

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.

Great Ryrie 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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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. SCHOOL PROFILE

Our school was established in 1998 and is located approximately 20 kilometres east of the CBD. In 2021 school enrolments are around 500 students. The school is in a relatively quiet location in the suburb of Heathmont, 20 kilometres east of Melbourne. The school was built in 1998 as a result of the amalgamation of three smaller schools and the attractive buildings have been well maintained. In 2004 the school was further extended after the closure of the adjacent Heathmont College site and in 2019, this building was demolished and replaced with a new building comprising of four classrooms, flexible learning spaces and storage space.

We have 49 school staff including, 2 Integration Aides with a focus on EAL and Reading Intervention support, 7 Integration Aides a Library Technician, 2 MEA's, and a Chaplain, all at varying part time fractions. We offer four specialist programs including Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education and Indonesian. The Victorian Curriculum provides the basis of the curriculum through an integrated model. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities that include all of the specialist programs, offering the opportunity for all students to thrive and succeed. In addition, the school is committed to developing a comprehensive suite of student leadership and wellbeing programs, to support the variety of differing needs in our school community. The work of the School Council and the parent community is evident throughout the school and continue to work to improve facilities and equipment for students and teachers.

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The student population has changed in the past few years with the increase in enrolment of students from English as an Additional Language and refugee backgrounds. In a school of close to 500 students, (47.5% of whom are female) we have six indigenous students and just over 28% of our students come from a background where English is an Additional Language (EAL). Just under three fifths of these students (14.9% of our student population) are recent refugees (primarily from Myanmar – this group alone representing seven languages). The school also has eleven students funded through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD). Our students come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds but as a whole the population is in the mid-range for Victorian schools.

In addition to our indigenous inclusive curriculum and a strategically resourced PSD program, the school has been implementing a range of organisational practices and programs to support EAL students and families for several years. The EAL Coach and Education Support Staff provide transition and support for refugee families as well as individual, small group and mixed-group experiential and targeted teaching programs to support the students in the classroom and beyond.

We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.

2. SCHOOL VALUES, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Great Ryrie's 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 respect, responsibility and learning at every opportunity.

Our school is also committed to preventing and addressing bullying, including cyberbullying. Please see our Bullying and Harassment Policy for more information.

Our Philosophy

At Great Ryrie we strive to develop the whole child physically, socially, emotionally, academically and enhance their natural talents and abilities. We get to know our students, build positive relationships and tailor the learning to their individual needs. Our teaching and learning is focused on making our students literate and numerate but also to develop a curiosity to make sense of their world through real life inquiry learning.

Our Vision

At Great Ryrie Primary School we aim to empower students to reach their personal best and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Our Values

At Great Ryrie we believe our core values are central to the life of our school and are the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values at every opportunity.

Are core values are embedded in our School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework.

At Great Ryrie we are:

- ***Respectful***
- ***Responsible***
- ***Learners***

The Great Ryrie behaviour matrix was developed in consultation with the entire school community and outlines how our school values can be enacted out in all the different areas of our school. Please see our SWPBS Handbook for further detail about the behaviour expectations that are linked to each value.

Associated Values

- **Individuality** to be yourself and have confidence to know you can ‘have a go’ and achieve your personal best.
- **Honesty and integrity** to seek the truth and ‘walk the talk’ in all our actions.
- **Positive attitude** towards school and making it a fun, enjoyable, challenging and rewarding learning experience.
- **Collaboration** with the whole community so that we understand that we’re all in this together and we can achieve.
- **Understanding and acceptance** of yourself and others in our multi-cultural community.

3. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

To realise our vision, our school has in place a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in the school. We recognise that some students, as a group or as individuals may need extra social, emotional or educational support to flourish at school, and so we will put in place strategies to identify these students and provide them with the support they need.

The School works collaboratively with students and parents/ carers to establish fair and respectful behaviour policies and practices, based on the school’s values, expected social competencies and positive peer relationships. *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
- 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 GRPS use the instructional model developed by all staff, 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 GRPS adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students as documented in the Assessment Schedule
- our school’s Statement of Values 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 Junior School Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- students participate in 3-Way Conferences with their teacher and parents to celebrate their learning and progress mid-year
- create opportunities for cross-age connections through our Year 5&6 and Foundation Buddy Program and through our Connections groups (See below)

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- students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, School Chaplain, Year Group Leaders, Assistant Principal and 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, which includes programs such as:

- ***Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR):*** A review of all policies and curriculum documents has been undertaken to ensure that the principles of the program are being demonstrated in our school. A gender lens is used when planning school events, curriculum and staffing, to ensure respectful relationships across the school. Teachers use the RRRR teaching document to deliver lessons to address the Personal and Social Learning domain in the Victorian Curriculum and to instil a culture of respectful relationships across the school.
- ***School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS):*** SWPBS is a systems approach for establishing the social, culture and individualised supports needed for all students to achieve both social and academic success. Through a multi-tiered framework, it aims to set up a framework to TEACH and ACKNOWLEDGE expected behaviour for all students and prevent problem behaviour. Students are explicitly taught the expected behaviours that relate to the school values. Please refer to the SWPBS Handbook for detailed information about this framework.
- ***Positive Education:*** Principles such as kindness, gratitude, mindfulness and character strengths are used across the school to promote wellbeing amongst staff and students. Lessons relating to these principles are included in Connections groups, which are multi-level groupings of students that operate across the school twice a term. Connections aim to promote connectedness amongst the student population.
- ***Safe Schools:*** The Safe Schools program helps schools foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTI students. It recognises that creating a safe and inclusive environment is key to tackling bullying and harassment, and preventing suicide and self-harm. All students should be safe from bullying and feel included at school. Students who don't feel safe or included at school cannot learn effectively and reach their full potential. Safe Schools is not a subject taught in the classroom and it is not a part of the curriculum. It is a program for principals, teachers and school communities. Schools have the discretion to use as many or as few of the resources, training materials, and other support that the program offers to help them deliver their commitment.
- ***Restorative Practices:*** Teachers respond to inappropriate behaviours using a Restorative Practices approach. The aim is to repair damaged relationships with individuals and groups, using scripted discussion prompts and process. The SWPBS behaviour matrix is also used in the process, to reteach and restate the schools appropriate behaviours. Where appropriate, parents will be involved in the process.
- ***Child Safe Standards:*** The compulsory minimum standards for all organisations that provide services to children including Victorian schools. The aim of the Standards is to ensure organisations are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

Targeted

- each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Homework Club is offered for Refugee students on a weekly basis after school through a partnership between GRPS and Foundation House
- Koorie students have an ILP and regular Student Support Group Meetings
- 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
- staff are trained in and will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

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- lunch time clubs such as Lego club and Code club are offered for students that need an alternate option to the playground
- data obtained through the SWPBS behaviour referral system, drive the direction of the explicit teaching of appropriate behaviours in particular year levels or areas of the school

Individual

- Student Support Groups (SSG) are held once a term for all students on the Program for Students with disabilities (PSD) Please see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- students that are not funded under the PSD program, but are experiencing challenging behaviour or are in need of emotional and social learning support will be involved in SSG meetings as needed
- Individual Learning Plans and Behaviour Support Plans will be adopted for students at risk relating to both academic and social and emotional learning
- Program for Students with Disabilities is coordinated by the Assistant Principal and supports students funded under the PSD program through SSG meetings. Individual goals are developed to drive student learning, with an individual focus that supports their needs. These goals are developed in consultation with teacher, student and parent.
- teachers refer students needing support to the Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services are coordinated to support the student
- Lookout Centre is engaged if extra support is needed for students living in out of home care
- Tier 3 components of the SWPBS framework involve a functional behaviour analysis approach to students that are exhibiting ongoing behavioural concerns. This analysis provides evidence and guidance to implement behaviour plans and drives referral to appropriate community agencies or health professionals
- OnPsych counsellor is available to support students needing extra support via a mental health plan provided by a GP.

Great Ryrie 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.

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
- 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.

4. IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Great Ryrie 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.

Great Ryrie 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
- annual academic performance as recorded against Victorian Curriculum standards
- regular data analysis of academic performance using assessments as specified in Great Ryrie Primary School Assessment Schedule during weekly Year Level Team meetings and during School Improvement Team meetings
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- staff professional learning with a focus on trauma and functional behaviour to support teachers in identifying students needing extra support
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- provide opportunity for parents to share knowledge about students at the 'Meet the teacher' interviews in Term 1, as well as continued engagement with families throughout the year
- outline as part of the new teacher induction the process to refer students to Student Support Services officers including Psychologist and Speech Pathologist
- communication between Chaplain and Principal Class around students needing extra support.

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, 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.

6. STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our commitment to SWPBS and stated in our Behaviour Purpose Statement.

Behaviour Purpose Statement: *We are a community that promotes a positive, respectful and engaging learning environment. Together we support each other to be responsible for our actions and to aspire to be our best.*

Our values of 'Respect, Responsibility and Learning' are the basis for our expected behaviour matrix. This matrix outlines the behaviours that are expected to be demonstrated by students for each value in different settings around the school. **The settings are:** All areas, Learning spaces, Playground, Moving around the school, Use of ICT, Assembly, Toilets. The matrix is displayed throughout the school via individual area posters. They are to remind students of expectations and for teachers to use to redirect student misbehaviour in particular areas. Please refer to the SWPBS Tier 1 Handbook for further detail.

SWPBS promotes the acknowledgement of students demonstrating appropriate behaviours.

When a student is seen demonstrating one of the values or an expected behaviour from the matrix, they are given a value card which is then tallied by their teacher. Students work to earn individual and class rewards. Whilst the focus is on acknowledging appropriate behaviours, SWPBS is ***not the ignoring of dangerous or threatening behaviours.***

Major Behaviours

Below are the major behaviours that GRPS have identified as not being tolerated:

- Dangerous and aggressive physical contact that is or may be hurtful to others
- Abusive/threatening/rude and hurtful language
- Leaves supervised area without permission and refuses to follow instruction
- Sustained disruptive behaviour
- Damage to others or school property

If the behaviour is not one of the below behaviours, it is a minor behaviour.

Managing Minor Behaviours

As stated in the rationale, defining and teaching explicit school-wide and classroom behavioural expectations is a key component of SWPBS. Therefore, when teachers observe or are informed of students demonstrating minor behaviours, they are to use them as teaching opportunities to explicitly teach students the expected behaviour. Staff will remind the student to make positive changes in an attempt to redirect their behaviours, using the following steps:

- **State** what the inappropriate behaviour is
- **Refer** to the appropriate expectation poster
- **Re-teach** what the student should be doing and help them with strategies to do so.

Managing Major Behaviours

Whilst SWPBS focusses upon positive reinforcement, it also involves consequences for negative behaviour. These consequences are discussed with the student and they are supported to reflect upon their actions, when they are calm and deescalated after incident.

Consequences will vary due to the nature of the incident and frequency and 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 and redirected to the appropriate behaviour expectation
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal from the yard at break times for half of each break
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- removal to another classroom for a specified amount of time
- restorative practice conversation
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion.

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.

Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Great Ryrie Primary School's Bullying policy.

7. ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Great Ryrie 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 by offering them input into its operations and curriculum offerings and seek feedback through the Parent Opinion survey, and from parent representatives on School Council. The School Council provides financial assistance and encouragement to the school community in our efforts to build a sense of 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, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy
- 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.

8. EVALUATION

Great Ryrie 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

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- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related policies and documents to support this policy can be found on our school website.

- School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Tier 1 handbook
- *Child Safe Standards*
- Bullying and Harassment Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy is mandatory and is scheduled for review every 1 to 2 years under DET guidelines. School Council consultation is required.

This policy was last updated in March 2021 and is scheduled for review by March 2023.