies to target students may include:

Student specific strategies include adopting information from the Department's Policy and Advisory Library such as:

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

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

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

*Ardeer 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*
  - *Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst*

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

## 4. Identifying students in need of support

*Ardeer South Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The staff and Student Wellbeing Team play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Ardeer 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*
- *consultation/referral with School Wellbeing Coordinator*
- *consultation with School Support Services(SSSO)*
- *School Entry Health Questionnaire*

## **5. Student rights and responsibilities**

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

### **Strategies for identifying students in need:**

The school identifies students in need of assessment and extra support during first term each year. Foundation students attend four transition days during November/December and informal assessments begin. Our Workforce planning and Annual Implementation Plan then address the needs of all these students to ensure there are resources and support in place for them over the year. We gather information at enrolment, monitor their attendance and behaviour and assess their academic performance in literacy and numeracy. A Student Support Group (which includes the parents, allied health workers as appropriate, education support staff, classroom teacher and Principal) is established for students identified as having a special need and this group meets regularly to identify classroom strategies and access assessments from SSSO regional staff as needed. A comprehensive list (and files) of these students is kept up-to-date regarding the Individual Learning Plan, timetabled support, strategies, assessments and meetings to monitor their progress.



Children are encouraged to develop self-discipline, to respect staff and other students, to work and play co-operatively, take pride in their school and value achievement. We explicitly teach values, social skills, expected behaviour strategies for successful play and getting along with others in class and the playground.

To further support these goals the Wellbeing Coordinator provides individual, family and small group support.

We encourage students to understand the control they have over their attitudes and behaviour, acknowledge that their actions and behaviours can sometimes cause harm to others, and teach them to work towards repairing relationships. Students are expected to be honest, to work co-operatively and to respect staff, students and others.

Programs implemented at Ardeer South Primary School to promote student engagement, high attendance and positive behaviours.

Across Whole School	Class Levels	Community/Parent linked
Wellbeing Approach – whole school collective responsibility for all students.	Leadership Program – Yr 6	Fortnightly Newsletter
Assembly Awards – Student of the Week linked to school values	Levelled Literacy Learning	Education Week Activities
International Day	Interschool Sport – senior students	Supporting local RSL activities for Anzac Day & Remembrance Day / Reconciliation Day
Italian Day	School Camp Program	Parent Helpers Program- in classrooms
Whole School Assembly	Choice Banners	Parent Information Sessions
Junior School Council	Learning spaces conducive to learning	Parent Group- Fundraising and school activities
Excursions/incursions	Buddy Program Yr Prep & 5/6 and new students	Parent/Teacher Interviews
Differentiated Curriculum: addressing ways in which students vary as learners.	K-Prep Transition	School Performances
Whole School Concerts	Yr 6-7 Transition	Art Show
Integration Support Program	Team teaching	Work Experience for local students
Information Communication Technology (ICT) rich environment	PSD Transition Supports	Working Bees
Book Week		Compass
Life Education Van		School Facebook Group/Page
Sunsmart Program		

## 6. Student behavioural expectations and management

*Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values / Student 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. Student bullying behaviour will be managed in accordance with Ardeer South Primary School's Bullying Prevention Policy.*

*When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Ardeer South Primary 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 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*
- *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 Principal/Assistant Principal*
- *restorative practices*
- *detentions*
- *behaviour reviews*
- *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 Ardeer South Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

## 7. Engaging with families

Ardeer 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
- 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

Ardeer 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, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Ardeer South Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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

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 and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2024
Consultation	Consultation of this policy is mandatory. Parent community and school council consultation - February 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2026 – (noting that this policy has a mandatory review cycle of 2 years]