Goornong Primary School

Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

At Goornong Primary School we are committed to providing a safe and happy environment for all students who attend our school. This is based on the notion that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. The following *Engagement and Wellbeing Policy* is designed to support our school to offer a safe, secure and engaging environment for teachers to teach and students to learn.

The policy is based on our school's values of respect, honesty, teamwork and care. We aim to recognise positive behaviours at school, in order to create an environment where these behaviours are valued and celebrated. When negative behaviour occurs, we aim to engage in a restorative approach to guide students to engage in more positive actions in the future.

I encourage parents to discuss the policy with your child/children and thank you for your support in helping us to promote a safe and engaging educational environment.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Cox

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.

Goornong 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.

School Profile

Goornong Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive rural school located 30km north of Bendigo on the Midland Highway. The school offers a friendly and caring learning environment that promotes strong relationships between students, staff and families and encourages each student to achieve their full academic potential.

Having opened in 1875, Goornong Primary School has served families of the local and surrounding districts for over 150 years.

The school's vision is to prepare students to become active, engaged and responsible citizens of the local and broader community, with staff working hard to ensure that each child's journey through primary school is full of enjoyment, academic achievement and personal development.

The school's values shape our teaching, partnerships and daily interactions and include:

*Respect for yourself, for others and for your community.
*Care for yourself, your family, your friends, your school and your community.
*Honesty and accountability for fulfilling your academic and social potential.
*Teamwork in the way we learn, work and play.

The curriculum at Goornong Primary School has a strong focus on developing skills in literacy and numeracy, building the foundations for students to become lifelong and capable learners. In addition, specialist subjects including Art, LOTE (Chinese), MARC Library, STEM, Physical Education, Cooking, Sustainability & Environment and Performing Arts provide students with a well-rounded and viable curriculum.

VALUES

Our values of honesty, teamwork, respect and care are the responsibility of all students, teachers and parents to uphold on each and every school day. Sitting at the centre of our values is a belief in high expectations for all students and school staff and a commitment to hard work.

- Respect for yourself, for others and for your community.
- Care for yourself, your family, your friends, your school and your community.
- Honesty and accountability for fulfilling your academic and social potential.
- Teamwork in the way we learn, work and play.

Our school and community beliefs about behaviour and learning are supported by our school values:

Respect for yourself and others.

- Act in a way that does not disrupt the learning of other students.
- Act in a way that allows teachers to help all students to learn.
- Play in a way that allows all participants to feel included.
- Wear correct uniform at all times.
- Care for and look after equipment and belongings of others.
- Value and respect individual differences.
- Return found items to the office.
- Speak nicely to all people.
- Use manners.

Care for yourself, your family, your friends, your school and your community.

- Play safely and responsibly.
- Keep the school grounds litter free.
- Look after garden areas.
- Look after and care for school equipment.
- Play in appropriate play areas.
- Hygienic use of toilets at all times.
- Remain within school grounds unless permitted to leave.
- Practice safe bike use and road safety when travelling to and from school.
- Care for your personal belongings and equipment.
- Follow Sun Safety practices.
- Walk on the concrete paths and around buildings.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Follow teacher directions and requests.
- Move carefully around the school.
- Keep your work area and classroom tidy.

Honesty and accountability for achieving your academic and social potential.

- Be on time for all lessons and activities.

- Ask for permission before touching other peoples' belongings.
- Come to school prepared with all necessary items.
- Observe the rules of your classroom.
- Be honest with yourself in the way you approach your work and the quality of work you produce.
- Admit when you have made a mistake.

Teamwork in the way we learn, work and play.

- Work cooperatively in a way that encourages all group members to participate.
- Consider all ideas when working or playing in a team.
- Treat all peers fairly.
- Include other students in games and activities.

ENGAGEMENT & WELLBEING STRATEGIES

Goornong 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

- 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 Goornong Primary School use a visible 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 Goornong 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 to 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 Group and other means including student forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers or principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- 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 Student Wellbeing Coordinator or 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 school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, through implementation of programs such as Respectful Relationships.
- Programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. eSafety Commissioner courses).
- Opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities).
- Buddy programs, peers support programs.
- 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

- The school principal and classroom teachers monitor the health and wellbeing of students 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.
- 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.
- We support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds.
- 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 [insert any specific measures at your school to support LGBTIQ+ students]
- 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

Individual Strategies

Goornong 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
    - 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.
- 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.
- Accessing Education Department programs and resources for support, such as:
    - Student Support Groups
    - Individual Education Plans
    - Behaviour - Students
    - Behaviour Support Plans
    - Student Support Services
    - Program for Students with Disabilities
    - Mental health toolkit
    - headspace
    - Navigator
    - LOOKOUT

Identifying Students in Need of Support

Goornong Primary 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. Goornong 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.

Student Rights & 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. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

Student Behaviour Expectations & Management

Behavioural expectations of students and the school's staged response to managing student behaviour is outlined in the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

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 the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Goornong 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 school principal.
- Restorative practices.
- Loss of playtime privileges.
- Behaviour support and intervention meetings.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion.

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

- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Goornong Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

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

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

Engaging with Families

Goornong 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.
- Providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school 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.

Policy Evaluation

Goornong 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 data.
- Case management.
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data.
- SOCS.

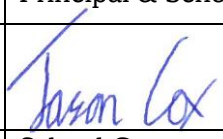
Goornong Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

Policy 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.

POLICY REVIEW

Date Reviewed:	18.05.2026	
Consultation:	Invited via the school newsletter.	
Approved By:	Principal & School Council	
Approval Authority:		
Communication Procedures:	School Community ▪ Via school newsletter. ▪ Available on school website.	Staff / Volunteers ▪ Via induction pack.
Next Review Date:	May 2028	

APPENDIX A - STAGED RESPONSE TO DEALING WITH STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

"Behaviour we ignore is behaviour we accept!"

1st – a friendly verbal reminder that the student is engaging in negative behaviour.	1. Remain calm and be pleasant. 2. Give rights-based warning, "*Billy, your talking is disrupting other students. Please be quiet."* 3. Allow take-up time.
2nd – a second verbal reminder that the student has continued to engage in the negative behaviour and that if the behaviour continues there will be a consequence (such as removal to a quiet space, name on board or missing out on a portion of playtime).	1. Remain calm but more assertive. 2. Reassert, ""*Billy, your talking is disrupting other students."* 3. Give choice, "*If I have to speak to you again you will have to…"*
3rd – verbally identifying the behaviour for a third time and enforcing the consequence.	4. Follow through with graded consequences: a. Move student to another seat or quiet space. b. Remove student from learning space for time out. c. Arrange restorative discussion between Principal and student.

Student Agreement

Engagement & Wellbeing Policy Agreement

_____

parent

acknowledges that I have read and discussed the Engagement & Wellbeing Policy with my child / children.

_____

(student)

As a student at Goornong Primary School, I will demonstrate the school's values and demonstrate positive behaviours that ensure the school environment is safe and happy for everyone.

_____ _____

Student's signature Parent's signature

Date

_____

***Please keep your copy of the *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy* and return this agreement to the school at the beginning of the school year.**