



## STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Baringa School on 51271744.

### 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.

Baringa 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

## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Baringa School provides special education to students aged 5-18 diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability. Student enrolment in 2020 was 178.8 full time equivalent. The student population draws from a wide geographical area predominantly within the Latrobe Valley, including Moe, Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill. We also have students from Rawson, Trafalgar and Willow Grove in the Baw Baw Shire. The large majority of our student cohort are transported to school by bus.

Baringa School students come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Baringa school provides a safe, supportive learning environment, through individualised learning programs aimed to maximise the potential of all students. Our aim is to develop independent and motivated students who take responsibility for their learning by providing consistent, targeted and differentiated instruction and learning opportunities.

In order to provide a learning program that is stimulating and relevant to the needs of our students, the school operates within four distinct units/teams; Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary and the Senior Learning Centre (SLC). Teachers, Education Support Staff, one Speech Pathologist, and a consultative Occupational Therapist support small class. Individual Education Plans (IEP's) focus on all areas of the Victorian Curriculum with a particular emphasis on literacy, numeracy, social skills, science, indigenous education and health and PE. Our Primary teams have additional focuses in the area of personal safety while our Secondary and SLC teams provide programs involving community access, vocational training, work experience and life skills.

Experienced and dedicated staff teach students the skills and knowledge they need to become valued and contributing members in their local communities.

### 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Baringa Schools Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community.

Baringa School believes that every child, irrespective of their disability, can and will learn in an environment of dignity and respect. It is the role of the school and its community to build on a child's strengths and talents to ensure that each child reaches their full potential. The school aims to develop students who are able to contribute to and participate in all aspects of community life in a positive way. Students will develop a wide range of skills to enable them to live enviable lives as independently as possible.

The school's mission is to create resilient and independent lifelong learners. To facilitate the achievement of all learners, we provide:

- A quality inclusive learning environment that is responsive to student voice and agency
- Differentiated, in-depth and individualised learning plans, aligned to the Victorian Curriculum
- Highly effective teaching, focussed on improving student outcomes.
- Enriching, engaging resources that support student's physical, social and emotional development
- Strong community partnerships to assist students in their engagement in work and future pathways
- Opportunities for parents to participate in learning and decision-making partnerships
- Networks that promote and support student achievement, wellbeing and engagement

We believe that effective learning occurs when outstanding and innovative teachers provide a variety of tasks that actively engage students who are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. The expectation is that students will be successful and enthusiastic learners capable of building positive relationships.

Baringa School is inclusive, valuing the diversity of community members. All members share responsibility for the development of an inspired, educational community of independent citizens. There are connections including service to and support from the wider community.

Baringa School Community values Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be a Learner are reinforced throughout the school and promoted with parents and the wider school community.

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Baringa 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
- deliver a broad curriculum including workplace programs, access to Community College Gippsland and the Advance program to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Baringa School use a Gradual Release instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction that is evidenced-based, and includes high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Baringa 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, newsletters, school Facebook page and end of year school concert.
- 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 school captains program and other forums including classroom-based feedback and Student Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, SWELL staff, Wellbeing Officer and Assistant Principals and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through Mentoring and Buddy programs.
- all students are welcome to self-refer to SWELL staff, Student Wellbeing Officer, Psychologist, Mental Health Practitioner (if older than 12), Assistant Principal and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. Family members of students are also welcome to make a referral to any of the above services.
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Safe Schools
  - Zones of Regulation
  - School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)
- we develop programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, school representative groups and 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

- we have a designated wellbeing team with a number of staff in key roles including the Assistant Principal in Student Wellbeing and Wellbeing Officer whose primary roles are to monitor the health and wellbeing of students across the school and act as a point of contact for student 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 – refer to our Aboriginal Action Plan for further information
- our English as additional language students are supported through our education and wellbeing programs, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included, through strategies identified in their ILP's.
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background by developing ILP's to support students' education and wellbeing and offer access to school wellbeing supports including our SWELL team and Mental Health Practitioner.
- 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.

- 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 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 each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- all students from Year 10 and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future
- Baringa School assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- speech staff develop targeted social skills programs utilising the Zones of Regulations Program. They develop social stories and other visual resources to support student engagement
- small group therapy will run to promote social skills, understanding of emotions and behaviour, increase mental health awareness and increase student safety

### Individual

Baringa 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 (biannual Student Support Group, SSG meetings in terms 1 and 3). For more information re SSG’s please see the following department policy [Student Support Groups](#).
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan, Information regarding both of these documents can be found by clicking on the following links;
  - [Individual Education Plans](#)
  - [Behaviour Support Plans](#)
  - [Safety Plans](#)
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- Implementing the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework and behaviour interventions including the [PBIS Shop](#)
- Explicit teaching programs targeting unexpected behaviours in line with Sentral incident data.
- referring the student to:
  - SWELL team
  - [Student Support Services](#)
  - Mental Health Practitioner
  - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, [headspace](#), child and adolescent mental health services, [LOOKOUT](#) or The Orange door
  - Re-engagement programs such as GOTCHYA & Ladder programs

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 including:
  - 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

Baringa School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team (SWELL) plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Baringa 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 (School Profiles)
- 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
- Sentral incident data
- ISOC reports
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers or staff
- functional Behaviour Assessments
- speech Pathology Assessments
- psychologist

#### 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 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 wellbeing or leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values.

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, Baringa School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines and Behaviour policy. 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
- placed on a behaviour agreement contract
- 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 SWELL team
- restorative practices
- detentions (within school hours such as recess and lunch play).
- 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 Baringa 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

Baringa 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 (using Facebook, student diaries, SMS, newsletters, website and phone).
- involving families in other curriculum-related activities (eg. School sports days)
- 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.

## 8. Evaluation

Baringa 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 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
- continuum trackers
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Baringa 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
- Included 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 Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	18 <sup>th</sup> October. 2024
Consultation	School Council Student Wellbeing Team School Improvement Team
Approved by	Principal – Kelly Mether
Next scheduled review date	October 2026