



Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

Endorsed by School Council: June 2020

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.

New Gisborne 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 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

School Profile

New Gisborne Primary School is a growing school that currently caters for a population of 611 students (2020) from Foundation to Year 6. Situated in the picturesque foothills of the Macedon Ranges, the school enjoys an excellent reputation within the local area. The school's core curriculum comprises Literacy, Numeracy, Inquiry Learning and embedding Digital Technologies across all curriculum areas. BYOD iPads continue to be used in Years 4-6 with shared devices in Foundation to Year 3. Specialist and support programs include Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Physical Education, Literacy Intervention and Languages (Indonesian) for all year levels. Quality learning programs are also provided in other curriculum areas including the Little Learners Love Reading Program, You Can Do It, Kitchen Garden (Yr. 4), Foundation & Year 6 Buddy Program, Student Leadership and the school's Positive Start Program. Student participation in extra curricula programs is encouraged with staff promoting and operating programs such as Tournament of Minds, Energy Breakthrough, Maths Olympiad, Choir and Singing Group. An Out of School Hours Care program with enthusiastic and caring external staff operates at the school each morning and afternoon.

There is a strong sense of community at the school, with parents and extended families actively contributing to school programs and fundraisers. The school's Parents Association is well established and is very effective in identifying school needs and organising and conducting whole school activities. Consistent communication between parents, the school and School Council serves to facilitate an effective and constructive feedback loop. The school actively supports the wider community through its involvement in community activities and celebrations as well as specific programs. This includes visits by senior students to the local aged care facility, participation in the annual Gisborne Carols by Candlelight and the Anzac and Remembrance Day services.

New Gisborne Primary School has consistently achieved very good academic results, particularly in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy, with students generally achieving at or above both State and Like School means. The parent community invest in their children's education through their contribution and feedback to the school as well as nurturing other external interests. Student participation in extra curricula programs is encouraged with school teaching and support staff promoting and operating programs such as Tournament of Minds, Energy Breakthrough, Choir, Singing Group, Visual Art and various sporting activities outside of regular teaching hours.

The school's focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Technologies over the course of the 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan has been supported by an increased focus on Student Voice, Agency and Wellbeing. The challenge that we face in the near future will reside in our endeavour to maintain our strong and tight-knit sense of community, our high expectations, our school values and our 'personal touch' in a school that remains one of the larger schools in the area.

School Values, Philosophy and Vision

The school's vision is "To provide a high quality, balanced and challenging curriculum that allows students to perform to the best of their ability in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation". Underpinning and informing this vision are the following school values:

In the pursuit of life-long learning at New Gisborne Primary School we value:

- Respect and Integrity in all dealings with others.
- Providing the skills and knowledge to become life-long learners
- Using initiative and taking responsibility for actions

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- Effective partnerships between teachers, students and parents and the broader community
- Setting high expectations and striving for excellence while recognising, understanding and catering for a diversity of needs across the school.

* See Appendix 1 - The School Philosophy and Vision Statement

Whole School Prevention Statement

At New Gisborne Primary School students are typically self-motivated, engaged and happy learners in a technologically rich environment. They are encouraged to be active, resilient members of the school and local community. The school aims to provide a supportive and safe environment that challenges students to set and accomplish their learning goals and celebrate their achievements. Implementing a consistent approach to Literacy and Numeracy teaching practices across the school is always a priority.

Strong leadership and expertise in these areas facilitate continuous improvement by providing professional learning and support to planning, delivery and review of classroom programs. Ongoing monitoring of student learning outcomes through the use of continuous formative assessment is used to inform teaching practice. Developing teacher data literacy has been, and continues to remain, a school priority.

The school is committed to the implementation of the *You Can Do It!* program which focuses on building the social, emotional, and motivational capacity of young people. It encourages prevention, promotion, and intervention efforts (school, home and community) in order to build the social and emotional strengths of our students. At weekly school assemblies, Student Achievement Awards, aligned to the school values and the *You Can Do It!* Program, are presented.

Parents are encouraged to assist with a range of programs and activities including classroom support, camps, excursions, school sport and other special events, as well as supporting fund raising activities.

New Gisborne Primary School implements a comprehensive transition program which assists in developing students' confidence, skills, knowledge and attitudes as they move through their primary schooling. This program includes:

- Kinder to school - specific sessions during Term 4 where pre-schoolers visit our school and meetings between preschool and Foundation teachers and Parent Information Sessions for Foundation parents are held
- Buddy classes - all classes throughout the school have a buddy class with all Foundation students buddied up with a Year 6 student
- In school transition - three timetabled sessions during Term 4 where students "step up" to their next year level
- Year 6 to Year 7 - visits from local secondary school teachers and students and Year 5 and 6 students visiting local secondary schools
- Parent Information Sessions – at the start of the school year and throughout the year as required.

Student absences are monitored and parents are contacted if attendance is a concern.

Professional learning for staff is a high priority, with staff valuing the notion of being lifelong learners. Staff set annual Performance Development Plan goals and professional development programs are linked to identified needs and Strategic Plan goals.

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Key Improvement Strategies for Student Wellbeing and Engagement

NGPS's Student Engagement and Wellbeing goal in the 2016 – 2020 School Strategic Plan is to improve each student's capacity to create and maintain excellent working relationships both in and outside the classroom.

Key Improvement strategies are to:

- Develop a shared understanding of wellbeing that makes explicit the importance of relationships and the links to learning, engagement, personal responsibility and high expectations.
- Continue to build a positive, caring environment that empowers and supports students to drive their own learning.

Actions include:

- Develop a whole school deep understanding of the Victorian Curriculum Capabilities
- Develop a school wide approach towards promoting student safety and wellbeing
- Introduce a whole school approach to embedding Respectful Relationships in order to promote and model respect and equality.

Engagement Strategies

New Gisborne Primary 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 universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal Strategies

New Gisborne Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote broad school community engagement. These include:

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents/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
- teachers at New Gisborne Primary School use a school-wide instructional framework to deliver an explicit, common and shared model of instruction that ensures evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers 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
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling

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- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and in 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 Junior School Council and other forums. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school productions, performances, athletics, music programs, choir and singing group
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - eSmart
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs

Targeted Strategies

New Gisborne Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote targeted year level or group engagement. These include:

- each year level has a Level Leader responsible for their year, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their level, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services 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 or external professionals each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual Strategies

New Gisborne Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These include:

- 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 Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- Student Support Groups to provide support for a student with behaviour or attendance related issues, see:

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

- 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 (CAMHS), TWEENS Clinic or ChildFirst
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator or Lookout

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 Plan 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.

Identifying students in need of support

New Gisborne 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 to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. New Gisborne 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
- referrals from teachers, District Nurse, visiting specialists

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.

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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 with confidence.

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 a trusted teacher, a member of the school leadership team and/or their parents or carers.

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 New Gisborne Primary School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, the 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 or school leadership
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

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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.

Engaging with families

New Gisborne 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, staff and school
- 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.

Evaluation

New Gisborne 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
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Please see The Statement of Values and School Philosophy and Child Safe policies on the school website.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in June 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2022.

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