



Student Wellbeing & 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.

Nepean 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.

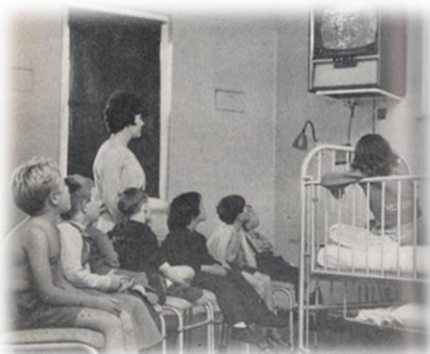
Contents

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

School profile

Nepean School was opened in 1925 with an enrolment of 20 students. In 1929 the school transferred to a new site in Mt Eliza, as part of the Royal Children's Hospital. At the onset of World War Two, the entire school was moved to Sherbrooke where staff and students remained until 1944.

As student numbers grew steadily through the 1960s there was a need for a purpose-built special school to cater for students with diagnoses such as polio, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and congenital conditions. The Nepean Committee was formed and campaigned for two years for the rights of children and young people with physical disabilities. In December 1980, Nepean School opened on its current site. Over the last one hundred years, Nepean has grown into a multiculturally diverse community with a focus on education and independence for our students.



← Teaching in the wards at Mt Eliza (1960s)

Student's on the site of the new school (1980) →



Vision

Nepean School's vision is to provide an innovative, inclusive and supportive environment for students with physical disabilities and complex health needs.

Mission

Nepean School's mission is to aim to instil confidence and resilience in students to support them in accessing rewarding life experiences and a meaningful place in society.

Objective

Nepean School's objective is to work with students towards their individualised learning goals to realise their potential.

Our school's objectives are considered as part of the 4 yearly strategic planning process and reflected in the goals listed in our current School Strategic Plan (SSP). We also develop an Annual Implementation Plan to operationalise the goals and key improvement strategies contained in our SSP.

Values

Nepean School's values are underpinned by love, empathy and kindness –

- excellence and best practice in learning and teaching
- a sense of belonging through social connectedness
- creating and celebrating success together
- teamwork and perseverance
- respect
- communication and empowerment
- independence and a strong sense of self
- equity
- right to learn, play & communicate in a safe environment




Motto

Our school motto reflects our ongoing commitment to learning, working and playing together, understanding that is our shared skills, knowledge and passions that make a difference to our students.

Together we Achieve the Extraordinary

Rules

Nepean School rules are based on kindness.

	<i>Kindness to Ourselves</i>	always trying our best understanding that mistakes are part of learning being healthy and safe
	<i>Kindness to the Environment</i>	keeping our school tidy looking after our plants, trees and waterways packing things up when we finish
	<i>Kindness to Each Other</i>	listening and talking respectfully sharing and playing together helping each other

Nepean School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of love, empathy and kindness at every opportunity.

Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Nepean 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 tiered supports and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal (Tier 1 supports)

- 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
- deliver a broad A – 10 curriculum including VPC and VET programs to ensure that students are able to choose programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Nepean School use our 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 Nepean 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 AITSL
- 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
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Kimochis
 - Interoception
 - Zones of Regulation
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour, e.g. cyber safety

- opportunities for students to mix with students in different sub schools through whole school activity days
- 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 (Tier 2 supports)

- referral to the Wellbeing Team for in class observations, consultation and support
- liaise with external stakeholders, including NDIS therapists
- referral to SSS
- 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 Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing & Safety Plan
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background through adopting common words and phrases
- 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

Individual (Tier 3 supports)

- individual movement breaks
- Individual Learning Plans
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Support Groups (meet once per term)
- Mental Health Practitioner
- Connections to School Teacher
- Health & Wellbeing Key Contact
- individualised strategies – Sensory Toolbox, visual schedules, incentive projects

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

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

Nepean 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
- considering the cultural identity and background of each student and their family

- ensuring students have common words and phrases in their native language within their communication system
- sourcing appropriate activities and resources in different languages for students to engage with
- 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
- considering the cultural identity and background of each student and their family
- engaging interpreters to support students and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- acknowledging and celebrating the culturally significant events within our school community, for example Eid and Divali
- utilizing technologies such as Google Translate to support families to fully participate and understand information sent from school
- noting the language skills of staff, for example we have employed a number of staff who are proficient in Mandarin
- using a 'plain English' approach with all written information sent from school
- 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.

Identifying students in need of support

Nepean School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported academically, emotionally and socially. Our Wellbeing Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Nepean 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
- information from external stakeholders, including NDIS therapists
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- engagement with families
- self-referrals

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
- communicate using their preferred communication system
- 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 behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and Child Safety 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. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Nepean 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 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 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
- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention

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 Nepean 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.

Engaging with families

Nepean 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 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.

Evaluation

Nepean 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
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Nepean 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
- Referenced in staff induction processes
- 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	June 2024
Consultation	Student Representative Council
Approved by	Claire Toohey Acting Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2026