

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers. If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office on 9700 2601

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.

James Cook 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.

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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

James Cook Primary School is at the gateway to Endeavour Hills, southeast of Melbourne, celebrating 47 years of outstanding education. Our student population comprise a diverse multicultural and socioeconomic demographic. They are encouraged to be the very best versions of themselves, through the school's values of Respect, Teamwork, Inclusiveness, Resilience, Innovation and Persistence.

Our school motto "Believe To Succeed", is underpinned by the belief that every child can and will succeed. We focus on developing the whole student through academic and social programs equipping them with the tools to contribute successfully within the local and global communities. Students are placed at the centre of learning, with teachers working collaboratively to plan and deliver an inclusive and engaging curriculum for 21st Century learners.

We deliver personalised learning with a relentless focus on Literacy and Numeracy, including Intervention/Extension Programs for Reading and Mathematics. A 'Growth Mindset' culture nurtures resilient, intrinsically motivated learners, underpinned by our School-Wide Positive Behaviour Matrix of Expectations. We provide specialist programs that enhance the learning experiences for our students in Visual Art, Music, Mandarin, Auslan and Physical Education.

Visitors enter a welcoming reception/administration space. We boast three learning modules, housing four homegroup learning spaces, a Visual Arts Centre, Gymnasium, Library/Specialists' Centre accommodating Music, Auslan and Mandarin classes and a 'Cook's Kitchen' STEM centre. Our grounds include a soccer pitch, basketball courts, extensive play equipment, and asphalted areas. We have a vegetable garden in our outdoor learning spaces.

James Cook Primary School maintains strong community partnerships, integral to the success of our students:

- A strong relationship with James Cook Kindergarten
- An Adventure Playground via a 'Joint Use Agreement' shared with the City of Casey
- Fully funded, 1-on-1 psychology services engaged to provide support for students



- Kids Hope mentoring supporting our students at risk
- Food Bank supporting our Breakfast Club Program.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Our school is committed to providing a safe, secure, inclusive and stimulating learning environment for all students. Students can reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy, and safe, and when there is a positive school culture to engage and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

It is fundamental to acknowledge that each teacher, is a vital source of support, and a determinant in the success of their students. The teachers at James Cook Primary School will work collectively to ensure that students feel valued and cared for, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and can effectively engage with their learning. This school recognises the need to be engaging and inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of our students, accommodating different learning abilities and rates of learning and intervening early to identify and respond to individual student needs.

Our school strives to be a learning community where students and teachers can relate well to each other, and where different ideas and viewpoints are valued and respected. James Cook Primary School's motto is "Believe To Succeed". We support students through our philosophy of learning and teaching as stated in our Vision, Mission and key values.

Vision:

At James Cook Primary School every child will have the opportunity to experience:

- High quality engaging education
- A safe and supportive environment
- Positive values

Mission:

At the completion of schooling at James Cook Primary School, students will:

- Be competent in literacy and numeracy
- Have respect for themselves, others and the environment
- Demonstrate socially competent behaviours
- Be responsible citizens that contribute to the wider society

The key values that are identified as the core for James Cook Primary School are:

Respect – Treating ourselves and others with honesty, kindness and integrity. Showing people that we care about everyone and everything in our school.

Teamwork - Working together, considering everyone in the team for a common good.

Inclusiveness – An acceptance and celebration of everyone and the qualities they bring to the school.

Resilience – The ability to bounce back in a positive way after experiencing problems or setbacks.

Persistence - Students think for themselves, striving for their best, never giving up.

Our Statement of Values is available online at: james.cook.ps@vic.edu.au

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

James Cook 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

- 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 James Cook 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 James Cook 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.
- Monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at whole-school, cohort and individual levels.
- Students contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Voice and Engagement Team (SVET). Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, SVET Leader, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have questions or concerns.
- Opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through house spirit activities, school plays, athletics, and special events.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal if they wish to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We boast an 'open door' policy in which students and staff are partners in learning.
- We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs including:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Safe Schools
- Programs, incursions and excursions are developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs).
- Opportunities for student inclusion include sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities.
- 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

- 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 structured, inclusive and differentiated classroom practices.
- 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](#) with an appointed Learning Mentor, an Individual Learning Plan, Student Support Group(SSG) and referral 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](#), 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 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 implement a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma.
- Students enrolled via the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)

Individual

James Cook Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual student engagement including:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances.

- meeting with students and their parents/carers to talk about how best to help the student engage with school.
- developing an [Individual Education Plans](#) and/or a [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, e.g modifying the classroom layout.
- referring a 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 or 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 [Student Support Groups](#) 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

James Cook Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. James Cook 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 and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

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 kindness, 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 kindness and 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.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations are grounded in our school's Matrix of expected behaviours as documented upon enrolment, displayed in each classroom and attached to the school's newsletter.

- Our school will implement a whole-school behaviour management approach that is based on pro-social values, social competencies, incentives and positive peer relationships.
- The school will focus on establishing positive and respectful relationships, particularly between teachers and students, and establishing a learning community that provides multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.
- The school's strategies to promote pro-social values will be whole-school in focus and include close links with curriculum. The Victorian Curriculum includes the Capabilities domain of Physical, Personal and Social Learning, which encourages students to work with others, and to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school. In the context of the Victorian Curriculum, the school curriculum will include pro-social values and behaviours to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, value diversity and build a culture of learning, community and engagement.
- Implementing preventative and early intervention strategies to support positive behaviours is a key part of the Student Welfare Policy at our school. Prevention and early intervention strategies the school will deploy include:
 - defining and teaching school-wide and classroom expectations.
 - establishing consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for problem behaviour.

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 [Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy](#). When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, James Cook 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 implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as, 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 are included in the Relational Problem-Solving Process for Unacceptable Behaviour:

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| 1. Redirection to expected behaviours | 5. Notification to parents regarding inappropriate behaviour |
| 2. Warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate | 6. Behaviour support and intervention meetings |
| 3. Student given opportunity to reflect on behaviour | 7. Suspension |
| 4. Remind students of expected behaviours | 8. 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 James Cook 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

James Cook 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. Involvement in our school by parents and carers helps children achieve the best possible learning outcomes. Parents and carers will be provided with the opportunity to participate in school life, both formally and informally, through school council, the Parents and

Friends Association, volunteering and staying up to date with news about what is happening in education via our newsletter.

8. Evaluation

James Cook 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

James Cook 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
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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 policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Student Engagement • Child Safe Standards • Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care • Students with Disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ Student Support • Behaviour - Students • Suspensions • Expulsions • Restraint and Seclusion |
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The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)

| Policy Review and Approval | |
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| Policy last reviewed | March 2026 |
| Consultation | March 2026 - School Council School community via Compass |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | March 2029 |