



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Melissa Lewis (Assistant Principal) on (03) 9481 0009.

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.

Northcote 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

1. School profile

Northcote Primary School is located in the inner northern suburb of Northcote and was first established in 1874. It retains the original Victorian and later Edwardian heritage brick buildings. Refurbishments to original traditional classrooms a few years ago, created flexible learning spaces in most areas. This provided the environment to transform the teaching and learning practices in our school, to be far more suitable for today's teaching and learning needs.

Northcote Primary School is known for its strong sense of community connectedness and the school has this in spades. Over our 145 year history the school has evolved into a place where community matters and where our students continue to achieve academically. We are proud of our consistent teaching and learning and the high standards we set for our staff and students. We are a welcoming school community. Strong relationships are the hallmark of our school – among students, parents, and staff and within the Northcote community.

The school vision is: Collaborative learning in a community that cares.

The core values of the school are:

Collaboration: Students are encouraged to be their best selves through progressive learning and teaching practices that give them the foundations, curiosity and creativity to be life-long learners.

Community-minded: Welcoming students, staff, families and friends by promoting a sense of belonging and sharing in our school and wider community.

Respect: Accepting and valuing ourselves and others and fostering an atmosphere of inclusion, resilience and mutual respect.

These values underpin a school environment and atmosphere where safety, caring attitudes, quality respectful relationships, consultative decision-making, and high educational standards are encouraged.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Collaboration	Students are encouraged to be their best selves through progressive learning and teaching practices that give them the foundations, curiosity and creativity to be life-long learners.	Collaboration means: Working together towards a common goal. Teachers work with each other and with students to provide rich and challenging learning environments for students to achieve success and thrive. Staff have shared responsibility of the students in their care and in the delivery of the curriculum they teach.
Community-minded	Welcoming students, staff, families and friends by promoting a sense of belonging and sharing in our school.	Community-minded means: Actions based on shared expectations, values, beliefs and meanings between individuals Involvement, connection, belonging, inclusion.

Respect	Accepting and valuing ourselves and others and demonstrating this in our behaviour.	Respect means: We respect ourselves by accepting and valuing who we are We respect others by treating people fairly and appreciating different circumstances and views We respect our community by welcoming newcomers and lending a hand to each other
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These values underpin a school environment and atmosphere where safety, caring attitudes, quality respectful relationships, consultative decision-making, and high education standards are encouraged.

VISION

At Northcote Primary School we believe our core purpose is to develop children to be literate, numerate and curious, and to be part of a vibrant and engaged community of staff, family and friends.

We aim to develop students who are motivated, engaged and resilient, and who contribute to the wellbeing of others.

Our positive school culture is predicated on student engagement being the basis for learning. To support this, our leadership team is actively engaged in developing classroom practice to ensure that our pedagogy and curriculum engages all students. Effective teaching, inclusive and engaging curriculum and respectful relationships between members of the school community is promoted through collegiality, eg, mentoring and peer observations, and professional learning teams that encourage innovative pedagogy developed using the Department’s Effective Schools Model, Victorian Curriculum, Student Engagement Policy Guidelines and DEECD initiatives.

PHILOSOPHY

Northcote Primary is committed to ensuring that improved student learning is the highest priority. This is achieved by providing a comprehensive curriculum based on Government Curriculum Framework and guidelines with a focus on personalised learning. By identifying and focusing on the aptitude and interests of each individual student, the school provides a learning environment that ensures students have every opportunity to reach their potential.

To enable students to be the best they can requires a teaching and learning culture that helps students to become independent thinkers who can take risks and believe in their own abilities. In recent times, the school has had a sharpened focus on supporting improvement and consistency in teaching practices through the school. The school uses consistent teaching approaches to cater for differing student needs. The pedagogical focus is to provide an inclusive teaching and learning program, with the collaborative teaching approach to best meet the needs of all students. These approaches are informed by regular assessment of student learning and consist of a combination of targeted support programs; extension of highly able students; direct instruction; inquiry learning and the use of information and communication technology routinely across the curriculum.

High expectations and authentic relationships increase students’ confidence and curiosity and energises their commitment to learning.

3. Engagement strategies

Northcote 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

- 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 Northcote Primary School use the Gradual Release of Responsibility 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 Northcote 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 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 (JSC) and other forums including year group meetings. 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 plays, athletics and JSC.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the 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:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Bully Stoppers

- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour, as required
- opportunities for student inclusion through lunchtime clubs
- the Prep-Grade 6 buddy program

Targeted

Each year group has a Team Leader, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support

- each year group has a year level leader, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act 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 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

Individual

Northcote Primary 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
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan ([Individual Education Plans, Behaviour Support Plans](#))
- 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 ([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 The Orange Door.

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 ([Student Support Groups](#)) 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

Northcote 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. Northcote 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
- 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 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 and management

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 Northcote Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Northcote 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 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
- 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 Team Leader
- restorative practices
- detentions
- 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 Northcote Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

7. Engaging with families

Northcote 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 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

Northcote 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 (Student Online Case System)

Northcote 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 website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carers notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention and Child Safe Standards can be found on our school website.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2021
Consultation	Northcote Primary School Staff, Term 3, 2021 School Council Education Sub-Committee 11-10-2021 School Council 27-10-21
Approved by	School Council Education Sub-Committee 15 th November 2021 Julie Andrews (Acting Principal) and School Council December 1 st 2021
Next scheduled review date	October 2023

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