

# 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.

Port Phillip Specialist 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

Port Phillip Specialist School (PPSS) is located in a central position close to the central CBD of Melbourne, public transport, close to recreational facilities including beaches and within walking proximity to retail and primary produce outlets. Students and staff maintain the grounds. PPSS is a solid brick construction built in the 1800's, it has transformed from a primary school and as such, some of its buildings still resemble its beginnings. Many of the school buildings were refurbished around 2000 and these now include an in-ground heated pool and hydrotherapy spa, a sensory



integration room, a THEISS Independent Living Unit house, a computer resource centre, a therapy resource centre, multipurpose function rooms and serviced offices and Performing Arts Centre. These facilities provide a specialised teaching and learning spaces to service the needs of our students and the Performing Arts Centre houses our Visual and Performing Arts Program. The school has a clearly articulated Vision, Values and Mission, which has guided and informed the process of the schools continuous improvement and development.

That being:

PPSS is committed to values of professional excellence, co-operation and respect while embracing diversity. Our environment is creative, accepting, flexible and positive. PPSS believes that all students will develop capabilities, in communication and independence, to the best of their abilities. PPSS supports students to build confidence and demonstrate capabilities in an environment that is respectful and supportive.

Students are drawn from a wide range of suburbs in the South East Region but customarily come from the Municipalities of Port Phillip, Bayside and Stonington. However, a small number of students attend the school from outside the bus zone. The zone comprises a mix of socio-economic groups including a large public housing component and suburbs that are more affluent. Transport to and from school is provided by the Department of Education (DET) to students who live in the transport zone at no cost to parents.

All students have an intellectual disability however; we have an increasing number of students with multiple disabilities. A large percentage of our students have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and an increasing number within our Early Education Program are visually impaired and/or have multiple disabilities. Our enrolments have been between 105 and 125 over the last four years. All school-aged students are funded under the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD). PPSS is funded by DET to run an Early Education Program for children aged 2.8 – 5 years old. This is provided via an onsite program and an integrated program at Uniting Care Kinder in Port Melbourne.

PPSS delivers the Victorian Curriculum Levels F-10 utilising the ABLES Assessment tools and Victorian Early Years Learning and Developmental Framework (VEYLDF). A number of our students undertake Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) units.

The school consists of four sub-schools and two early education programs. Our Early Years sub school caters for ages 5 – 8, Foundation 8-11, Pathways 11-15 and Transition To Life 15 – 18 years of age. Students are placed within a class group, which will best cater for their individual needs. Learning outcomes are formally reported bi-annually to parents and caregivers. Student Support Groups meet bi-annually to review students' individual goals. PPSS has 60 staff, with a profile of two principal class, two leading teachers, fourteen class teachers, five specialists, five therapists, two wellbeing staff and four administration staff.

### **Integrated Services Model**

The Integrated Services Model, developed in 2000, continues to be pivotal in meeting student wellbeing. Students are supported to access education to their maximum potential by PPSS supporting their health and wellbeing needs. Therapists, Psychologists and our schools Social Worker, work in collaboration with the class based teams to understand students' needs, develop, and implement required support strategies. The Integrated Service Committee continue to meet formally two times each week to address issues arising and manage all students through a case review process. The committee engage with external agencies to support the 'whole child'. Our



Social Worker engages with families and community organisations to individually address any non-attendance matters.

### **Community Involvement**

PPSS works hard to involve Parents and Community at the school. Events such as Family Fun Day end of Term Assembly and The Arts Festival are key points our community come together. Parent Information sessions were held throughout the year with a focus on communicating how education is presented at PPSS, how therapies are integrated into the curriculum and information was presented that related to NDIS transitions. The students and community at PPSS enjoy a high quality special education facility. Basic education provisions are funded by DET. Additional facilities such as the Hydrotherapy Pool have been built by parents and the generosity of the broader community. PPSS is moving into a period where maintenance and management of facilities is expected to become expensive. The aging buildings and resources will require significant investment from both DET and community resulting in expected pressure on School Council budgets.

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

### **Child Safe Standards**

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests. At Port Phillip Specialist School, we consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people to be our highest priority. We strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at our school at all times. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment where all students can be happy, confident and resilient, regardless of their sexual or gender identity, cultural background disability or other circumstances. We take account of the diversity of all children, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and vulnerable children.

PPSS is committed to values of professional excellence, co-operation and respect while embracing diversity. Our environment is creative, accepting, flexible and positive.

PPSS believes that all students will develop capabilities, in communication and independence, to the best of their abilities.

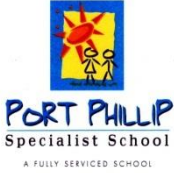
PPSS supports students to build confidence and demonstrate capabilities in an environment that is respectful and supportive.

At Port Phillip Specialist School, we are genuinely invested in our students who are at the heart of all we do.

We are driven by Trust, Collaboration, Compassion and Respect to inspire and empower each other, our students, their families and our whole community.

We hold ourselves accountable to these values and bring passion and joy to our students' learning through our unique and creative approach to delivering the curriculum.

### **Trust**



Trust empowers us all. We trust each other to act and, in turn, we feel trusted to act ourselves.

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration is the essence that drives the actions and interactions across our school community. We work together to support all students.

### **Compassion**

We remain open and willing to feel for others, in order to gain insight into their experiences.

### **Respect**

We respect the diversity of our community and value the ideas and wellbeing of every individual.

#### **1. Engagement strategies**

*Port Phillip Specialist 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 whole of school and targeted and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:*

#### *Whole School*

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing*
- *creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning*
- *analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data*
- *deliver a broad curriculum including VCAL to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Port Phillip Specialist School use the Visual and Performing Arts Program and the Victorian Curriculum as an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons*
- *teachers at Port Phillip Specialist School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching*
- *our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community*
- *carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling*

- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents*
- *monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs*
- *All students are welcome to self-refer to the Social Worker, 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 are proud to have an ‘open door’ policy where students and staff are partners in learning*
- *we engage in positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:*
  - *Respectful Relationships*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peers support programs*

#### Targeted

- *each year group has a Home Room Teacher to act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support*
- *all students have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to our School Psychologist and Social Worker 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*

#### Individual

- *Student Support Groups, see:*  
*<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>*
- *Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan*
- *Program for Students with Disabilities*
- *referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services*
- *referral to ChildFirst, Headspace*
- *Navigator*
- *Lookout*

*Port Phillip Specialist 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*
  - *Re-engagement programs such as Navigator*

*Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:*

- *being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing*
- *collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student*
- *monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family*
- *running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:*
  - *with a disability*
  - *in Out of Home Care*
  - *and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

## 2. Identifying students in need of support

*Port Phillip Specialist 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. Port Phillip Specialist 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*

## 3. 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.

#### 4. Student behavioural expectations

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

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

*Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.*

*Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:*

- *warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate*
- *teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour*
- *withdrawal of privileges*
- *referral to the Year Level Coordinator*
- *restorative practices*



- *detentions*
- *behaviour reviews*
- *suspension*
- *expulsion*

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

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

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

## 5. Engaging with families

Port Phillip Specialist 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.

## 6. Evaluation

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

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

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

[PPSS Child Protection Reporting Policy.pdf](#)





[PPSS Student Wellbeing and Engagement - Policy July 2018.pdf](#)

[..\2018 Policies\PDF Policies\PPSS Behaviour Management Policy August 2018.pdf](#)

[..\2018 Policies\PDF Policies\PPSS Bullying Prevention - Policy -July 2018.pdf](#)

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on July 2021 and is scheduled for review in June 2021